

Rowan's Law and ABYC Keelboat Regattas

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Background

The impetus behind Rowan's Law was the death in 2013 of Rowan Stringer, a high-school rugby player. She died of "second impact syndrome" following multiple concussions suffered over a few days. The law was given Royal Assent by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario in 2018 and came into full force July 1, 2020. The objective is to improve concussion safety for youth involved in competitive amateur sports.

Concussions and especially repeated concussions are a serious matter for all ages but they are most serious for younger people. Although Rowan's law focuses on kids and teenagers the law applies to "athletes" (including keelboat sailors) up to age 26 and to older people in positions of responsibility.

The skipper's responsibility

Most young people who race competitively are part of a club team and the club coach is responsible for ensuring that the procedures laid out by Rowan's Law are followed. In the absence of coaches for keelboat regattas, ABYC requires skippers to be responsible for concussion awareness and removal-from-sport procedures under Rowan's Law for their crew.

By registering for an ABYC keelboat regatta you as skipper agree to accept that responsibility and to comply with the following concussion management procedures. If you will not be skipper (the person in charge or PIC) on your boat for the race, you must ensure that your appointed PIC will comply with these procedures on your behalf.

Before competing, you must read the [Ontario Government Concussion Awareness Resource](#) and the [Ontario Sailing Concussion Recognition Tool](#). You must then read and agree to the [Ontario Sailing Concussion Code of Conduct – Designated Person](#).

Before competing, you must require any crew member under 26 to confirm that they have read the Concussion Awareness Resource and that they have read and agreed to the [Ontario Sailing Concussion Code of Conduct – Athlete and Participant](#).

You must immediately remove a member of your crew from competition if you suspect they have sustained a concussion and then:

- call 911 if in your opinion doing so is necessary
- report the incident to the ABYC Rear Commodore at rearcom@abyc.ca, the ABYC club manager at clubmanager@abyc.ca, and the Rear Commodore or equivalent at your home club
- If the crew member is under 18, advise their parent or guardian of their removal
- advise the crew member (and their parent or guardian if they are under 18) that they should undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and that they must follow the [Ontario Sailing Return to Sport Procedures](#).