



Safety Boat Handbook

The purpose of this document is to provide club members and safety boat crew with information on the provision of safety cover during club race and sailing events.

For large events a specific Safety Plan may be published to augment these procedures, and a dedicated Safety Officer (SO) may be appointed to manage the Safety Plan and coordinate the safety boat activity.

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1. Safety boat operations – level of cover:

All club sailing activity shall be accompanied by the appropriate level of safety boat cover. There is a voluntary assumption of risk if members, singularly or collectively, decide to sail without the presence of safety boat cover.

The level of safety boat cover for any given event should be in accordance with that stipulated in the Club Health and Safety Policy Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) #10, extract as follows:

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE # 10 Safety Cover/Supervision
REF Rescue Cover/Supervision.

Purpose:

To provide club parameters for provision of adequate levels of safety cover during club racing events.

Decision to Participate:

In all cases it is the responsibility of the skipper of each boat to decide whether the conditions are suitable for his/her skill level and that of his/her crew.

The Officer of the Day (OOD) has the authority to postpone, cancel or abort racing if in his/her opinion the prevailing conditions warrant.

Controls - Senior Racing.

Ratio of rescue boats* to dinghies 1:9

* Mark Laying boats can count toward fulfilling required ratio.

Controls - Junior Racing

Ratio of rescue boats to dinghies (level 1 & 2) 1:6

(Level 3) 1:8

(Fun level) 1:10

2. Safety boat operations - general information:

1. During club race events the safety boats are under the direction of the Officer of the Day (OOD).
2. For other events e.g. Just Sailing activity or club outings, the event organiser and the safety boat helms should agree and designate a safety boat coordinator.
3. For large events a specific Safety Plan may be published to augment these procedures, and a dedicated Safety Officer (SO) may be appointed to coordinate the safety boats; this will be notified to the safety boat crews in advance.
4. The decision to race rests with the OOD who shall also be responsible for the management of safety on the water.
5. All safety boats must be crewed by 2 people, a helm who must have completed the ISA National Powerboat Certificate and a crew who is able to assist the helm.
6. Each safety boat crew should also be proficient in:
 - a) Communicating using a VHF radio.
 - b) Monitoring sailors during racing.

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- c) Helping sailors who have capsized or are experiencing difficulties while sailing.
- d) Boat righting and boat towing.
- 7. A safety briefing, chaired by the OOD or activity/outing organiser, and attended by the safety boat crews, should take place before each race day or activity/outing and it should cover:
 - a) The expected number of competitors and boat classes.
 - b) The level of safety boat cover available.
 - c) The weather forecast, wind direction and strength.
 - d) The expected sea state, tide, and visibility.
 - e) The radio channels to be used.
 - f) For club racing: the course orientation; and the number, length, and timing of races.
 - g) For Just Sailing activity or club outings: the nature of the activity or outing; safety boat coordination, and fleet monitoring.
- 8. Safety boat role allocation -
 - a) One safety boat should monitor the slip during launch and accompany the last sailors to launch to the course.
 - b) While prioritising safety cover, the OOD may assign other safety boats for mark laying in advance of racing.
 - c) The OOD should assign safety boats to designated locations to monitor the fleet during racing.
 - d) At the end of racing at least one safety boat should act as sweeper and accompany the last sailors to leave the race area to the slip.
- 9. Prior to launch safety boat crews must:
 - a) Wear a life jacket and appropriate clothing.
 - b) Attach the engine kill chord, and once on the water test the kill chord and wear it whenever the engine is in gear.
 - c) Check their boat is serviceable and equipped in accordance with Club SOP #7 – safety boat minimum equipment list (see section 6).
 - d) Check their radio battery charge is sufficient for event duration and conduct a radio check.
 - e) Check that they have the correct fuel tank for the boat. Fuel content must be sufficient for task plus 25% reserve. Minimum 75% level in the tank prior to launch.
- 10. Safety boats should be launched and recovered in accordance with Club SOP #8 – safety boat launch and recovery.

3. Safety boat operations - on the water:

- 1. The safety and welfare of sailors and the protection of “life and limb” are the primary roles of the safety boat personnel, while giving due cognisance to their own ability and safety.
- 2. The recovery of boats, sailing gear or any other equipment is secondary to sailor safety and welfare.
- 3. Safety boat crew should:
 - a) Do nothing that would endanger their own safety.
 - b) Recognise that safety incidents are dynamic and can change quickly.
 - c) Remain on the water throughout racing and accompany all sailors ashore after racing.

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- d) If necessary, call on additional assistance via the OOD or nearest safety boat – do not delay.
 - e) In the event of a threat to life, immediately escalate the incident and seek outside assistance by making a MAYDAY call on channel 16.
4. Immediately after all boats have launched safety boats should liaise with each other and the OOD to confirm the total number of boats and individual boat classes launched.
 5. At least one safety boat should monitor the last boats to launch and accompany them to the race area.
 6. Prior to racing starting safety boat crew should confirm with the OOD/Safety Officer where they should position their boats during the race for fleet monitoring.
 7. Safety boat crews should keep a constant watch on the fleet throughout the sailing event and be mindful that in stronger sailing winds it is usually the sailors from the middle to the back of the racing fleet that require most support.
 8. All capsizes must be attended to immediately and the wellbeing of the sailor(s) ascertained. Sailors from dinghies that have turned turtle must be checked to ensure they are clear of all impediments and above the water.
 9. If a boat is inverted (turtle) and the sailor is not visible safety crews should not delay intervening. The time taken for the safety boat to arrive alongside the capsized boat should have been sufficient for the sailor(s) to emerge from under the boat. It is essential when a sailor is not visible that the safety crew establish that the sailor is not trapped under the hull; this may involve righting the boat or, as a last resort, a safety boat crew member entering the water if they are competent to do so. If this is not possible further assistance must be sought immediately from the nearest safety boat or other sailors in the vicinity who may be able to enter the water.
 10. If the sailor is visible and in a position of safety after capsizing ascertain if he/she is ok. A sailor may wish to continue and prefer not to be given assistance as this would eliminate them from the race, however in circumstances where a sailor may be exhausted, excessively cold, injured or have damaged equipment, the safety boat crew, in conjunction with the OOD may decide to stand the sailor down from racing in the best interests of their safety and welfare. In such circumstances this should be clearly communicated to the sailor and appropriate assistance rendered to assist the sailor to shore.

If a boat is to be abandoned to bring a sailor ashore it should be marked or tagged to indicate to others that the crew is safe. This may be by means of ribbon, coloured tape, or coloured tie wraps attached in a prominent position. Whatever method used should be communicated to the OOD and the boats can be recovered at a later stage.
 11. If the sailor wishes to and can continue the safety boat crew should provide close supervision without interference until the sailor resumes sailing or subsequently asks for assistance. Safety boats should be mindful not to impede other competitors while monitoring a capsized sailor, however in an emergency the safety boat's activity takes priority.
 12. If the sailor does not wish to continue in the race but wishes to participate in a subsequent race the safety crew should inform the OOD to this effect.
 13. If the sailor needs assistance:
 - a) Be mindful not to make the final approach to them at speed thereby creating more difficulties with a large wake.

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- b) Approach nose in and from a downwind position, this keeps the engine propellor furthest away from the sailor and prevents the safety boat from being blown onto the sailor.
 - c) Be mindful of any line trailing in the water.
 - d) Ensure the engine throttle lever is 'clicked' into the neutral position or if necessary, turned off.
 - e) If possible, get the sailor to right the boat so it is on its side.
 - f) Take the sailor into the safety boat if required.
14. If a sailor requires assistance which involves towing ashore the safety boat should coordinate with the OOD on which safety boat will conduct the tow and obtain permission to leave the race area.
15. Always remember:
- a) To monitor the entire fleet.
 - b) To monitor the wind direction.
 - c) To wear the kill cord correctly.
 - d) To minimise boat wake.
 - e) To stay on the outside of boats racing, unless attending an incident.
 - f) To slow your approach to boats or sailors well in advance.
 - g) To 'click' the engine throttle lever into neutral and if necessary, switch the engine off when rendering assistance.
 - h) To monitor sailors for the effects of cold and exhaustion, particularly after capsizes.
 - i) To recognise that safety incidences are dynamic situations that can change quickly.
 - j) **STOP: Stop/Think/Organise/Proceed.**

4. Safety boat operations - rendering assistance (ref. National Power Boat Certificate training):

Capsize righting:

- Crew at the centre board:
 - Have crew depower the rig, un-cleat the jib and main sheet, drop spinnaker.
 - If lifting the mast, position the mast upwind so the sails will blow away from you when righted.
 - Position safety boat at mast tip and lift the mast tip to initiate righting.
- Crew not at the centre board (in safety boat):
 - Come alongside in same direction as the hull is pointing.
 - Rotate the hull head into wind.
 - Pull on the centreboard (use paddle if the centreboard is missing).
 - Push the hull away to avoid the centre board fouling on the safety boat.
 - Be careful boom does not swing over the safety boat.
 - Alternatively, the mast can be lifted from the tip.

Lifting sailors from the water:

- Approach the sailor slowly from downwind, aiming slightly off to one side.

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- If sea is heavy be careful that the bow doesn't come down on the sailor.
- Put the engine in neutral or if necessary, switch it off.
- Help the sailor aboard over lowest part of boat.
- Keep low in the safety boat to protect your back.
- Face sailor towards boat and get firm a grip on clothing around the waist or leg area.
- Take care to protect sailor's head and face as they come into boat.
- If tide is taking sailors legs under the boat, try facing them away from the boat before lifting.

Towing:

- Always tow from the transom bridal; do not tow from sponson grab rope.
- Approach from up-wind (to avoid sails and boom) and pass towrope.
- Have the sailor tie the towrope around their mast or attach it to their painter.
- Always ensure that tow rope can be released quickly from the safety boat.
- Attach the tow rope to the safety boat bridal, **do not** tie-off on the sponson grab ropes.
- Have the sailor lower or depower their sails, raise their centre board, move their weight aft and then steer to follow the safety boat.
- Get under way slowly to avoid snatching the towrope.
- If doing a daisy chain tow of several boats be careful not to overload the first boats in the chain.

5. Safety incident escalation:

The guiding principle in the event of an injury to, or incapacitation of a sailor is to "scoop and run" the sailor back to shore as quickly as possible and seek appropriate assistance. In the event of imminent threat to life on the water the incident should be immediately escalated by making a MAYDAY call on VHF Ch 16.

Immediate support required on the water:

Dublin Coastguard	VHF Ch 16 / Phone: 01.6620922
Skerries RNLi	VHF Ch 16
Skerries Coastguard	phone 112 or 999
Skerries Punt	VHF Ch72

Support required ashore - Minor incidents – (no broken bones or head injuries):

Dr. Seamus Mulholland, 7 Strand St., Ph 01.849 0678

Dr. Sarah or Dr. Jack Keane, 10 Holmpatrick St., Ph 01.849 1497

Minor incidents requiring X-rays etc.:

VHI Swiftcare, Airside Retail Park, Swords, Ph 1890 866 966

Serious injury or incapacitation:

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Ambulance Service	Skerries/Swords	999	24hr
Beaumont Hospital	Beaumont Rd.	809 3000	24hr

GARDA: Skerries, Ph 01.849 1211; Balbriggan, Ph 01.802 0510

6. Safety Boat Minimum Equipment List:

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE #7 - Safety Boat Minimum Equipment List

SAFETY BOAT MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LIST

The following list of equipment is the minimum that must be carried in SSC Safety RIB.

- A grab Bag containing smaller items & 1st Aid Kits are now installed in separate lockers for each RIB (2-7) in the boat shed. Grab bag to be taken afloat by RIB drivers & returned after recovery.
- Anchor - suitable size and type, fitted with sufficient chain and line for the operating areas.
- Towing Warp - at least 1 warp.
- Painter - length overall slightly less than 1 x boat length
- Fuel Tank - correct tank for the craft. Capacity must be sufficient for task plus 25% reserve. Minimum 75% level in the tank prior to launch.
- Paddles - 2 x paddles securely stowed.
- Bailer – 1, secured to craft.
- VHF - Tested prior to launch. (May be handheld).
- Boat Hook – 1
- Knife - Sheathed/protected knife capable of cutting ½ inch rope.
- 1st Aid Kit - Secured in a protected area of the craft.

7. Mark laying:

Mark laying may be done by safety boats under the direction of the OOD; however, it must be borne in mind that the provision of adequate safety cover is the primary role of the safety boats and their crew.

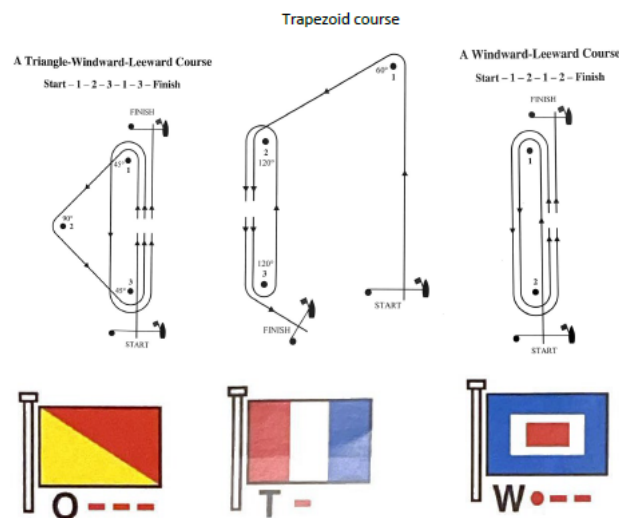
The following information is provided to assist safety boat crew when engaged in mark laying:

- Wear appropriate gloves to protect against abrasion and jelly fish.
- Exercise caution not to damage sponsons with the mark anchor chain.
- The OOD will select the course to be sailed and display the corresponding flag from the committee boat.
- Course examples:

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- Olympic (triangle) – a weather and a leeward mark directly upwind and downwind respectively from the committee boat, plus an additional gybe mark on a compass bearing from the weather mark.
- Trapezoid – see below
- Windward/leeward (sausage) - a weather and a leeward mark directly upwind and downwind respectively from the committee boat.



- The OOD will communicate the heading and distance from the committee boat to the mark positions.
- When proceeding to the mark position prepare the mark tackle by:
 - Connecting the anchor warp to mark warp – make sure neither is tangled.
 - Opening the anchor flukes and locking them with the ring.
- Approaching the mark position drop the mark overboard and trail it behind the boat.
- When the OOD call “Drop Mark”, drop the anchor into the water.
- The OOD may request you to give a compass bearing from the mark back to the committee boat.
- Check that the mark is holding position by backing off a few boat lengths and taking two transits to fixed points.
- The Pin End will be dropped in a similar manner by trailing the mark behind the boat while still holding the anchor on board and steering a course upwind parallel to the committee boat. The distance out from the committee boat will be decided by the OOD depending on the fleet size starting. When the OOD calls “Drop Mark” drop the anchor into the water. (Do not trail the mark warp from the sponson grab ropes or cleats).
- When retrieving marks pick up the warp from downwind with the boot hook and pull the mark into the boat. To avoid abrasion of the sponson, position the boat so that the warp is not under the boat as you pull up the anchor.

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- When the anchor is retrieved disconnect its warp from the mark warp and retract the anchor flukes.
- Place the anchor and chain into the tackle bucket and coil the warp neatly on top. Loop the shackle end of the warp through the bucket handle.

- Occasionally, the ODD may request a safety boat to display a flag ahead of the fleet or at a mark:

Flag C



The position of the next mark has been changed

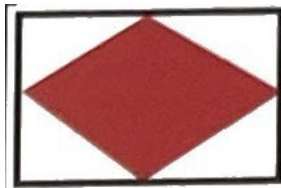


to Starboard



to Port

Flag F



When displayed at a mark on the course all boats should sail directly to Finish at Committee boat.

Flag M



The object displaying this signal replaces a missing mark

Flag L

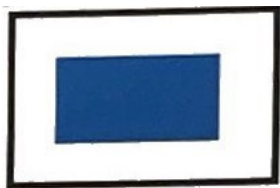


Come within hail or **follow** this boat

Flag S

Blue Flag

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The course has been shortened



This Committee boat is in position at finishing line

- Class flags are as follows:

Class Flags:



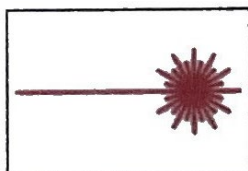
Mermaid



Wayfarer



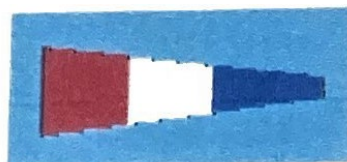
Fireball



Lasers



GP 14s



Cruisers



Remaining fleets or all