The UK RS Feva Class Association

Major Event
Safety Standard Operating Policy and Procedures

Approved	
Version	1.0

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References:

RYA Major Youth Event Safety Standard Operating Policy and Procedures – v8.2

Revision History

Version	Revision Date	Summary Of Changes
1.0	January 2015	First published version (Barry Jobson)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is set out best practice guidelines for the RS Feva UK Class Association for use at events where the class is part of the Organising Authority as defined in a Notice of Race and or Sailing Instructions.

RRS Rule 1 and 4 as well as standard safety sailing Instructions confirm that a boat accepts that it is entirely responsible for her own safety. Nevertheless, these operating procedures have been developed as guidelines for good practice in the overall management of the safety of all those competing in RS Feva UK Class Association major events where most of the competitors are under 18 years of age.

2. Scope & Limitations

This document does not replace or supersede a host clubs specific standard safety policy or legal health and safety requirements for organization of events on behalf of the RS Feva UK Class Association. The document does however set out a level of expectation by the RS Feva UK Class Association as to minimum requirements.

Contained within this document are procedures which can be used as the basis for managing the Safety resources in order to reduce the inherent risks associated with sailboat racing to a level as low as reasonably practical (ALARP).

3. Objectives of the Safety Fleet

The objective of the Safety Fleet is to provide efficient, competent safety cover at the event to allow competitors and all those involved maximum enjoyment whilst minimizing the risks to the safety of the sailors.

5. Overall Organisational Structure

- This structure is designed for the normal single course events at Grand prix and other national RS Feva events. Where multiple courses are required at an event reference should be made to the current version of the equivalent RYA policy which is considered to be the best practice model for such large events.

- Overall safety management at an RS Feva event is the responsibility of the host club Event Director / Principal Race Officer (PRO) with the support of the RS Feva UK Class Association Safety Officer. The host club Event Director / Principal Race Officer shall be responsible for overall safety 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/or PRO 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 host club Event Director should undertake the role of, or appoint an Event Safety Officer (ESO) for the preparation of Risk Assessment and Safety Plan for the event.

  A safety plan should consist of procedures for the following items of information;
  - Towing arrangements to and from the course area
  - Safety boat positioning and numbering on the course area including specified roles for each boat
  - Transitioning to and from the course area
  - Boats returning to shore whilst racing is continuing
  - Abandoning boats
  - Requirements for briefings, both daily and prior to the event
  - Safety boat allocation and resourcing
  - Emergency Action plan for the event
  - Identify race management and safety communication channels
  - Any tallying requirements
  - Medical cover for both on water and ashore
  - Event specific guidelines for when fog descends
  - Competitor list for each safety crew and any specific medical conditions
  - Identify any emergency drop off points
  - Event and Daily Risk Assessment

- The Event Safety Officer (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, re-fueling, mooring, etc.).

- The RS Feva UK Class Association would encourage the Event Director / organising body to utilise safety crew and helms that are familiar with recovering Fevas whenever possible. Additional class resources can be identified by the RS Feva UK Class Association prior to the event to undertake these roles.

- The ESO is responsible for defining the location of the Event Emergency Drop-off point.
    - The Event Emergency Drop-off Point shall be used for any emergency situation where the rapid recovery to the shore of any competitor or other individual who has been afloat is necessary, and where medical assistance and access may be required.

- The ESO would normally set up a VHF Radio Control Base (Bridge), often ashore when there are a number of radio channels to monitor. This location should have a facility for a Base radio to monitor all calls on each channel and keep a record of all important information. Instructions from the ED/PRO and ESO are often passed through bridge to ensure that all stations can hear and the information is correctly logged. Bridge may also control shore based flag signals and launching through the beach master (where required) who may be on a separate channel to the safety fleets.

- Where an ESO is not appointed the operational roles shall be divided between the Event Director / PRO / CSL and Bridge / Beach master. For most Feva events it would be envisaged that Bridge & Beach Master would be a combined role. For clarity the roles and responsibilities of Event Safety Officer, Bridge and Beach Master are separated within the context of this document.

- The RS Feva UK Class Association Safety Officer will generally be afloat at major events and will be able to advise the ESO/PRO on specific RS Feva policy requirements and characteristics of the fleet. When present the Class Safety Officer will be able to take on the role of CSL at the request of the ESO, this should be arranged in advance by the Event Director.

- On the water the CSL should liaise with Beach master / Bridge, mark layers, jury boats, selector boats and any authorised support boats on their course. It is the CSL's responsibility to decide where authorised support boats should be located. The CSL shall also coordinate with the PRO / Event Director when required.

- The Safety Fleet will consist of dedicated Safety Boats and any authorised support boats. At the request of the CSL to the Event Director / PRO, 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 CSL until the need passes, where after they should be released back to the PRO.

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

- The PRO 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 Event Director / PRO and CSL 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 / CSL 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..

- All Safety Boats and all other Official Boats should tally daily via VHF with Bridge / CSL. A schedule of the names of all safety crew afloat should be produced and maintained usually through the event office. The CSL 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 and then advise CRO/ESO/Bridge and ask for their fleet to be launched once the Event Director & PRO has given permission.

- Bridge/ESO should then advise that the launch flag is displayed and the competitors may leave the shore after the Beachmaster has tallied them out where Tallying is being used. The Beachmaster should inform via Bridge to the CSL and CRO, the number of tallied out competitors including number of sailors afloat for their course for that day.The CSL should then manage the fleet for that day's sailing from launch to return ashore at the end of the day.

- Where a competitor has not tallied out to go afloat at the beginning of the day and has failed to inform race management of their intention to not take part, all necessary steps shall be taken to confirm that those competitors have not gone afloat. This should include on-site announcements, checking ashore to identify any boats or trailers and where necessary phone calls to the sailors or their designated contacts.

- At the end of the day, the CSL should escort their fleet ashore. Where Tallying is being used the Beach master should tally the fleet in and inform Bridge when the whole fleet has been accounted for. The CSL should inform the ESO / Event Director or PRO usually via Bridge when the fleet is ashore. The ESO / Event Director or PRO should communicate with Bridge and release each Safety Fleet when they are no longer needed. No Safety Boat may go ashore until released by the CSL after confirmation to stand down by the Event Director / PRO.

- Tallying should always be used at events on the sea or estuaries and at any event where the race area can not be fully observed from shore. Tallying would not normally be used at UK inland events but where there is a likelihood of fog or mist tallying should be undertaken.

5. Safety Fleet Size

The RS Feva UK Class Association prides itself on providing a high quality safety fleet.

For all racing events, whether organised by the Class Association, or organised in conjunction with another organising authority, we recommend a minimum Safety Boat / Competitor ratio of 1 Safety Boat per 10 competing boats. This equates to 1:20 sailors, the maximum allowed by the RYA guidelines. This recommended Safety Fleet size ensures that:

- there are adequate Safety Boats available to assist specific competitors in difficulty, whilst racing can continue, covered by the bulk of the Safety Fleet;
- there are Safety Boats that can be deployed to escort retiring competitors ashore, without impact to ongoing racing;
- with the addition of Mark Layer RIB's and Jury RIB, there are adequate Safety Boats to tow the fleet ashore.

The Safety Fleet does not, under any normal circumstance, include Mark Layers, Jury Boats or other RIB's involved in Race Management, whose responsibility is to support the Race Team in delivering racing.

Where very light winds are anticipated it is considered reasonable to include one of the race management boats as a safety boat (normally this would be the pin-laying boat) however this should not be considered if there is any likelihood of stronger winds arriving during the event.

As stated above the ratio of 1:10 is considered as the lowest normally acceptable. Where there is a possibility of strong winds every endeavour should be made in advance of the event to improve on this ratio.

6. Radio Call Signs

The Event Safety Officer should allocate call-signs to each Safety Boat, Medic Boat, and other safety related individuals as well as to race committee boats (committee boats, mark layers, pin boat, jury boat etc) and should produce a comprehensive list of boats and their call signs and identification flags that should be given to each member of the Safety Fleet.

7. Radio Procedures

The Event Director should allocate radio channels for each course which should be used by the Race and Safety Teams.

- If there is a separate Safety Channel this should 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 PRO and CSL should monitor both the Safety Channel and Race Management Channel.

- Bridge should monitor all channels and should have at least one radio operator.

- The Beach master should be in communication with Bridge and may monitor the fleet or safety channels and be able to communicate directly with any safety boat coming into the launching area.

- The Event Director and ESO should be contactable via the Safety Channel, but can call up the PRO and CSL on their Race Management channel. The Event Director/PRO, ESO, CSL and Beachmaster should also have mobile telephones.

- The support boats should monitor and be contactable on the Safety Channel.

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

8. Safety Boat Identification

All Safety Boats should carry unique identification flags where appropriate. They must be returned to the Event Office at the end of the event.

9. Positions of Safety Boats during Racing

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.

10. Personnel and Equipment

All Safety Boats should 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 5 additional sailors.

- It would be unusual for a Safety Boat to have more than three crew members. The ESO / CSL 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 paramedic at the event, who can be used for initial rapid response in the event of a medical emergency.

10.1 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, preferably serrated and easily accessible;
7. Kill cord and spare, which must be used by the driver at all times when underway;
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 and bailer;
11. Drinking Water;
12. Waterproof first aid kit and survival bag or thermal protective aid;
13. Distress Flares: 2 orange smoke and 2 pinpoint red or 2 day/night flares. (not on inland waters)
14. Tow rope.

10.2 Desirable Equipment, which should be carried by at least one Safety Boat:

1. Wire Cutters, to cut away rigging and trapeze wires;
2. Tool kit;
3. GPS location equipment; (not required in inland waters)
4. Torch;
5. Spare radios;

11. Operational Guidelines (Safety Boats)

- ESO should produce a schedule of briefings for Safety Fleet personnel and communicate this to the relevant attendees.

- All safety briefings should as a minimum include roll call of safety crews, weather and navigation information, location of emergency procedures and drop off points, any relevant competitor specific information i.e., experience, known issues etc. All safety crews must also be reminded to ensure all safety boats are sea worthy and carry the required equipment.

- When “Safety Boat” Tallying is in use the ESO should ensure that all Safety Boats are tallied out and back and ensure that safety cover is provided in a timely manner.

- ESO may provide appropriate waypoints and bearings to the Safety Boats. 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.

- ESO may arrange for a radio check to be performed with each boat as it leaves the shore. The CSL will decide when there is sufficient safety cover for his fleet to be launched and then advise Bridge, and will then manage his fleet for that day’s sailing.

- The PRO should advise Bridge when he is ready for the competitors to be launched. Once the Event Director/PRO has given permission to launch the fleets, if Bridge is satisfied that there is sufficient safety cover, he should advise the Beach Master and CSL that the launch flag may be hoisted and the competitors may leave the shore.

- When competitor tallying is in use the Beach Master should tally all of the competitors afloat and then confirm the number of boats afloat in each Fleet and inform Bridge who then informs ESO and CSLs. **This is critical to the safety of the fleet.**

- All retirements from racing are to be notified to the CSL and Bridge who should keep a record and inform the PRO.

- Once Beach Master has informed Bridge that all boats are safely ashore, ESO should inform the Safety Fleet that it can stand down unless they are needed to help another fleet.

- If the Beach Master finds that one or more boats are missing, they are to inform Bridge immediately, who will immediately alert the ESO and CSL. ESO should direct a number of Safety Boats back to the Race Area to start a search. Meanwhile, Beach Master should urgently investigate the missing individuals – if they are not accounted for within a time period respective of the conditions at the time the ESO should be informed immediately and, at this point, should probably declare an Emergency Situation.

12. 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/CSL should confirm the method to be used at the Daily Safety Fleet Briefing.

13. 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 CSL should confirm the method to be used to the PRO for each fleet.

14. Procedures for retiring boats

- Retiring Boat informs a Safety Boat, the Safety Boat decides whether to remove the sailor(s) from the Boat:
    - If the sailor(s) is/are removed, the Boat should be tied up to a buoy if possible. 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 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 or tally number.

Note: Fevas may invert when abandoned or tied to a buoy therefore consideration should be made in laying the tie up point by the CLS to ensure sufficient water depth so as not to damage the mast!

- CSL or Bridge informs Course PRO;

- No sailor may be permitted to sail ashore without permission from the PRO/ESO or CSL. Should a sailor be sent ashore Bridge must be notified of their intention to return ashore and liaise with the Beach Master to confirm their safe arrival. If conditions permit a Safety Boat may be released from its duties to escort the sailor (s) ashore. A boat may be permitted to sail ashore without escort on inland waters where it is possible for the nearest safety boat to reach them easily. Where a boat is permitted to sail ashore unescorted their progress is to be monitored by the nearest safety boat and the CSL should clarify which this is and confirm that they are observing. Generally in such circumstances the safety plan should allow for a particular safety boat to have this additional duty.

- If any boat is not accounted for by the Beach Master then the ESO & CSL must be informed immediately and the ESO should deploy boats to commence a search.

NB. Under no circumstances are Boats to proceed ashore unescorted without permission from the ESO/CSL.

15. Guidelines for use when fog descends

1. If fog arrives prior to the start of a race (once the fleet have been released from the shore) – CRO and CSL agree to postpone racing and CSL shall direct the Safety Fleet to implement Fog Guidelines and advise Bridge that they have done so.

1. If fog arrives during a race –CRO and CSL to shorten or abandon racing and CSL directs the Safety Fleet to implement Fog Guidelines and advise Bridge that they have done so. Fleets are informed by the Safety Boats either at the finish or on each leg of the course to stop, stay close together near a known reference point such as a mark or safety boat. Safety Boats count competitor boats near them and report to CSL.
2. The CSL calculates the total number of Boats and informs Bridge. If the total number does not equal the total of the boats that went afloat, Bridge will inform the ESO & CSL so that a search can commence.
3. Boats are to be sent ashore in small groups keeping in sight of accompanying RIBs. RIBs to report to CSL the sail numbers or tallies of all boats that they are escorting to shore.
    2. If a boat capsizes all group stops whilst boat being righted.

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

16. Guidelines for use when strong winds arrive

1. If strong winds arrive prior to the start of a race –CRO and CSL agree to postpone racing and CSL requests Safety Fleet to implement Strong Wind Guidelines and shall advise ESO that they have done so. Fleets are informed by CSL and nearby Safety Boats to return to shore using one of the options set out in section 13.

2. If strong winds arrive during a race – CRO and CSL agree to shorten or abandon racing and CSL requests Safety Fleet to implement Strong Wind Guidelines and shall advise ESO that they have done so. Fleets are informed by the Safety Boats either at the finish or at a suitable mark from which returning to shore is easiest, to stay close together and proceed ashore by whichever method set out in section 13 is considered most appropriate. In circumstances where the distance to shore is considerable and the number of safety boats is inadequate to give adequate cover both on the course and along the route to shore it may be advisable to require boats finishing at the top of a fleet to sail in the start/ finish area until the majority of boats have finished and then release boats to sail ashore.

3. Safety Fleet should then implement the most appropriate Return to shore base options as per section 13. In most cases the progressive forming of a corridor by safety boats will be the most appropriate way of ensuring adequate safety cover.

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

17. 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 all stations using the code words "**CODE RED" and its location.**

- The safety or mark boats nearest to the "CODE RED" boat's location should immediately proceed to help. All other stations should minimize radio traffic. The CSL, who should immediately assess the situation, may 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.

- Any boat should, if absolutely essential, request the Emergency Services to attend, however this is best done by the ESO or CSL. If necessary, the casualty should be taken ashore in an appropriate boat to the Event Emergency Drop off point to meet up with the Emergency Services.

- ESO should take control the situation as soon as possible to allow the CSL to go back to managing his fleet. If appropriate he will make the situation safe then arrange recovery of the crew and boat or hand them over to the appropriate authority.

- If the situation is considered by ESO/CSL to be hazardous to the rest of the fleet, ESO/CSL should request that the PRO 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 CSL - both Bridge and the ESO should be kept fully informed by the CSL 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 CSL or ESO informs all stations that CODE RED is cleared.

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

18. Private Support and Coach Boats

At some RS Feva UK Class Association events there are private support and coach boats that provide assistance to specific sailors. These will be out on the water both during racing and at other times. They will often tow competitors to and from the race area and may provide additional safety cover for their sailors.

It is important to manage these boats so that they do not interfere with other sailors or the racing. It is best practice to have a Sailing Instruction that requires non-official boats to keep a long distance away from the race area otherwise sailors linked to that boat will be penalized.

It is essential that operators of private support and coach boats are effectively briefed on any emergency safety plans, agree a communication system and understand general good practice for the event. They may be asked to display appropriate flags and should be briefed on the proper location for them to operate between races.

If properly briefed and constituted private support boats can be brought into the tactical reserve to provide safety support in case of emergencies, which might allow racing to be run when otherwise it would not be possible.

At many events National squad coach boats provide a useful resource for the safety fleet and may form a part of the safety ratio. It is important that such boats are properly constituted, attend safety briefings and understand that they have an obligation to cover their designated role within the safety fleet. CSLs should aim to allow a degree of flexibility for such boats in their location on the race course as they will need to be in the finish area between races but nevertheless can perform a useful role during racing and when accompanying the fleet to or from shore