



## **ROYAL TORBAY YACHT CLUB A GUIDE FOR DINGHY SAILING EVENTS SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

### **1 Introduction**

This safety guide describes management activities aimed at providing safety for sailing dinghy racing. 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 Royal Torbay Yacht Club and its location at the North West corner of Tor Bay.

### **2 References**

Ideas and concepts from the following documents have been used in the preparation of this guide.

RYA Major Event Safety Standard 10 Feb 2009

RYA Youth Racing Safety Policy v 2.0 Jan 2007.

RYA Safety Fleet Contingency Plans 2008

International Sailing Federation Race Management Manual Pt1, Ed 4, 2009

RYA Racing Best Practices, Race Management.

### **3 Objectives**

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.

The guide should be most useful to less experienced race and safety officers but it may also be used as a check list by those more experienced.

### **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 slipway, 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. To be considered should include the following:



- 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, 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.
- 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 de-rig 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.

### **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 Event Safety Officer (ESO). If there is more than one course, each course should have a Course Safety Leader, CSL.

### **6 Safety Management Activities**

#### **6.1 Before Race Day**

- The ESO completes a risk assessment specific to the event and takes any necessary actions from it.
- The ESO prepares the Safety Briefing handout and any other handouts considered necessary.
- Obtain from the Sailing Secretary or the online entry list the expected number of entries for the race.



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- Decide how many patrol boats are needed. A ratio of one patrol boat per ten sailing dinghies may be used as a starting point. Then to be considered are:
  - o Type of race, class of dinghies and general ability levels of sailors in those classes.
  - o Sufficient patrol boats should be deployed so that an incident can be attended within three minutes.
  - o Location of the race and patrol boat coverage en-route to the race course.
  - o At this stage, the weather for the race day should be assumed to be challenging but within any rules set by class associations.
- Check with the Sailing Secretary that there are a sufficient number of patrol boats assigned for the race and that each has driver and crew assigned. This may include RIBs assigned to mark laying and jury boats. In that case, their drivers must be informed of their safety duties and attend the safety briefings.
- Check with the Event Organiser that the required number of safety boats are available.
- At least two weeks before the event, check that safety team volunteers have confirmed their attendance. If not, ask the Event Organiser to call them for confirmation. Decide where and when the safety team, members and visitors, should report for duty and ask the Event Organiser to publish that information.
- Make a list of patrol boats to be deployed together with the names and mobile phone numbers of drivers and crews. Prepare a list of drivers, crew and mobile numbers to be handed out at the safety briefing.
- Identify the first aiders and list in which boats they are.
- If safety boat identification with flags is to be used ask the Event Organiser to prepare the flags.
- Decide if the safety activities during the race will be managed from the Committee Boat or from a Safety Boat on the course.
- Decide if a mother-ship is necessary and if so then arrange this. The mother-ship crew are members of the safety team and should be present at the safety briefing.
- Decide the system for recording competitor participation and retirement and confirm these arrangements will be in place. Big events may need a Slip Team. If a tally system is to be used then it should be controlled by a member of the Slip Team with a radio.
- The Harbour Master will have been informed, by the Sailing Secretary, at the start of the season of the date of the Event, expected entries and radio channel for communications.



- Ensure that the Club First Aid Box is available and its location known.

#### 6.2 On Race Day before the race.

- Obtain the weather forecast for the race period and tidal conditions.
- The ESO 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.
  - If Fog is possibility state that competitors should wait at the Committee Boat to be escorted back.
  - The mother-ship if present, how to recognise it, its location and role.
  - Describe hazards en-route to the course, for example, the fair-way to the Harbour Entrance. Navigation in the Harbour Entrance.
  - Hold a Safety Briefing for all the Safety Team. Include mark layers and the crews of rounding boats and jury boats if they are also counted as safety boats. The following may be included.
    - Check that all safety team members are present and that safety boat drivers and crews are assigned to each boat and have a radio, equipment kit and tape for marking abandoned boats. Advise the RO 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 ESO 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.



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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 expected for the race period.

If strong wind is forecast:

RO may reduce numbers to increase Safety 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 the slipway.

Assign watching areas for each patrol boat during the racing.

Patrol boats should advise Beach of retirements. Beach to advise ESO when the retiring boats have landed. In strong wind all retirees should be escorted back or to a position where the slip has clear visibility of them and has acknowledged this.

**Emphasise that safety 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.**

If the help is needed outside their assigned area, patrol boats must first advise their intentions to the RO or ESO.

If yachts, spectator boats appear to be heading onto the course, then safety boats should politely request they change course.

Identify the need for safety 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 safety boats, will be stood down by the RO or ESO after racing when all sailors are counted back. Safety boat drivers must respond and that response amounts to sign off for the safety boat crew.

Identify boats to be used for mark laying or taking numbers.

Identify the mother-ship, if one is assigned, and its location and role.



- State that safety boats and support boats acting as safety boats may not carry spares for competitors or 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 safety boat crews of their duties. Safety Briefings should be held on each race day. Any problems and solutions from the previous day should be included in the briefing discussions.

### 6.3 Postponing or cancelling the race

The RO and ESO should assess the conditions before the race. To be considered are the following.

- The weather forecast.
- The anticipated sea state on the course and en-route to the course.
- 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 ESO, 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 During the race

The ESO should be in a suitable position for monitoring the race. Normally this will be on the course.

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

Communicate with the Beach for any retiring boats.

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.



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

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

If the casualty needs to be returned to Torquay Harbour Hammer Head Landing Stage and needs an ambulance, then the Beach should be instructed by the ESO or RO to make the 999 call. If so Beach should despatch someone to guide the ambulance from the Harbour Barrier to the drop off point, Hammer Head Landing Stage.

If ambulance is called, Beach must inform the Torquay Harbour Office and the Coastguard on VHF 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 ESO or RO.

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

#### 6.5 Abandoning the race

The RO and ESO 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 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 safety boat numbers on the course due to towing duties or attending to injuries or sickness.

#### 6.6 After the race

Check that all sailors are accounted for back on land. Then stand down the safety boats and mark layers and jury boats if they were acting as safety boats, receive a response from each boat to confirm they have stood down. As safety boats are stood down, remind drivers of any specific refuelling arrangements.

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

#### 6.7 Missing competitors



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

**7.0 Contact Details**

RTYC 01803 292006 Post Code TQ1 2BH

Torquay Harbour 01803 292429 Post Code TQ1 2BG

RYA Training 023 8060 4180

Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) 023 8039 5500

Coast Guard 999

Brixham Coast Guard 01803 882704

**8.0 Change Log**

Change No 1. 23 May 2012 Annex C Beach Master added

Change No 2. 25 May Include Coast Guard in contacts and remove wire cutters from Safety Boat Equipment.





**Annex A**  
**Dealing with a major incident.**

It is every Yacht Club's nightmare to experience a major incident at their Club. Thankfully this is very rare but if you are ever unfortunate enough to be involved in one, you need to know how to handle the unfolding events.

Your first priority is, of course, the safety of participants and officials. However once ashore you need a strategy to deal with the authorities and the press.

- a. Get a statement from competent witnesses.
- b. Remove key witnesses from the area to somewhere you can talk to them away from the press.
- c. Produce a written statement for the press, such as.

*RTYC regrets to announce the death of a crew member who fell overboard at night from a participating yacht. When and where. Our deepest sympathy to the relatives etc. A full statement will be issued at 2pm tomorrow. Give yourself time to collate the information.*

- d. Don't hold a press conference but decide who will speak to the press.
- e. Don't allow well meaning but ill informed competitors or officials to make public comments.
- f. Try to keep a record of whom you have spoken to. Who has contacted you etc.
- g. Inform RYA Training (023 8060 4180) who can assist with compiling your press statement.
- h. If the rescue services have been involved the press will probably obtained some information from them.
- i. If there has been a fatality the police will contact the Club and inform the next of kin. Do not publish the name of the casualty until you know this has been done, even if the press appear to know who it is.
- j. If the boat has a code of practice certificate you must inform the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) within 24 hours. You can do this by phoning 023 8039 5500. They will inform you within 28 days whether they intend to investigate.
- k. Keep any relevant equipment such as lifejackets etc.
- l. If required, send a report to the MAIB (refer to booklet G27).

When dealing with a major incident, it helps if.

- a. Your paperwork is up to date with information such as contact numbers for the next of kin.
- b. Your boats and volunteers comply with own safety policy and the RYA's conditions of recognition.



## **Annex B**

### **Safety Boat Guide**

*(This guide should be laminated and handed to the safety boat drivers at the safety briefing).*

#### **WHAT WE AIM TO DO:**

- **BE VIGILANT AT ALL TIMES AND PROVIDE RAPID SAFETY SUPPORT FOR COMPETITORS AND OTHERS IF NECESSARY.**
  - **PUT THE SAFETY OF PEOPLE BEFORE EQUIPMENT.**
  - **OPERATE RIBS SAFELY AND RESPONSIBLY.**
  - **KEEP NEAR OUR STATIONS AND CLEAR OF RACING BOATS.**
- ATTEND PROMPTLY ALL INCIDENTS IN YOUR ASSIGNED AREA BE READY TO ENTER WATER, LAST RESORT ONLY.
- ENSURE ALL PERSONS ARE SURFACED AND COUNT HEADS
  - LOOK OUT FOR SERIOUS INJURIES, (IE NEEDING SOME HELP)
  - IF OK STAND OFF, KEEP CHECKING FOR OTHER INCIDENTS
  - OFFER HELP IF REQUESTED, OR IF APPARENT DIFFICULTY
  - WEAR SUITABLE THERMAL PROTECTION, WET/DRY SUIT.
  - DO NOT LEAVE YOUR ASSIGNED AREA WITHOUT CHECKING WITH SAFETY LEADER.

#### **IF SAILOR TRAPPED UNDER INVERTED HULL**

- RIGHT THE BOAT ASAP. DON'T TRY TO RELEASE THE SAILOR BEFORE RIGHTING THE BOAT.(ref RYA REPORT ON ENTRAPMENT)

#### **IN CASES OF SERIOUS INJURY OR MEDICAL PROBLEM**

- RADIO "CODE RED", CALLSIGN, POSITION, PROBLEM
- IF 999 NECESSARY, ASK RACE BEACH / CLUB OFFICE TO CALL IT.
- TAKE CASUALTY ASHORE ASAP OR AS INSTRUCTED BY ESO/RO
- ALL OTHER RADIO TRAFFIC TO BE MINIMAL UNTIL CODE RED IS CLEARED BY ESO / RO.

#### **STRONG WINDS**

- LOOK OUT FOR OVERPOWERED SAILORS BECOMING FATIGUED
- TOW TO WAITING BUOY, COMMITTEE BOAT (CB), MOTHERSHIP OR TOW HOME. THEN RETURN TO SAILING AREA.
- ESO WILL POSITION SAFETY BOATS AT STRATEGIC POINTS ENROUTE HOME.
- PUT SAFETY OF SAILORS BEFORE BOATS, BEWARE LEE SHORE!

#### **FOG / POOR VISIBILITY**

- IF GPS AVAILABLE, MARK WAY HOME AND CB (ON THE WAY OUT!)
  - COMPETITORS ADVISED TO COLLECT AT CB AND WAIT TO BE ESCORTED IN A GROUP.
  - SEARCH RACE AREA SLOWLY, WHISTLE, LISTEN FOR RESPONSE
  - REPORT NUMBERS OF BOATS WITH YOU.
- CALM • TOWING MAY BE REQUIRED, BUT WAIT UNTIL AUTHORISED
- TOW FROM THE BACK OF THE FLEET, PICK UP STRAGGLERS FIRST.
- AFTER DROP OFF, RETURN TO SAILING AREA.
- TOWING • ENSURE TOW CAN BE RELEASED QUICKLY



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**SAFETY TEAM BRIEFING**

- CONSIDER LENGTH OF TOW LINE AND SPEED
- ALONGSIDE FOR SHORT HOPS OR RUDDER BROKEN
- PAY CONSTANT ATTENTION TO TOW AND COLLISION REGS

**DAMAGED BOAT**

TO BE MARKED WITH TAPE IF TO BE ABANDONED (on rudder fittings)

- ASSIST IF NO OTHER DEMANDS FOR ATTENTION
- KEEP A LOOKOUT FOR MORE URGENT INCIDENTS
- TAKE TO WAITING BUOY OR CB FOR LATER TOW HOME

**MISSING COMPETITORS**

- A SEARCH PLAN WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE ESO/RO
- NOTE THAT COASTGUARD MAY TAKE CONTROL

**TRANSIT TO AND FROM RACE AREA**

- SAFETY BOATS WILL BE ASSIGNED TO FOLLOW THE LAST BOAT OUT TO THE COURSE AND BACK FROM THE COURSE.

**COMMUNICATION WITH COMPETITORS**

- GET CLOSE IF ANY INCIDENT, ODD BEHAVIOUR, DISTRESS SIGNAL, STOP TO TALK
- PASS ON REPORTS OF RETIREMENT TO RACE OFFICER.

**LOOKING AFTER OURSELVES**

- AVOID TAKING RISKS, ESPECIALLY TO SAVE EQUIPMENT
- THINK ABOUT DRINKS FOOD, SUNSCREEN, CLOTHES, ETC

**COMMUNICATION WITH REST OF TEAM**

- USE VHF CHANNEL (tba), MOBILE AS BACK UP (pick up contact sheet)
- **TALLY ON BY CALLING RO WHEN GOING AFLOAT, ADVISE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON BOARD. STAND DOWN ONLY WHEN RELEASED BY THE ESO.**
- SEEK HELP FROM ESO IF UNSURE ABOUT ANYTHING
- IN EVENT OF COMMS FAILURE, FOLLOW THIS BRIEFING AND USE INITIATIVE

**RIB Safety Equipment**

**KILL CORD SAFETY REQUIREMENT**

- WHEN CLOSE TO SWIMMERS THE SAFETY BOAT ENGINE MUST BE SWITCHED OFF
- THE KILL CORD MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES THE ENGINE IS ON.

**IF USING YOUR OWN RIB MAKE SURE YOU HAVE:**

- TWO LONG TOW LINES AND FLOATING LINE, KNIFE, WHISTLE, FIRST AID KIT
- ANCHOR AND WARP, PADDLE, COMPASS, DRINKING WATER
- PERSONAL BOUYANCY, TO BE WORN AT ALL TIMES.
- SURVIVAL BAG, HAZARD TAPE

**Thanks for your help.**



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**Annex C**  
**Beach Master Guide**

**Telephone numbers**

**Coast Guard 999 Brixham Coast Guard 01803 882704 VHF Ch 16**  
**RTYC 01803 292006**  
**RTYC Bar 01803 297271**  
**Harbour Office 01803 292429 Torquay Harbour VHF Ch 14**  
**Harbour Post Code TQ1 2BG**

**Sailing Office Code C 2863X**  
**Town Dock Code 5672**  
**Committee Boat Mary Gurine**  
**Safety Boat Harry**  
**Safety Boat Bev**  
**Safety Boat TYST**

1. Collect Beach Master Box and VHF Radio from Sailing Office.
2. Base yourself at the top of the slip at least one hour before race start time.
3. Touch base with the Race Officer.
4. Check VHF Radio with a test transmission to Mary Gurine (Committee Boat) on Channel 72.
5. Seek permission to launch from the Race Officer once a fully manned Safety Boat is at the slip.
6. Keep a tally of number and class of boats launched.
7. Before launching check to see if the boats crew are properly dressed with buoyancy aid fastened correctly and any long hair worn up.
8. Once all boats have been launched radio Mary Gurine with the number of each class launched.
9. Stay handy to slip and monitor the VHF Radio Ch 72 (or assigned channel).
10. Be ready to receive any returning boats.
11. Be ready to receive Safety Boats with an injured sailor.
12. If medical assistance is required call for an Ambulance to come to Beacon Quay Torquay Harbour TQ1 2BG.
13. Any casualty will be landed at the Hammer Head Jetty, Beacon Quay.
14. If a casualty is to be brought ashore needing medical assistance inform the Harbour Office and send a guide to the Barrier at Beacon Quay entrance to meet the Ambulance.
15. After racing check that all boats have returned and then inform the Race Officer that all boats are on Beacon Quay.
16. Return Box and Radio to the Sailing Office.

**Many thanks for your help.**