



# HAYLING ISLAND SAILING CLUB SAILING SAFETY MANAGEMENT POLICY

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## 1 Introduction

This safety guide describes management activities aimed at providing safety for sailing dinghy racing open meetings. It describes activities for preparation of the event, during the racing and after the event.

Because of the extremely high number of variables in sailing dinghy racing, this guide cannot be considered definitive for all kinds of events in all conditions. Activities may be tailored to the specific needs of a particular event.

This guide is specific to Hayling Island Sailing Club and its location at the entrance to Chichester Harbour with sailing areas in the harbour or in Bracklesham Bay or Hayling Bay.

## 2 References

Ideas and concepts from relevant RYA and HISC documents have been used in the preparation of this guide.

Selected comments from event race officers and safety officers have been also incorporated.



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### **3 Objective**

The objective of this guide is to assist in achieving a high standard of safety without unduly constraining sailing activities. The aim of the Safety Team is to provide efficient and competent safety cover and allow competitors maximum enjoyment while minimising risks to sailors and boats.

### **4 Responsibilities of the Sailor.**

It is the responsibility of the sailor, or parent or guardian of the sailor, to decide that he/she is able to participate safely in the race and to not launch if that is in doubt.

The sailor must have a knowledge level that is compatible with their reasonable participation in the race, including knowledge of the Sailing Instructions and the Racing Rules of Sailing, especially the rules to avoid collisions. The sailor must hold appropriate third party insurance.

Before leaving the beach, the sailor or parent or guardian of the sailor, shall assess and judge that the sailor's ability is compatible with the sailing conditions for the race and their equipment is adequate for the race. The following should be considered:

- The responsibility for a sailor's decision to participate in a race, or to continue racing is his/hers alone. He/she is entirely responsible for their own safety, ref RRS Rules 1,4.
- The location of the race, inside or outside the harbour and the wind, tidal and sea conditions on the course and in the route to the course.
- The weather forecast for the period of the race.
- The length of the race course and the expected time on the water.
- Personal protective clothing and buoyancy, adequate for the conditions. Special care is needed in cold or strong wind conditions, especially for juniors.
- Long hair should be tied up.
- The class of dinghy and any class specific items and equipment, for example, harness, painter, buoyancy bags, hatches, righting lines, any class specific rules for how the sailing dinghy is rigged and set up.
- The dinghy should be in a safe and seaworthy condition.
- The sailor should know how to derig the dinghy.

Sailors must properly use the published system for recording participation in the race and his/her return from the race, for example, sign in and sign out, or the tally system. The specific system used shall be identified in the sailing instructions or at the sailor's briefing.

Sailors must record, without delay, their return from the race by signing the Sign Off sheet, Retirement Sheet or by returning their Tally to Tally Control or otherwise according to instructions given at the sailor's briefing.



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### **5 Responsibility of the Race Officer for Safety.**

The Race Officer (RO) has overall responsibility for safety management during the event. The RO may delegate the authority to manage safety activities to an Safety Officer SO. If there is more than one course, each course should have a Course Safety Leader, CSL.

### **6 Safety Management Activities.**

#### **6.1 Planning and preparation**

##### **6.1.1 Risk Assessment**

For major events, planning starts many months before the event. The Risk Assessment is a key planning tool and the first should be completed at the start of planning. Reference should be made to any parameters or conditions that were set at the time the event was agreed and costed.

Normally the SO completes it and both the SO and RO agree it. This document should be considered dynamic and be modified according to decisions made during planning. The last version should be produced within the last two days before race day and it should contain the current weather forecast for race day. Sometimes the Harbour Master and Solent Coastguard request copies of the Risk Assessment, see the Event Risk Assessment.

##### **6.1.2 Establish how many patrol boats are needed.**

Useful starts are a ratio of competitors to safety boats of 12:1 and then consider the following factors. This process is subjective and much will depend on the experience of the race team.

- Course shape and size. This will be decided by the RO early in the planning. Championship courses normally have beats of around 1nm. Appendix A shows the RYA suggestions for how to tactically position safety boats on the normal shapes of courses. Normally all safety boats can be deployed in the start area before the start of racing, then deployed to their watching positions as the race gets under way. Also, multiple safety boats should be deployed at high risk parts of the course such as the gybe marks.
- Number of competitors. This will be an estimate at start of planning. If numbers change significantly from the first estimate then the number of patrol boats should be changed accordingly.
- Type of race, class of dinghies and general ability levels of sailors in those classes.
- Safety cover is necessary during the time the race fleet are en route to and from the course area. When sailors will be permitted to return to HISC during the race period, i.e. retirees, additional safety boats may need to be committed to the route to and from the course in high medium to strong winds. For youths, this cover should be maintained at all times for retiring boats during the race period and sufficient safety boats should be allocated to ensure competitors do not leave the advised route.
- A mothership may be utilised so as to negate the need for safety cover en route to and from the course for retirees during racing.
- At this stage, the weather for the race day should be assumed to be challenging but within any rules set by class associations.



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- Jury boats and mark laying boats may be considered safety boats for the purpose of achieving the 12:1 ratio, but they must be informed of this role and agree to it and attend the safety briefings.
- Plan how backups may be called should they be needed. Examples are private RIBs, the marine staff or Hayling Rescue.

### 6.1.3 Allocation of safety boat crews.

- Starting with the required number of safety boats, check in Dutyman that there are sufficient numbers of volunteer helms and crew. If not, then advise the Sailing Secretary and RO who will begin to allocate the remaining vacancies. Check with the Marine Manager that the required number of HISC Club RIBs is available.
- Members' private RIBs helms and crew should also be entered on Dutyman. If visitor RIB helms and crew are to be included in the safety teams, including the jury boats, then ensure that they are sent the Visitor RIB Registration form which must be completed and returned to the Sailing Secretary.
- Assign helms and crews to each club RIB. Prepare a list of all safety boat helms and crew including jury and mark boats. Assign call signs to each RIB. Start collecting all their mobile numbers. This list should be handed out at the safety briefing and a copy given to the Race Box.

### 6.1.4 Other safety management activities.

- Decide if the safety activities during the race will be managed from the Race Box or from a patrol boat on the course. Normally courses in the harbour are managed from the Race Box and courses outside the harbour are managed from a patrol boat. Two members of the safety team should be assigned to the race box to man the radio, and liaise with the RO and SO.
- Decide if a mothership should be used and if so then arrange this. The mothership crews are members of the safety team, their role should be defined to them and they should be present at the safety briefing.
- Decide the system for recording competitor participation and retirement. Request the Sailing Secretary to set this up. Big events may need a Beach Team that includes one person in the Race Box. If a tally system is to be used then it should be controlled by a member of the Beach Team with a radio. The Beach Team is part of the Safety Team and should be at the safety briefing.
- Plan a dinghy familiarisation session for the safety boat crews. Plan for a dinghy to be available for demonstration. Determine how best to tow the race boats and how to right them from the safety boat if that is feasible. Set when and where.

### 6.1.5 About two weeks from race day.

- Prepare and send the safety team a welcome email detailing as much information on the event as possible along with date, time and place of the first safety team briefing. Inform safety crews of any dinghy familiarisation session if necessary. (e.g. Moths). In addition request details of mobile phone numbers and any relevant qualifications held.



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- If patrol boat identification with flags is to be used ask the Marine Manager to prepare the flags.
- Normally club racing will be run from a committee boat and there should be no conflict with the safety activities from the race box. However, in some circumstances club racing management might need to use the race box. In this case, consult with the CRO to manage any matters that arise including use of radio channels, sound and flag signals and sighting the club line. Both parties are expected to work to minimise their impact on the other.
- The Harbour Master and Solent Coastguard should have been informed, by HISC, at the start of the season of the date of Open Meetings, expected entries and radio channel for communications. For larger events, >100 dinghies, the Harbour Master and Solent Coastguard may be invited to the safety briefing. The SO should make contact to confirm details.
- Call the office and ask that the First Aid room is checked and access is clear.
- Prepare the safety briefing handouts. Liaise with the Office to produce the following for presentation at the safety team briefing.

### Safety Team Briefing

Safety Fleet Positioning – a chart of the course showing watching areas for each safety boat.

Table of race team mobile phone numbers.

Chart of flags for course location, race start sequence and other common signals.

Chart of West Pole Sands and navigation.

Details of other Safety Crews and allocated boats

### 6.2 ESO activities on Race Day before the race.

- **Weather forecast:** Obtain the weather forecast for the race period and tidal conditions.
- **Sailors Safety Briefing:** to be held each day of racing.

The SO should attend the sailor's briefing, which should include the following:

- The system for recording participation in the race and the quitting thereof, usually a tally system. Emphasise the requirement to return tallies immediately on landing. State that failure to do this within 30 minutes of the last boat landing will cause the Search Plan to be started. This leads to the Coastguard being called with the associated implications. This happens in addition to any penalties for late return of the tally.
- The weather forecast and tidal stream rates for the race period including wind over tide hazard. Emphasise to stay east side of channel in ebbing tide to avoid being drawn onto bank in event of capsize.
- If fog is possibility state that competitors should wait at CB to be escorted back.
- The mothership if present, how to recognise it, its location and role.
- Describe hazards enroute to the course, for example, the navigation channels, shallows in the harbour, the wrecks in Bracklesham Bay and West Pole Sands and if practicable, identify their positions on a sketch or chart.



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- West Pole Sands: describe the dangers of this bank.
  - Shallow or exposed, often with very rough water and strong current.
  - From the sea side, cannot see the breakers and make judgement on how rough it is.
  - The Bar Beacon is a critical mark and should always be passed to the East.
  - Ebbing tide flow is stronger than flood. Can get swept onto bank after capsize if too close.
  - West Pole Sands is a no go area and patrol boats are not obliged to go there to give assistance.
- **Safety Team Briefing** Hold a Safety Briefing for all the Safety Team on each race day. Include mark layers and jury boats if they are also counted as patrol boats. The following may be included.
  - Check that all safety team members are present and that patrol boat drivers and crews are assigned to each boat and have a radio, equipment kit and tape for marking abandoned boats. Advise the PRO if the number of patrol boats available is less than planned.
  - Notify the radio channel to be used. For more than one course, each course should operate on a different radio channel.
  - State that one person in the patrol boat should be equipped to enter the water, but this should be done only for an emergency, for example sailor entrapment. An additional person in the water is an additional person to recover and the patrol boat crew must be able to continue afterwards.
  - Identify the call signs of all patrol boats and hand out a list of people, call signs and mobile numbers.
  - If the SO is to be in a boat, then identify that boat and state it will be used for co-ordination of safety activities and will not normally go to incidents.
  - Identify the race start time, launch time and when to be ready on the water. The patrol boats should be ready to go before the competitors launch.
  - Report weather forecast and tidal conditions expected for the race period.
  - If strong wind is forecast:
    - RO may reduce numbers to increase Patrol Boat: Competitor ratio.
    - RO may shorten race instead of abandoning in order to keep the fleet together.
    - Very important to watch the back markers.
  - Assign patrol boats to escort duties while the dinghies are sailing to and from the race area. One patrol boat should follow last competitor out to the course. One patrol boat should follow the last competitor from the furthest position on the course back to HISC. Consider requesting patrol boats to stop at West Pole Beacon and keep watch while next patrol boat reaches the beacon. Then that patrol boat keeps watch and so on so that the entire route is observed while the competitors are enroute.
  - Consider operating a competitor launch window to keep the fleet concentrated so the safety boat resources do not become too stretched, especially in strong wind conditions.



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- Assign watching areas for each patrol boat during the racing. Emphasise that Safety Boats should not go onto the course unless there is a need and should stand off with enough distance that their wind shadow is negligible.
- Patrol boats should advise Race Box of retirements. Race box to advise SO when the retiring boats have landed. In strong wind all retirees should be escorted back or to a position where the Race Box has clear visibility of them and has acknowledged this.
- If the help is needed outside their assigned area, patrol boats must first advise their intentions to the RO or SO.
- If yachts, spectator boats appear to be heading onto the course, then patrol boats should politely request they change course.
- Identify the need for patrol boat drivers to do a radio check as soon as ready to go identifying the number of persons on board. Each patrol boat, including mark layers and jury boats if they double as patrol boats, will be stood down by the RO or SO after racing when all sailors are counted back. Patrol boat drivers must respond and that response amounts to sign off for the patrol boat crew.
- Identify boats to be used for mark laying or taking numbers.
- Identify the mothership, if one is assigned, and its location and role.
- Identify any hazards on the course such as shallows, the marked wrecks in Bracklesham Bay and the West Pole Sands. State that patrol boats are not obliged to go to incidents in these areas but may do so at the driver's discretion.
- State that patrol boats and support boats acting as patrol boats may not carry spares for competitors nor photographers.
- It is essential that all drivers and crew understand the course and where they are to patrol. Visitors in particular may not be familiar with the location, the type of race course and any hazards. A flip board should be used to quickly show the essential details.
- Remind the patrol boat crews of their duties as described in the Safety Team Briefing. Request the Sailing Secretary to provide copies of this document laminated so they can be handed out to each patrol boat helm.
- Emphasise that the SO will not normally attend incidents. If that becomes necessary the SO shall first hand over management of safety activities to the RO.
- Emphasise that when a patrol boat assists a dinghy, such as taking in tow, they should advise the SO so that the remaining safety boats can be redistributed. This is important to ensure the whole area remains under watch and the SO knows what resources remain.
- Emphasise that the shore team in the race box should record all transmissions and their time and ensure close out of all items. If not then advise the details to the SO.
- Advise refueling and lunch pack arrangements.
- Advise time and place of subsequent daily Safety Briefings. Any problems and solutions from the previous day should be included in the briefing discussions.





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- **Emphasise that patrol boats must be vigilant and quickly attend all who need help in their assigned area irrespective of whether or not they are competitors. Inverted dinghies especially need a rapid response to check for sailor entrapment.**

### 6.3 Postponing or cancelling before the race start

The RO, SO and the class association representative should assess the conditions before the race. To be considered are the following.

- The weather forecast, tidal strength and conditions for the race period.
- The anticipated sea state on the course and enroute to the course and whether the course is inside or outside the harbour.
- The class of sailing dinghy, skill levels and age range of the sailors in that class.
- Any class rule or item in the Notice of Race addressing maximum wind strength.

The RO, supported by the SO and class rep, should decide if the race ought to be postponed or cancelled.

Considerations in a decision to postpone or abandon a race include the following:

- If the sailors are **youths, that is under 18 years of age**, and the Met Office Inshore Forecast for the race period contains an average wind strength prediction of greater than **F5 (17 to 21 knots, mean 19 knots)**.
- If the sailors are adults, that is 18 years of age or more, and the Met Office Inshore Forecast for the race period contains an average wind strength prediction of greater than **F6 (22 to 27 knots, mean 24 knots)**.

**or in either case as may be directed by class association rules or NOR.**

### 6.4 SO activities during the race

#### 6.4.1 SO Positioning.

The SO should be in a suitable position for monitoring the race. Normally this will be in the race box for races within the harbour and on the course or adjacent to the course for races outside the harbour. The SO should move around attending the locations where there is maximum risk of safety problems, normally start area and gybe marks.

#### 6.4.2 Organising patrol boats:

As dinghies need attention from patrol boats, others should be reassigned watching areas so as to cover the gaps as necessary.

If safety boats do not attend incidents quickly the ESO should make the instructions to do so.

The SO should watch for safety boats moving onto the course without need and call them to stand off.

If pleasure craft should appear to be heading for the course, the SO may need to dispatch a safety boat to head them off or go his / her self.





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### 6.4.3 Retirees:

The SO should be aware of any retiring competitors at the mothership and assign a safety boat, when available, to escort them back.

Communicate with the Race Box for any retiring boats. The SO notes the boats retiring and ask the Race Box to report when retirees have landed and to report if they do not return in a reasonable. **Youths should not be permitted to return unescorted, but should wait at the mothership for an escort to arrive.**

### 6.4.4 Abandoning the race

The RO and SO shall continually assess the conditions during the race with a view to abandoning if necessary.

To be considered are the following.

- Current behaviour of the wind strength and direction and any observable indicators such as cloud formations. The wind strength increasing greater than any maximum class rule or statement in NOR.
- Prevailing wind recordings from local weather stations such as Chimet, Bramblemet and any other appropriate source that gives warning of approaching worsening conditions.
- The numbers of sailors experiencing difficulties such as frequently capsizing leading to tiredness and exhaustion.
- Depletion of available patrol boat numbers on the course due to towing duties or attending to injuries or sickness. Advise the RO when available safety boat numbers are reduced to the point where incidents cannot be attended in a reasonable time.
- Normally it is better to shorten the race than abandon it because the competitors will be more concentrated where they are expected to be.
- On strong wind days, call for backup safety boats as previously planned..

See Safety Briefing Handout for escorting recommendations.

## 6.5 CODE RED CONTINGENCY PLAN for medical emergencies.

If a patrol boat finds a medical emergency, call on the race VHF channel:

CODE RED, CODE RED > state patrol boat position > state the problem.

The nearest RIB goes to help. SO or RO will dispatch patrol boat with first aider and or go himself.

All other radio traffic to be minimised and wait for further instructions from SO or RO.

If the casualty needs to be returned to HISC Pontoon and needs an ambulance, then the Patrol Boat, SO or RO should ask the Race Box or HISC Office, call sign Hayling Club, to make the 999 call. If so Race Box or HISC Office should dispatch someone to guide the ambulance to drop off point, HISC pontoon.

If ambulance is called, SO must call Solent Coastguard on ch 67 to explain the problem and the actions taken so they are not surprised when the ambulance service calls them.

Casualty to be identified to ambulance, from Tally if necessary.

CODE RED remains active until cancelled by SO or RO.

In case of an urgent, serious medical emergency, any patrol boat should make a ch 16 PAN PAN or MAYDAY call for rapid on the water assistance.



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### **6.6 ESO activities after the race**

Check that all sailors are accounted for back on land. Then stand down the patrol boats and mark layers and jury boats if they were acting as patrol boats, receive a response from each boat to confirm they have stood down.

As patrol boats are stood down, remind drivers of any specific refueling arrangements.

In the event of a significant incident, or safety related protest, the RO or SO should provide a written report to Rear Commodore Racing so that any necessary actions may be taken.

### **7 Missing competitors**

Should competitors and or boats appear to be missing 30 minutes after the last competitor has landed, a Search Plan must be implemented, see HISC Safety Search Plan.

END