

# **RYA MAJOR YOUTH & JUNIOR EVENT SAFETY STANDARD OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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## 1. Introduction

The RYA has a clear responsibility for the safety of children competing within RYA-sponsored events. A child is defined as being any person under the age of 18.

This document sets out the procedures to be used as the basis for conducting the Safety Cover in order to reduce the inherent risks associated with racing to a currently socially acceptable level. The RYA should ensure that this level is reviewed regularly.

## 2. Objectives

The Objectives of the Safety Fleet is to provide efficient, competent safety cover at the event to allow competitors and family maximum enjoyment with minimum concern for the safety of the sailors and boats.

## 3. Overall Organisational Structure

The safety of all participants is the responsibility of the Event Director and delegated to the Course Race Officers from the time the first participant is permitted to go on the water until the time that all the competitors are off the water and have been accounted for.

The Event Director and CROs have absolute authority to employ all the resources available to them as they see fit, and to direct the work of all those assisting.

In discharging this responsibility, the Event Director should appoint an Event Safety Officer ("ESO"). The ESO will formulate policy and procedures for the event.

The ESO should appoint separate Course Safety Leaders ("CSL").

Normally, the ESO may not also be a CSL or perform any other role within the Safety Fleet.

The ESO should manage Beachmaster, the Motherships and any unofficial support boats. The CROs should liaise with the mark layers, jury boats and selector boats.

The Safety Fleet will consist of dedicated Safety Boats. At the request of the ESO to either the Event Director, or to a CRO, the mark layers, pin end boats and jury boats may be brought into the Safety Fleet. They should then operate under the direction of the ESO, or the CSL for one fleet, until the need passes, where after, they should be released back to the CRO.

Each CRO will have operational responsibility for the safety of competitors on their course. The CRO should work with the CSL to communicate the safety cover plan with their race and safety team.

Each CRO and CSL should define and manage how cover should be handled on each course and should manage the movement of their competitors from shore to the course area.

The ESO and CSLs will host a safety briefing for all the Safety Fleet drivers and crews at the beginning of the event. They should also attend the competitors briefing and give the

competitors a safety briefing. The ESO should attend the daily Race Management briefing and should thereafter brief the Safety Fleet before sailing to ensure adequate communication of weather data, daily organisational plans, etc. The ESO should also brief the Motherships as to their role – particularly with regard to retiring competitors.

The ESO is responsible for the overall management of the Safety Fleet both on and off the water. This should include delivering the organisational structure, adherence to this document, and management of the Safety Fleet infrastructure (e.g. boat allocation, boat resourcing, refueling, mooring, etc.).

All Safety Boats and all other Official Boats should tally daily with the ESO and the ESO should keep a schedule of the names of all safety crew afloat. The CSLs or Bridge may perform a radio check with each boat in their fleet as it leaves the shore. The CSL should decide when there is sufficient safety cover his/her course and then advise ESO.

The CRO should advise the ESO when he is ready for the competitors to be launched. If the ESO is satisfied that there is sufficient safety cover, he should advise the Beachmaster and CSL's that the launch flag may be hoisted and the competitors may leave the shore after the Beachmaster has tallied them out. The CSLs should then manage their respective fleets for that day's sailing from launch to return ashore at the end of the day.

At the end of the day, the CSL's should escort their fleet ashore. The Beachmaster should tally the fleet in and inform the CSL when the whole fleet has been accounted for. The CSL should inform the ESO when the fleet is ashore. The ESO should communicate with the Beachmaster and release each Safety Fleet when all that fleet's competitors are safely tallied ashore. No Safety Boat may go ashore until released by the ESO.

#### **4. Radio Callsigns**

The ESO should allocate callsigns to each Safety Boat, Medic Boat, Mothership and other safety related individuals. The Event Director should allocate call signs to race committee boats (committee boats, mark layers, pin boat, jury boat etc).

The ESO should produce a comprehensive list of boats and their call signs that should be given to each member of the Safety Fleet. This list should include mobile telephone numbers.

#### **5. Radio Procedures**

The Event Director should allocate radio channels for each course which should be used by the Race and Safety Teams for that course. The Beachmaster should operate on another channel ("the Safety Channel") which should also be used by all the course Race and Safety Teams, Event Director and ESO, in the event that either the Event Director or ESO declare a fleet wide emergency covering all the courses. The CROs and CSLs should monitor both the Safety Channel and their course's own channel.

The Event Director and ESO should be contactable via the Safety Channel, but should call up the CROs and CSLs on their appropriate course channels. The Event Director, ESO, CROs and CSLs should also have mobile telephones.

The Motherships and support boats should monitor and be contactable on the Safety Channel. (Note: If allocated to a course, they should monitor the course channel as well).

**NB. Radio transmissions should be kept to a minimum to prevent clutter.**

## 6. Safety Boat Identification

All Safety Boats should carry unique identification flags that should be issued by the ESO. They must be returned to the ESO at the end of the event. The ESO should produce a schedule of flags that should be included.

## 7. Positions of Safety Boats during a Race

Each Safety Boat should be allocated a position on the course that they should assume for the duration of the race. These positions should be allocated in advance but can be modified by the CSL as necessary.

## 8. Personnel and Equipment

All Safety Boats are to have a minimum of two competent adults aboard, one of whom should be dressed to enter the water to aid a rescue. There will be no maximum number of crew but Safety Boats should not be overloaded with crew and should be able to accommodate a minimum of 3 additional sailors. It should be unusual for a Safety Boat to have more than three crew members. The ESO may withdraw a Safety Boat from the Safety Fleet if he feels that it is inappropriately crewed.

It is not normal to require on-the-water medical support to a standard above that of First Aider. However, the ESO should attempt to have a Doctor or trained Medic at the event who can be used for initial rapid response in the event of a medical emergency.

### **Essential Equipment which should be carried by all Safety Boats:**

1. Adequate fuel for approx. 9 hours on the water use.
2. Fully functional VHF radio which should operate for 9 hours (this may require spare batteries).
3. A sound generator (whistle or fog horn).
4. Compass
5. Anchor and warp suitable for the race area.
6. Sharp knife, easily accessible.
7. Kill cord, which must be used by the driver at all times.
8. Personal buoyancy for the crew, to be worn at all times.
9. Safety Tape to identify abandoned boats (to be issued by the ESO).
10. Paddles.
11. Drinking Water.
12. Tow rope (preferably made of floating line).

**Desirable Equipment, which should be carried by at least two Safety Boats on each course:**

1. Wire Cutters, to cut away rigging and trapeze wires
2. Tool kit
3. Flares
4. GPS location equipment
5. Torch
6. First Aid Kit
7. Survival bag
8. Spare radios

The ESO may compile a list of equipment carried by each boat. Through the process of tallying each day, each Safety Boat may be asked to certify that it is complying with these equipment requirements.

## 9. Operational Guidelines

1. ESO should produce a schedule of briefings for Safety Fleet personnel and communicate this to the relevant attendees (Appendix 4).
2. ESO should tally all Safety Boats and ensure that safety cover is provided in a timely manner.
3. ESO may provide appropriate waypoints and bearings to the Safety Boats (Appendix 4). Additionally, each Safety Boat should take its own bearings and satisfy itself that it can independently navigate back to the launch area in the event of poor visibility.
4. ESO may arrange for a radio check to be performed with each boat as it leaves the shore. He will decide when there is sufficient safety cover for each course and then advise each CSL, who should then manage his fleet for that day's sailing.
5. The CRO should advise the ESO when he is ready for the competitors to be launched. If the ESO is satisfied that there is sufficient safety cover, he should advise the Beachmaster and CSLs that the launch flag may be hoisted and the competitors may leave the shore.
6. The Beachmaster should tally all of the competitors afloat and confirms the number of boats afloat in each Fleet and informs ESO, Bridge and CSLs. **This is critical to the safety of the fleet.**
7. The Safety Fleet's objective is to have a Safety Boat on station beside a capsized or otherwise distressed boat within 3 minutes of the incident occurring.
8. All retirements from racing are to be notified to the CSLs and Bridge who should keep a record and inform the CRO.
9. Once Beachmaster has informed ESO that all boats are safely ashore, ESO should inform the Safety Fleet that it can stand down.
10. If the Beachmaster finds that one or more boats are missing, he is to inform the ESO immediately. ESO should direct a number of Safety Boats back to the Race Area to start a search. Meanwhile, Beachmaster should urgently investigate the missing individuals – if they are not accounted for the ESO should be informed immediately and, at this point, should probably declare an Emergency Situation.

## 10. Procedure to get boats to the race area

One of four methods should typically be used:

1. Hold the boats in separate fleets and then proceed as a controlled group with Safety Boats spread throughout the group.
2. Hold the boats in manageable groups of boats (10-15 boats) and then proceed in groups with a Safety Boat per group.
3. Provide a corridor down which the boats sail with Safety Boats spread out along the corridor.
4. In a particularly safe area and in safe conditions, simply provide safety cover spread out over the route that the boats sail to the race area.

The ESO should confirm the method to be used at the Daily Safety Fleet Briefing.

## 11. Procedure to get boats back to the shore base

One of four methods should typically be used:

1. Hold the boats in separate fleets and then proceed as a controlled group with Safety Boats spread throughout the group.
2. Hold the Boats in manageable groups of boats (10-15 boats) and then proceed in groups with a Safety Boat per group.
3. Hold the Boats at, but clear of, the Finish Area and, when ready, provide a corridor down which the Boats sail with Safety Boats spread out along the corridor.
4. In a particularly safe area and in safe conditions, simply provide safety cover spread out over the route that the Boats sail from the race area to the Club.

The ESO should confirm the method to be used to the CRO and CSL for each fleet.

## 12. Procedure for retiring boats

1. Retiring Boat informs a Safety Boat and/or proceeds to a Mothership, informs the Mothership of her intentions and stays in the vicinity of the Mothership or boards the Mothership. If Boat informs a Safety Boat, the Safety Boat decides whether to remove the sailor from the Boat. If the sailor is removed, the Boat must be taken to a Mothership or attached to a specially laid buoy. Leave the Boat with a plastic tape tied to the pintles. If the sailor needs to receive attention ashore, again leave the Boat with plastic tape tied to the pintles. The Safety Boat or Mothership must immediately inform the CSL or Bridge that the Boat is retiring, confirm its location and that of its crew and identify it by sail number.
2. CSL or Bridge informs Course CRO.
3. If a group of retirees is formed and they wish to proceed ashore, the Mothership is to request the CSL to provide cover to escort the group ashore.
4. If conditions permit and a Safety Boat can be freed from its duties to conduct the escort, the group is escorted ashore, handed over to the Beachmaster who confirms to

CSL and ESO that they have been accounted for. If they are not accounted for, CSL is to inform ESO immediately and ESO should deploy boats to commence a search.

**NB. Under no circumstances are Boats to proceed ashore unescorted!**

### 13. Guidelines for use when fog descends

1. If fog arrives prior to the start of a race – Event Director or CRO and ESO agree to postpone racing and ESO requests the Safety Fleet to implement Fog Guidelines. Fleets are informed by CSLs and Safety Boats to stay close to the Committee Boat and to take tows.
2. If fog arrives during a race – Event Director or CRO and ESO agree to shorten or abandon racing and ESO requests the Safety Fleet to implement Fog Guidelines. Fleets are informed by the Safety Boats on each leg of the course to stop, stay close together and to take tows. If a competitor cannot see a Safety Boat, they are to STOP, stay with any other boats that they can see and use a whistle to attract attention.
3. Safety Fleet gathers competitors together and take in tow. Each Safety Boat should need to secure up to 10 competitors. Safety Fleet stays in the vicinity of the Committee Boat. When Safety Boat has a full complement of competitors, the Safety Boat reports the sail numbers of Boats on tow to the CSL and ESO.
4. The CSL calculates the total number of Boats in tow and informs ESO. If the total number does not equal the total of the boats that went afloat, ESO should instruct for a search to commence.
5. When all Boats are accounted for, ESO should ask the CSLs to tow the boats back to the base.
6. Boats should be tallied ashore as normal.

**NB. Under no circumstances are Boats to proceed ashore unescorted.**

### 14. Guidelines for use when strong winds arrive

1. If strong winds arrive prior to the start of a race – Event Director or CRO and ESO agree to postpone racing and ESO requests CSLs to implement Strong Wind Guidelines. Fleets are informed by CSLs and Safety Boats to stay close to the RIBs and to heave to.
2. If strong winds arrive during a race – Event Director or CRO and ESO agree to shorten or abandon racing and ESO requests Safety Fleet to implement Strong Wind Guidelines. Fleets are informed by the Safety Boats on each leg of the course to stop, stay close together, to stay close to the RIBs and to heave to.
3. Safety Fleet gather competitors together in groups and once sensible groups are formed, CSLs should request each Safety Boat to get the competitors to safely sail to the vicinity of the committee boat. Each Safety Boat should be asked to escort approximately 10 competitors in a group. Whilst groups are being formed, the Safety Fleet must stay in the vicinity of the Committee Boat.
4. In the event of a capsize, the group should stop until the boat is righted and ready to sail again.

5. Once all the competitors are safely accounted for the CSLs should inform the ESO and the ESO should give instructions to the CSL for the competitors to be escorted ashore or to remain near their committee boat.
6. Once ashore, competitors should be tallied ashore as normal.

**NB. Under no circumstances are Boats to proceed ashore unescorted.**

## 15. Emergency guidelines

In the event of an emergency occurring (injury to a sailor or anyone at sea supporting the event, structural damage endangering the safety of a boat in the event, etc.), the first boat on the scene should inform the CSL who should immediately assess the situation, call appropriate support to the scene, assist in stabilizing it and, if appropriate, inform the ESO, who should decide whether to declare an Emergency Situation on the radio.

Only the minimum numbers of boats are to remain involved with the Emergency, all other Safety Boats are to continue to provide safety cover for the fleets in the normal manner.

ESO should, if appropriate, request the Emergency Services to attend. If necessary, the casualty should be taken ashore in an appropriate boat to the Emergency Drop off point to meet up with the Emergency Services.

ESO should control the situation until it is handed over to the appropriate authority.

If the situation is considered by ESO to be hazardous to the rest of the fleets, ESO should request that the CRO shortens or abandons racing. In this event, after the fleets have gathered, they should be instructed to make their way ashore under the control of the CSLs - both the Beachmaster and the ESO should be kept fully informed by the CSLs of progress.

An Emergency is only declared closed when the situation has been resolved, the danger has been removed, the damaged boat made safe or the casualty evacuated to the safety of the shore.

**The Safety Fleet is only able to stand down and to return ashore when the Beachmaster has confirmed that all boats and crews are safely ashore and permission to stand down is granted by ESO.**