



Sidmouth Sailing Club

Safe Sailing Policy

2019

Table of Contents

Part 1: Introduction.....	2
Part 2: Basic Principles.....	3
Part 3: Sailing Management.....	4
Part 4: Safety boats.....	5
Part 5: Use of the Winch.....	6
Part 6: Major Incident Plan.....	7
Annex A: Risk Management Categories (RMCs).....	9
Annex B: Briefing for Club Sailing.....	10
Annex C: Procedures to be Followed for the Safe Use of the Winch.....	11

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Part 1: Introduction

Statement of Policy

- 1.1 Sailing, especially on the open sea, carries an element of risk. Sidmouth Sailing Club has a responsibility to promote safe sailing. On the basis of a risk assessment of the Club's principal activities, building on the accumulated experience of members who have sailed at Sidmouth over many years, the Club will:
- a. follow basic principles for safe sailing;
 - b. establish a framework for the safe management of the Club's principal activities;
 - c. provide sufficient safety boat cover and ensure the competence of safety boat helms;
 - d. manage the safe operation of winches for handling boats on the beach;
 - e. establish a plan to be followed in the event of an emergency or major incident;

Other Club policies will be made compatible with this policy; if they conflict, this policy shall take precedence.

Request for Comment

- 1.2 The Club welcomes feedback on this policy. Any comments should be passed to the Sailing Secretary (sailingsecretary@sidmouthsailing.org.uk), the Vice Commodore (vicecommodore@sidmouthsailing.org.uk) or a member of the Sailing Committee.

Review

- 1.3 This document will be reviewed annually and will be modified as circumstances dictate or when other advice is received from the RYA or emergency services.



Part 2: Basic Principles

- 2.1 The decision to sail on any given day rests ultimately with the helm and crew of each boat. Members sign a disclaimer to the effect they take part in activities at their own risk. It is incumbent on all helms to assess the prevailing and anticipated conditions and satisfy themselves they are capable and experienced enough to perform safely.
- 2.2 Members should be allowed to push their limits for the purposes of gaining experience. However, less experienced members will be given advice when conditions are likely to prove too challenging for them. For example: recommendations may be given for an individual or individuals not to go afloat, or to crew with someone else.
- 2.3 There is a fundamental responsibility for individual members to support each other on and off the water.
- 2.4 *Members must:*
 - a. Have the required insurance cover for their own boat as set out on the membership renewal forms.
 - b. Wear adequate personal buoyancy whilst afloat.
 - c. Report dangerous (or potentially dangerous) occurrences to an Officer of the Club.
 - d. Ensure all accidents are noted in the Accident Book held in the Boat Store.*Members should:*
 - e. Arrive in good time for sailing in order that everyone can launch their boats with appropriate assistance and without undue time-pressure.
 - f. Ensure their own boats and sailing gear are in good order.
 - g. Wear appropriate clothing for the conditions.
 - h. Sign on for sailing in order that the Race Officer/Officer of the Day (RO/OOD) can keep track of all sailors and safety boat crews intending to go afloat.
 - i. Attend the RO's Race Briefing before racing.
 - j. Assist other members, particularly those who are less experienced in launching and landing boats.
 - k. Give priority to landing boats and recovering safety boats from the beach before de-rigging boats in the Boat Park.
- 2.5 Club-owned dinghies must only be used afloat during club arranged activities with safety boats in attendance. Moreover, they must not be used by any helm who has been recommended not to go afloat due to lack of experience or due to poor weather or sea conditions.
- 2.6 Dinghies may be prepared in the Boat Park, however, mainsails must not be hoisted or unfurled, and all headsails must remain furled until boats are on the beach set head to wind. After sailing is complete the same principles apply.



Part 3: Sailing Management

Routine race management

3.1 Race Officer & shore contact

- a. A duty Race Officer (RO) will be nominated using the Officer Of the Day (OOD) rota.
- b. If the RO is to go afloat, a responsible person will remain ashore for the purpose of initiating the Major Incident Plan if that becomes necessary.

3.2 The RO shall nominate three or more experienced members, including the senior safety boat helm and any RYA National Race Officers who are Club members to:

- a. record details of the current and forecast weather and launch/recovery conditions on the beach on the signing-on sheet, and use this information to decide which Risk Management Category (RMC) is appropriate for the prevailing and forecast conditions (for guidance on RMCs see Annex A);
- b. decide whether to run racing, taking the RMC into account; and
- c. make other recommendations for the safe conduct of sailing, such as whether any members should be advised not to sail; the level of safety boat cover required and priorities for launching and landing.

These decisions should be made at least 45 minutes in advance of the first scheduled race start and communicated to the RO. The names of those nominated and their decisions will be recorded on the signing-on sheet.

- 3.3 If any member is advised not to sail, the members of the Committees and those nominated in 3.2 will support the senior officer present in doing so.
- 3.4 In the event of any advice not being followed by a club member, or for any other topic of concern, the the RO will record this in a Race Log, to be held in Race Control.
- 3.5 The RO will hold a briefing before launching (see Annex B). This will include discussion of the RMC and any other safe sailing issues.

Routine training management

- 3.6 The Training Centre Principal shall maintain a Staff Handbook describing routine safety management procedures for use during training activities. Staff and volunteers will be issued with a copy of the handbook.

Open Meetings and Championships

- 3.7 The risk assessment of and provision of safety and support boat cover for Open Meetings and Championships shall be managed by the organising committee.
- 3.8 The Principal Race Officer for the event shall have overall responsibility for safety afloat during the event.

Serious incidents

- 3.9 In the event of any serious incident, including deteriorating weather conditions likely to result in multiple capsizes or dangerous landing the RO will abandon racing.
- 3.10 In the event of safety boats being unable to cope with: the number of capsizes; boats missing; boats being blown off the sailing area or serious injury at sea or on the beach, then outside assistance will be summoned by the RO or other responsible person ashore (in accordance with Part 6: Major Incident Plan).



Part 4: Safety boats

Ensuring Competence of Safety Boat Helms

- 4.1 The RYA advises clubs that safety boat helms should be appropriately trained through a recognised powerboat qualification or a club-based training programme. The Club will operate an accreditation scheme whereby safety boat helms will, based on an assessment of their competence and their experience at Sidmouth, be accredited as Level 1, 2 or 3.
- 4.2 Accredited helms are authorised to use the Club safety boats as follows:
 - a. Level 3 helms are authorised to helm a safety boat and to supervise Level 1 and 2 helms in all conditions when sailing takes place.
 - b. Level 2 helms are authorised to helm a boat in RMC 'green' and 'amber' conditions (but not category 'red') and supervise Level 1 helms in 'green' conditions.
 - c. Level 1 helms will have undertaken training and be gaining experience. They are authorised to helm in risk category 'green' only.
- 4.3 The Sailing Committee will maintain an up to date list of all accredited helms and will be responsible for accrediting new safety boat helms.

Safety Boat Provision and Operation

- 4.4 Members intending to sail will be responsible for taking the safety boats and equipment to the beach.
- 4.5 For the purposes of this policy, 'safety boat' means a serviceable RIB with competent helm and crew, radios (primary and spare hand-held) and all other prescribed safety equipment.
- 4.6 All club sailing activities will be supported with adequate safety cover. The necessary level of cover depends on the prevailing and forecast weather and sea state, the number of dinghies going afloat and the competence and experience of the sailors and safety boat helms and crews. The following criteria apply:
 - a. Two or more safety boats will be used if the risk of multiple simultaneous incidents requiring the attendance of a safety boat is assessed as significant, or if the RMC is 'red'.
 - b. Two or more safety boats should be used if there are enough suitably accredited people to crew a second safety boat. This may be reduced to one in consultation with the senior safety boat helm, giving due consideration to the weather conditions and sea state.
 - c. There shall be at least one safety boat afloat before launching any dinghies, and it will remain afloat until the last dinghy is ashore.
- 4.7 A safety boat may be nominated to undertake race management tasks. All such tasks shall be abandoned at the first indication an incident has occurred.
- 4.8 It is acceptable, following confirmation that no crew is available, that a second or third RIB may go afloat with only a helm, provided the helm is Level 2 or 3.
- 4.9 Members under the age of 16 will not take part in any manual handling of RIBs ashore. Members under the age of 18 will not use the trailer winches.
- 4.10 The method of recovery of RIBs shall be at the discretion of the helm, who shall take into account the safety of those in the vicinity of the landing area. The helm should consult with a responsible person on the beach who is in possession of a radio. The following points apply:
 - a. The helm will declare their intention to approach at low or high speed and will if necessary direct the placement of weighs; the preference should be to approach at low speed.
 - b. For all landings at low speed, shore-helpers may be at the water's edge ready to acquire the



bow rope.

c. For landings at high speed:

- i. The helm will not approach, or will break off their approach to the beach if helpers are on or close to the line of approach or likely to be affected by flying debris.
 - ii. Weights shall not be thrown under the approaching boat, except by experienced members over the age of 18 if it is necessary to ensure the safety of the boat.
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Part 5: Use of the Winch

- 5.1 The Club will run an accreditation scheme whereby members will be trained in the safe use of the winch. Members will be trained and assessed as competent by a nominated member of the Sailing Committee. Only members assessed as competent shall use the winch.
- 5.2 The Sailing Committee will maintain an up to date list of competent winch operators. Winch operators and assistants shall operate in accordance with the procedures at Error: Reference source not found



Part 6: Major Incident Plan

Introduction

- 6.1 The Club's Risk Assessment has been prepared to establish effective control measures that mitigate the degree of risk implied by the Club's activities. The control measures will enhance the safety of members and guests in foreseeable situations. This section describes how the Club will deal with situations of an extreme nature that could lead to actual or potential injury to one or more persons involved in organised activities.
- 6.2 Guidance on handling emergencies and major incidents shall be held in Race Control and be readily available to the RO or responsible person ashore.

Emergencies & Major Incidents

- 6.3 The following are incidents that could lead to a major casualty situation; the list is not exhaustive, and the intention of this plan is to introduce systems that will seek to effectively control both those listed and the unforeseen:
 - a. Multiple capsize or stranding where self-rescue or rescue by club safety boats would result in prolonged exposure to hazard e.g. multiple capsize or lee shore stranding in strong tidal conditions, early or late season cold water exposure.
 - b. Collision with powered craft and serious damage to several boats.
 - c. Loss of one or more persons overboard in extreme weather conditions.
 - d. Medical emergency in poor weather.
 - e. Multiple physical injury.
 - f. Loss to visual contact with a dinghy or crew.
 - g. Craft or crew not accounted for when tallies are checked.

Action Plan

- 6.4 Immediate Action. Rapid response by the safety boat helm, RO and instructors during the initial stages of any incident will mitigate the potential for additional harm to individuals. The following action is to be initiated at any time when the safety boat helm or RO considers that a situation exists that may lead to death or serious injury, or when such a situation has already occurred:
 - a. A safety boat helm will take control of the incident on the water.
 - b. The alarm will be raised by VHF communication with person in charge (instructor or RO), the launching of distress flares and attempting to communicate with the emergency services using VHF CH16 or the emergency mobile phone located in the race office.
 - c. If communications can be established immediately, the location and extent of the incident should be passed to the emergency services; emphasis should be placed on the number of potential casualties and the proposed location at which the rescue teams should await casualty delivery. The emergency landing point will be the beach opposite the club house unless directed otherwise.
 - d. Club officials and organisers not involved in the incident should take steps to coordinate all boats that have not been affected and move them in close company to a place of safety. If appropriate, instructor-controlled boats may assist in the rescue operation but only if the lives of those on board are not endangered.
 - e. Safety boats will carry out rescue operations, with priority being given to those in greatest danger. Individuals who are in the water but not in immediate danger will be dealt with as soon as those in most need have received attention.



- f. Under no circumstances will children or crews be left in the water unattended. If the safety boat is unable to offer immediate assistance a responsible person is to remain in the water with them until assistance can be given.
- 6.5 **Co-ordination.** The following actions shall be taken in order that all persons can be accounted for:
- a. When the emergency services arrive on scene the safety boat helm will make contact immediately and explain the current situation and extent and disposition of any casualties.
 - b. The RO or person in control at the sailing club will ensure that a list of all persons involved is available and then be prepared to assist both the safety boat helm and the emergency services to account for all those involved in the incident.
 - c. An Officer of the Club or person in control at the sailing club will coordinate all requests for information from families and the media. Next of kin will be provided with details in respect of their own children only and are to be told their location; caution should be exercised in the release of any personal information. No information other than the overall details of the incident shall be given to the media; all requests for information will be passed to the emergency services.
 - d. When the situation has stabilised, the Club will inform all families of the incident and advise them to proceed to the Club to meet their relatives when they return.
- 6.6 **Post-incident.** When all persons involved are accounted for and casualties evacuated by the emergency services, the remaining craft will return to the Club with all remaining persons. All persons will be taken to the main function room and accounted for before being allowed to leave the premises.
- 6.7 **Summary.** The aim of this plan is to have procedures in place that will be implemented in the event of extreme situations. The Club will aim to ensure its effectiveness by implementing a regime of briefings for RO, safety boat helms and others involved in managing activities and maintain their competence in all areas of emergency control.

Annex A: Risk Management Categories (RMCs)

Category:	Green	Amber	Red	Black
Conditions:	Sea: smooth ≤ 0.5 m Wind: gentle F0-F3 Visibility: moderate ≥ 3 mi If any of the above are not met, consider amber	Sea: slight ≤ 1.25 m Wind: moderate F3-F4 Visibility: moderate ≥ 3 mi If any of the above are not met, consider red	Sea: moderate ≤ 2.5 m Wind: fresh F4-F5 Visibility: poor ≥ 1 mi If any of the above are not met, consider black	Sea: rough > 2.5 m or Wind: strong > F6 or Visibility: v. poor < 1 mi
Who sails:	Beginners and above	Intermediate and above	Experienced helms only (adult and junior)	No-one
Safety boat helms:	Level 2 or 3 Level 1 supervised by Level 2 or 3	Level 2 or 3 Level 1 supervised by Level 3	Level 3 Level 1 or 2 supervised by Level 3	No-one
Launching:	Safety boats first, then beginners.	Safety boats first, then intermediates.	Safety boats first.	No-one
Landing:	Either club beach.	Most protected club beach.	Most protected club beach or Clifton beach. Safety boat crews and race officer or shore contact to decide on preferred option.	

Guide to Visibility

	5 miles	2 miles	1 mile
East:	Beer Head	Weston Mouth	Salcombe Hill
West:	Ottertton Pt.	Big Picket	Peak Hill

Beaufort Scale

	<i>calm</i>	<i>light air</i>	<i>light brz.</i>	<i>gentle</i>	<i>moderate</i>	<i>fresh</i>	<i>strong</i>
Force:	F0	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Knots:	0	1-3	4-6	7-10	11-16	17-21	22-27
MPH:	0	1-3	4-7	8-11	12-18	19-24	25-31



Annex B: Briefing for Club Sailing

1. The purpose of the race briefing is to support safe sailing and improve communication. The information below sets out a template for the briefing.
2. Prior to the briefing the RO will determine the likely course to be sailed, seeking advice if necessary.
3. The briefing will take place at the entrance of the Boat Store 20 minutes before the scheduled race start time.
4. The briefing is compulsory for safety boat crews and competitors under 18; all other competitors are encouraged to attend the briefing.
5. The RO will lead the briefing.
6. The key points to be briefed are:
 - a. Welcome and introduction of new members or guests.
 - b. The Risk Assessment for the session and announce the Risk Management Category and any concerns arising from that.
 - c. Nominate experienced sailors to check the rigging of any boats being used by novices or inexperienced juniors.
 - d. Describe the intended course (drawn on the whiteboard) to both the competitors and safety boat crews.
 - e. Please help with the safety boats and then each other's boats both when going afloat and when coming ashore.
 - f. With the guidance of the senior safety boat helm, state whether the tide height or sea conditions have any effect on the urgency of launching or recovery of RIBs.
 - g. Remind everyone: the last one out of the changing room mops the floor.
 - h. On Wednesdays ascertain the numbers intending to stay for food.
 - i. Invite participants to respond with questions.



Annex C: Procedures to be Followed for the Safe Use of the Winch

1. **Note:** If at any stage there is cause for concern regarding the safety of any piece of equipment or in respect of members of the general public, the use of the winch must be stopped until the problem is rectified.
2. **If in doubt: stop.**
3. The winch operator must have two responsible assistants.
4. Winch operators and assistants must wear fluorescent jackets.
5. Operator and assistant independently to check fuel, operating controls, winch alignment and attachment to anchor point with shackle and pulley block condition and alignment.
6. Position safety rope and assistant to keep public away from winch cable.
7. Inspect rope as it is pulled out and ensure that it does not overrun and recoil onto drum in wrong direction.
8. Ensure rope passes through pulley block correctly.
9. Place one assistant at top of ramp to keep people clear of rope.
10. Assistant on the beach with hook is to be in control of attaching cable to boat and winching operation.
11. If there is no clear view between the winch and beach, assistant at top of ramp to relay messages.
12. Winch operator to start winch, take up excessive slack.
13. Winch operator to signal to beach that you are ready, via ramp assistant if needed.
14. Winch operator to await signal to start winching. Acknowledge response and start winching. Watch out for people stepping over the rope or approaching the winch. Remain alert: **do not be distracted.**
15. Winch operator to respond to signals from the beach. Acknowledge.

Remember: if in doubt: stop.

Recognised signals

- **Stop:** raised arm with stationary, open hand.
- **Start winching:** circular motion above head with pointed finger.
- **Acknowledge:** extended arm with thumb raised.