

## SAFETY STATEMENT

This should be read in conjunction with the Race Officer & Safety Crew Instructions

### INTRODUCTION

Following in the wake of a series of unfortunate tragedies in the area of maritime leisure activities over the years, the authorities are placing an increasing emphasis on safety measures and procedures.

It is against this background that this document has been produced. It should be noted that this document is not intended as a step by step methodology, nor is it intended to guarantee your safety, but rather as an overview of the measures, policies and procedures adopted by the Club to ensure that every possible effort is made to avoid an accident on the water, and in the event of such an accident occurring, that there is a procedure in place to deal with the incident.

By taking time before going on the water to assess the prevailing and expected weather and sea conditions and your safety, you can ensure that sailing can be what you expected it to be - fun.

It should be read in conjunction with the [Race Officer and Safety Crew instructions](#) which are more specific regarding implementation of policy and sailing adverse conditions incident escalation procedures. This laminate can be found on Club notice boards and in the Race Officer and Safety Boat dry lockers.

## **CLUB SAFETY POLICY**

### **Primary Responsibility**

The primary responsibility for safety lies with each member or user of the Club's facilities. Nonetheless, the Club, by imposing certain rules and organisation, seeks to ensure that activities arranged by the Club are as safe as possible and will undertake to enforce the written safety procedure. The Club is under no obligation to provide protective clothing, buoyancy or training to any member. Such responsibility lies with the members themselves.

### **Scope of Document**

The contents of this document refer to water-based activities only. A water-based activity is defined as follows:

A water-based activity is an activity organised by the Club where the participating members are required to go afloat to partake in the event. Such activities will have a Race Officer or Instructor appointed and must have safety boat cover appropriate to the numbers of boats taking part in the event.

Whilst every attempt will be made to ensure the safety of all members on the water during Club activities, it must be stressed that priority must be given to those members who are participating in Club events. The Club can accept no responsibility for members who sail outside Club activity times or who sail during such times but do not partake in the activity of the day.

In the event of the Race Officer, Instructor and/or Safety Officer cancelling an activity due to weather or other adverse conditions, it should be understood that the Club can accept no responsibility for any members who subsequently launch or remain on the water after a reasonable time to allow for returning ashore after such an activity is cancelled. It should be noted that Safety Boats will not be launched in the event of an activity being cancelled from outset.

In the event of an activity being cancelled while in progress, the Safety Boats will return ashore as soon as all participating boats are ashore, excepting any boat which has declared its intention to remain afloat despite the cancellation of the activity. Such boats are no longer considered to be participating boats for the purpose of this document.

The advice outlined in this document is further explored in more detailed procedural GSC documentation such as Race Officer and Crew Procedures, Shoremaster Guidance and Swim policy to name a few.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive committee is responsible for ensuring that the Club's safety procedure is implemented. To this end, it will appoint a Safety Officer to report to the Executive on all aspects of water safety.

The Club's Safety Statement, Safety Procedure and Methods of Implementation of Safety Procedure will be reviewed each year by the Executive and any alterations, which are deemed necessary, will be made. Members will be advised of any such changes.

The Executive committee reserves the right to exercise disciplinary procedure against any member who causes undue risk to themselves or any other person while engaged in or failing to return ashore after the cancellation of a club activity or failing to observe the Club's safety practice.

### **Safety Officer**

It is the duty of the Safety Officer to take all reasonable action to ensure the implementation of the Club's safety procedure. The Safety Officer must remain up to date in all aspects of water safety and to this end should liaise with the appropriate organisations involved in water safety. He/she must brief the Executive of any issues relating to safety on the water. The Safety Officer will make such decisions as he/she deems necessary to ensure reasonable steps are taken to ensure safety on the water. The Safety Officer's decision to cancel an activity is final.

### **Sailing Committee**

The Sailing Committee must assist the Executive to implement the Club's Safety Procedures during all water-based activities. When arranging a water-based activity, the Sailing Committee must ensure that safety boat facilities are appropriate to the numbers of boats participating and the levels of competence of the participants.

### **Race Officer and Senior Instructor (where the activity is a training course)**

The Race Officer or Senior Instructor (RO/SI) is responsible for the implementation of the Club's safety procedure during each water-based activity. The RO/SI must decide whether or not to allow an activity to take place or if in progress whether or not to cancel and return ashore. The RO/SI may advise individual members not to take part in a particular activity if he/she deems that the members in question do not have sufficient experience to cope with prevailing and expected weather and sea conditions or if members' personal or boat equipment is inadequate.

The RO/SI will record all incidents, including incidents where members were advised not to go afloat or return ashore.

Hereinafter, all reference to Race Officer (RO) may include Senior Instructor (SI) and reference to Safety Boat helm may include Dinghy Instructor (DI) or Assistant Instructor (AI).

### **Safety Boat Cox(en)**

The Safety Boat Helms must assist the Race Officer in the implementation of the Club's Safety Procedure during a water-based activity. In the course of an event, circumstances may require a Safety Boat Helm to take control of a situation however he/she will normally take instructions from the RO. At all times, Safety Boat Helms will adhere to the following order of priorities:

Safety of the crew of the safety boat itself

Safety of persons being assisted

Safety of other participating crews

Prevention of further damage to disabled or other boats

Recovery of disabled or capsized boat

The Safety Boat crews' responsibility ends only when all participating boats are ashore. The Safety Boat must be the last boat to come ashore.

Powerboats must be driven at a safe speed. The maximum speed in the harbour is 4 knots.

THE SAFETY BOAT KILL CORD MUST BE USED. Near dinghies and close to sailors in the water, powerboats must only be driven at very low speeds. Stop the engine immediately if you are in doubt about the safety of equipment or, especially, sailors. The safety boat driver must maintain one hand on the throttle at all times while underway.

Take your time when approaching a casualty. A careful and safe approach is preferable to a rushed approach which might endanger the casualty or other sailors in the area.

More detailed instruction in the Race Officer & Safety Crew Instructions.

The Safety Boat Helms will work with RO/SI to record all incidents, including incidents where members were advised/ordered not to go afloat or to return ashore.

### **All Members**

All boat owners or persons in charge of a boat must provide adequate insurance. The owner or person in charge must ensure that their boat is seaworthy and contains aboard the necessary equipment. Every member or guest who goes on the water either in a sailing dinghy, Safety Boat or Committee Boat is responsible for his or her own personal safety. Each member or guest must ensure that they are properly equipped to go afloat. The following is the minimum equipment that must be carried on all boats while participating in Club organised water-based activities:

Inherent buoyancy, i.e. adequate tanks/bags appropriate to the class design.

Paddle or alternative means of propulsion.

Personal Floatation Device (PFD) suitable to body weight and in good condition.

Protective clothing appropriate to the activity, weather and sea conditions and temperatures. This must include suitable footwear (flip-flops or bare feet are not permitted). It is recommended that sailors and those on Safety duty who may be expected to enter the water, wear at least a short wetsuit.

Knife on lanyard – except for those under 16 years.

Whistle tied to PFD or some part of protective clothing.

Before, during and after a Club organised water-based activity, each participating member or guest must comply with instructions relating to their safety or the safety of others given by the Safety Officer, Race Officer, Instructor, Safety Boat Helms, any Club Officer, or any

member of the emergency services. In the event of being advised to go ashore for safety considerations members will be deemed to be no longer participating in that water-based activity.

All members and guests – Race Officer, Safety Boat crews and sailors – must use the Sign Out/Sign In book. In an emergency it will be used to determine the number of sailors on the water. During a training course, there may be an alternative safety procedure in place for trainees.

### **Race/ Training Area**

Organised activities will take place in the designated race area. In general, the race area will be bounded by Bray Head to the North, the Moulditch Buoy to the South and extend no more than 1.5 nautical miles to the East. Refer to the relevant Sailing Instructions for details of the race area for individual events.

### **Free Sailing**

Members who choose to leave the race area must inform the Race Officer or a Safety Boat Helm that they are doing so, whether or not they have been taking part in racing. The Race Officer should enter the details on the race sheet. Such boats are no longer considered to be participating boats for the purpose of this document.

Good practice dictates that anyone who is sailing away from the race area or at times when there is no organised activity should inform a responsible person ashore of their intentions. Sailors who are not taking part in organised activities are encouraged to bring a suitable means of communication, preferably a marine VHF radio. Note that mobile phones can be useful in an emergency but are not designed to work offshore and, unlike VHF radios, and cannot be located by lifeboats and other rescue services.

Trainees on sailing courses shall not be permitted to free sail. Instructors shall be responsible for their trainees at all times.

### **Use of Club Powerboats**

The Safety Boats and Committee Boats are provided to enable the running of recognised club activities, namely racing, cruising and training. Their use is governed by the guidelines as set out in the Race Officer & Safety Crew Instructions' document.

They must not be used for towing swimmers or any type of equipment other than sailing boats and disabled craft. Towing must always be carried out at a safe speed. 'Speed towing' is expressly forbidden.

They must not be used for any activity not covered by this document without the express agreement of a member of the executive committee or the safety officer. Members of the executive committee and the safety officer are reminded that they must ensure that any other use of the club powerboats is covered by the club insurance policy.

Members under sixteen must be accompanied by their parent, an adult member or a qualified powerboat instructor. By law, members under sixteen may not take control of a safety boat and members under twelve may not take control of the committee boat.

The Harbour, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.

In the event of an incident, young children in the safety boats are unlikely to be able to help and may impede other crew.

There must always be a Helm and crew in each safety boat. Due to the size of the safety boats, there should be no more than two people in each safety boat to allow room for casualties, gear etc.

Personal flotation devices must be worn at all times by everyone on board a club powerboat.

## **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

*More specific guidelines can be found in GSC Race Officer and Safety Crew Instructions*

### **Make a Decision to Proceed With or Cancel an Activity**

The decision to proceed with or cancel an activity rests with the Race Officer after consultation with the Safety Officer (in the event of differing views, decision by Safety Officer to cancel activities is final) and Safety boat Helms. **Cognisance should be taken of the following:**

Weather Forecast, Gale warning in operation, Sea Conditions

Experience of members wishing to sail. If necessary, advise less experienced sailors that they should not participate. Always cater to the lowest experience.

State of Tide, Visibility, Suitability of gear,

Sufficient and effective Safety Boat cover, e.g. to assist in the event of multiple capsizes.

Advice of any member of the Irish Marine Emergency Service, RNLI, Air Corps, Naval Service or any other official body involved in safety at sea.

**An activity will be automatically cancelled before commencement in any of the following circumstances:**

Wind force forecasted in excess of Force 6.

Presence or imminence of fog.

Sudden and persistent squalling.

Advised to do so by any member of the Irish Marine Emergency Service, RNLI, Air Corps, Naval Service or any other official body involved in safety at sea.

Insufficient Safety Boat cover for number of participants.

Safety Boat and/or Committee Boat withdrawing from service for whatever reason, leaving insufficient Safety Boat cover appropriate to the number of boats afloat.

Insufficient number of crew for Safety Boats. There must be two in each boat.

Insufficient experience of Safety Boat Cox's and Crew to cope with conditions

Imminent Electrical Storm.

Once a decision has been made to cancel an activity before going on the water, the Race Officer must record details on the race sheet giving the reason for cancellation, method by which participants were advised of cancellation and any objections raised.

### **Cancelling an Activity Already in Progress:**

An activity in progress should be cancelled in any of the following circumstances:

Increase in wind force beyond Force 6

Deterioration in visibility due to fog

Sudden and persistent squalling

More boats capsized at one time than can be safely dealt with by the Safety Boat crews.

Advised to do so by any member of the Irish Marine Emergency Service, RNLI, Air Corps, Naval Service or any other official body involved in safety at sea.

Injury to Committee Boat and/or Safety Boat crews

Safety Boat and/or Committee Boat withdrawing from service for whatever reason, leaving insufficient Safety Boat cover appropriate to the number of boats afloat.

Imminent Electrical Storm

Once a decision has been made to cancel an activity after going on the water, the Race Officer should make all reasonable attempts to inform participants of the decision as soon as practicable after the decision has been made to avoid participants remaining on the water after cancellation. **3 long horn blasts from RO signals a cancellation and all ashore.** The Safety Boats may be used to ensure all boats know of cancellation unless engaged with a casualty or disabled boat.

#### **Logging Decision:**

Once a decision to cancel a water-based activity is made, this decision is recorded on the race sheet or RO logbook. Details should be given of the following:

Reason or reasons for cancellation of water-based activity

Details of any consultation before decision made, giving names of those consulted.

How participants were advised

Details of any objections or refusal to comply with the decision. Members who decide to go afloat or remain afloat do so at their own risk.

#### **Pre-launch Procedure for Each Participating Member**

Each owner or Person in Charge of a boat must check his/her boat to ensure that all the appropriate safety equipment is aboard.

Each owner or Person in Charge of a boat must ensure that both they and their crews have adequate buoyancy aid or lifejacket, and protective clothing.

Each owner, Person in Charge of a boat and their crew must satisfy themselves that they are capable of coping with the prevailing and expected weather and sea conditions.

Each owner or Person in Charge of a boat must advise the Race Officer that he/she is participating in the water-based activity, and use the sign out/in book.

**Procedures for the Race Officer, Assistant Race Officer and Safety boat crews are detailed in GSC Race Officer and Safety Crew Instructions**

## **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH AN EMERGENCY SITUATION**

### **Category 1 Incident**

A Category 1 incident is one where there is GRAVE AND IMMINENT DANGER to a person or persons on or in the water. It also includes incidents beyond the capability of the Club's facilities. Such incidents are informable which means that the Emergency Services MUST be notified.

The Race Officer must assess the situation quickly.

Inform the Emergency Services.

Follow any instruction given by the Emergency Services.

Log details of the incident in the RO Log Book.

### **Category 2 Incident**

A Category 2 incident is one where there is no immediate danger to a person or persons on or in the water, and the situation can be dealt with by the Club's facilities.

The Race Officer assesses the situation quickly.

Make all reasonable attempts to contact the Race Officer

Make all reasonable attempts to bring the casualty ashore.

Call the appropriate Emergency Services if applicable.

Enter details of incident in the RO Log Book

### **Procedure for revising Safety Statement and Practice**

The Safety Officer will make every reasonable effort to keep abreast of changes in safety management and practice by liaison with the various organisations involved with safety on the water such as the ISA, National Safety Council, RNLI, Irish Marine Emergency Services. The Safety Officer will report to the Executive on any safety related matters. The Executive will review the Club's safety practice at least once each year or more frequently if appropriate. Any changes made to the Club's safety practice will be informed to the members as soon as is practicable.

The obligations & methodology of the Race Officer and Safety Crew are dealt with specifically in the Race Officer & Safety Crew Instructions.

### **Recommending Individual Members Not to Sail**

The Safety Officer, Race Officer, Safety Boat Helms or any member of the Executive may advise individuals not to go afloat or if afloat to return ashore in the following circumstances:

No personal flotation device (PFD) worn

PFD badly fitting or in poor condition

Insufficient clothing for conditions

Boats considered un-seaworthy

Absence of safety equipment appropriate to the class of boat

Insufficient experience to cope with conditions

Injury to helm or crew



Capsize or man overboard lasting more than 15 MINUTES

Multiple capsizes

Sailors who appear to be under the influence of drink or drugs which could impair their judgement.

Where an individual is advised not to go afloat, details of this must be entered on the race sheet. Details must include reason for advice, when advice given and by whom and any objections by the individual.

Research has shown that a large proportion of people taken from the water actually collapse after they are aboard a rescue vessel. This seems to be due to the length of time the person is immersed in the water and is a separate condition to hypothermia. Changes take place in the constitution and pressure of the blood when the body is immersed for long periods of time. This is why it is important to recover a person from the water in the HORIZONTAL POSITION if they have been in the water for more than 15 - 20 minutes. It is also the reason why that person MUST GO ASHORE.

## **METHOD FOR DEALING WITH AN EMERGENCY SITUATION**

### **Situation Assessment**

Use common sense. Ask yourself is the situation one which you or another member of the club can cope with. Activating the Emergency Services is costly. Unnecessary call outs will get the Club a bad reputation for day to day activity management. However, the Emergency Services are the experts and they should be called before a situation develops which is beyond the capability of any Club members to resolve.

### **Request Assistance of Trained Members to Assist With an Incident on the Water**

If a situation occurs which is beyond the capability of the Race Officer, Safety Boat Helms and/or Crews (but does not require official outside assistance e.g. RNLI, Coast Guard) the Race Officer and/or Safety Boat Helms must enlist the help of any one or more of the Experienced Members, if they are available to be deployed.

A list of experienced Safety Boat Helms will be kept on the Club Notice Board and updated from time to time by the Executive.

The Race Officer must enter details in the RO log book of any incident where Experienced members were called to assist the Race Officer or Safety Boat Helms or any other member.

### **Dealing with an Injured Person**

In the event of an accident, call a trained First Aider.

If unable to find a First Aider, call an ambulance if the injury is serious.

The Race Officer must enter details of any accident or injury in the RO Log Book.

If any items are used from the Club's First Aid Kits, the Safety Officer must be advised so that the Kit can be restocked.

### **Launch authority**

The Harbour, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.

All available resources should be used when dealing with an incident on the water. The person in charge of an incident has authority to launch additional club boats if suitably experienced crews are available.

An incident ends when all participants have returned to shore and club boats have returned to the harbour. Only a member of the executive committee or the safety officer may authorise the launch or use of club boats once an incident has ended.

REQUESTING ASSISTANCE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES **VHF Channel 16 or 83 for Marine Rescue Coordination Centre or on a phone Dial 112 or 999 and ask for:**  
**Ambulance Service**

☐ Give the following details:

- o Location
- o Type and number of Casualties
- o Telephone Number
- o Directions if necessary

DO NOT hang up until told to do so by operator

**Marine Rescue** Coordination Centre:

- ☐ Coast Guard (see Gardai, below)
- ☐ Lifeboat
- ☐ Cliff Rescue
- ☐ Helicopter

☐ Give the following details:

- o Location
- o Type and number of casualties
- o Number of boats
- o Sea/Wind/Visibility conditions

- Give details as above.

Give details as above  
01 666 5800

**Gardaí**