

Organizers Promise Control Of Raft Race

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only automobiles moving down the foot of Main Street, The problem is also in bodies."

Riggio said that emergency vehicles would have been unable to move down Main Street because of the traffic and crowds last summer. In addition, he says the beer-drinking that has become a part of the race adds a different dimension to the safety problem.

"People were literally crawling out of that water and believe me, they were not in good form," said Riggio. "They could hardly handle themselves, never mind a raft."

Riggio would like to see the Coast Guard restrict the numbers of rafts, but a Coast Guard official said Friday that he didn't believe any changes would be made.

"We have stipulated a lot of safety requirements. We are recommending not only our town

patrol but also the state police and Department of Environmental Protection," the official said.

Raft organizer Ken Fischburg said the race "will go on as scheduled. We will do all we can to work with the good people of Essex."

"We were upset about the problems last year," Fischburg said. "We will keep cars away from that end of town. The race will be very good, but we'll keep it toned down so that only local people are involved."

The deadline for registering in the race is mid-July. Fees for participants will be five dollars for crew members and \$20 for each raft entered. Spectators who come to the island also will be charged this year.

Proceeds, after expenses, go to charity. Last year, the Connecticut River Raft Race Inc. donated about \$5,000 to a total of nine charities.