Royal Corinthian Yacht Club Ltd

Watersports Safety Management Guide

1. Introduction

This safety guide describes management activities to confirm safety during Keelboat, dinghy, and cruising in company sailing at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club (the Club). It covers Club sailing and Club Open meetings and preparation for the event, during the racing, and after.

Because of the extremely high number of variables in racing, this guide cannot be considered definitive for all events in all conditions. Activities may be tailored to the specific needs of a particular event.

This guide is for Club members and staff and is specific to the Rivers Crouch and Roach, our main sailing areas.

2. References

This guide has been created with ideas and concepts from relevant RYA and previous RCYC safety procedures. Comments from event race officers, fleet captains and the Sailing Committee, have also been incorporated. It is intended to review this guide regularly and at least every two years.

3. Objective

This guide aims to achieve a high safety standard for all our competitors without constraining sailing activities or enjoyment.

A. Responsibilities of the Sailor.

It is the responsibility of the sailor, or the sailor's parent or guardian, to decide whether the sailor can participate safely in the race and not to 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 (SI), Class Rules, The Racing Rules of Sailing and Crouch Harbour Authority rules, especially the rules to avoid collisions. The sailor must hold appropriate third-party insurance, of at least £3m per incident.

Before leaving the pontoon the sailor or parent or guardian of the sailor, shall assess and judge whether the sailor's ability is compatible with the sailing conditions for the race and whether their equipment is adequate for the race. The following should be considered:

- The location of the racecourse and the course wind, tidal, and sea conditions.
- The weather forecast for the period of the race.
- The racecourse length and the expected time on the water.
- Personal protective clothing and buoyancy, adequate for the conditions. Special care is needed in cold or strong wind conditions, especially for juniors and youth sailors.

- The class of boat or dinghy and any class-specific items and equipment, for example, harness, painter, buoyancy bags, hatches, righting lines, and any class-specific rules for rigging and setting up the boat and any SI requirements such as the carrying of a fully charged and operational VHF.
- The boat should be in a safe and seaworthy condition.
- The sailor should know how to de-rig the boat.
- Competitors must inform the RO of changes made to the course by the class or individuals.
- *[Sign out requirements to follow].*

B. Responsibility of the Race Officer for Safety.

The Race Officer (RO) is responsible for overall safety management during the race. The RO may delegate the authority to manage safety activities to a member of the race box team.

4. Safety Management Activities.

A. Advance planning and preparation

Risk Assessment: The Club should have informed the Harbour Master, at the start of the season, the days the Club will be racing, and the start times of the classes together with any event Risk Assessments.

RO activities on Race Day, before the race.

- Weather forecast: Obtain the Met Office weather forecast for the race period and tidal conditions, including wind over tide hazard assessment.
- RO to carry out a Risk Assessment on sailing for the day and complete a Risk Assessment Form.
- At a briefing or by VHF, notify competitors of any Commercial Traffic Movements notified to the Club by the Harbour Master.
- The RO should run a dinghy sailors' briefing, which should include the following:
- If fog is possible, state that competitors should wait for the patrol boat to be escorted back.
- Patrol boats should advise the Race Box of retirements. When they retire, all retirees should be escorted back or to a position where the Race Box has clear visibility of them and has acknowledged this.
- When a patrol boat assists a dinghy, such as taking in tow, they should advise the Race Box.
- Dinghy Open meetings. The system for recording participation in the race and retirement is a tally system. Emphasize the requirement to return tallies immediately on landing. Failure to do this within 30 minutes of the last boat landing will start the Search Plan, which could lead to the Coastguard being called with the associated implications.

B. Postponing or cancelling before the race starts.

(i). The RO and the class representative (if available) should assess the conditions before the race. To be considered are the following.

- The weather forecast, tidal strength and conditions for the race period.
- The anticipated sea state on 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.

(ii). The RO, supported by the class representative (if available), should decide whether the race should be postponed, cancelled or abandoned.

Considerations in a decision to postpone, cancel or abandon a race, include the following:

- If the sailors are youths under 18, and the Met Office Forecast for the race period contains an average wind strength prediction of more significant 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 Forecast for the race period contains an average wind strength prediction of more significant than F6 (22 to 27 knots, mean 24 knots).

C. RO activities during the race

- The RO should be in a suitable position to monitor the race. Usually, this will be in the race box or committee boat.
- The RO should be aware of retiring competitors and, if necessary, assign a patrol boat to escort them back.
- Any retiring boats must call the Race Box on VHF channel 37a. The RO notes the boats retiring and asks the Race Box and Beach Teams to report when retirees have landed and to report if they do not return in a reasonable time.

D. Abandoning the race

The RO and Safety Officer for Open Meetings, shall continually assess the conditions during the race to abandon if necessary.

To be considered are the following:

- Current wind strength, direction, behavior and any observable indicators such as cloud formations. The wind strength increases greater than any maximum class rule or statement in NoR or SI's.
- Prevailing wind recordings from our rooftop weather stations and any other appropriate source warning of approaching worsening conditions.
- The number of sailors experiencing difficulties such as frequently of capsizing, leading to tiredness and exhaustion.
- Normally, it is better to shorten the race than abandon it because the competitors expect to return to their Club moorings.

E. Intense Wind Days

- On intense wind days, call for backup patrol boats. See the attached Contingency Plan for medical emergencies.
- The nearest RIB goes to help. RO will dispatch a patrol boat with a first aider. All other radio traffic is to be minimized. Wait for further instructions from RO. The patrol boat will advise on the situation and what is needed.
- If there is a casualty who needs to be returned to RCYC Pontoon and needs an ambulance, the RO should call 999 and add the text from our contingency plan, Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, to make the call.
- Casualties are to be identified to ambulance service, from Tally if necessary.
- In an urgent, serious medical emergency, any patrol boat should make a channel 16 PAN PAN or MAYDAY call for rapid on-the-water assistance.

F. RO activities after the race

- Check that all sailors are accounted for and back on land. Then, stand down any patrol boats and receive a response from each boat to confirm they have stood down.
- In the event of a significant incident or safety-related protest, the RO should provide a written report to The Harbour Master and Rear Commodore Sailing so that any necessary actions may be taken.
- Missing Competitors: Should competitors and or boats appear to be missing 30 minutes after the last competitor has landed, a Search Plan must be implemented.

G. Safety for Visiting and Youth Classes and RCYC patrol boats

- Visiting classes must provide a safety officer and their safety plan for the event before the event.
- Coaches must supply daily risk assessments and show their safety measures are in place.
- Persons intending to drive the RCYC patrol boats must have PB2 qualification.

Dated: 11th April 2025.