



## **Hythe Sailing Club Protocols For Safety Boat Drivers**

### ***Eligibility to drive safety boat & the qualifications required***

- Minimum age of 18 years old holding RYA Powerboat Level 2 Coastal certificate or above together with RYA Safety Boat Qualification.
- It is recommended that either the Safety Boat Driver or Crew have a valid First Aid Qualification.
- Both Safety Boat Driver & crew must be members of the Club.
- Both Safety Boat Driver & crew must be physically able to perform the tasks in the prevailing Sea & weather conditions.
- If conditions are suitable and it is safe to do so, the Safety Boat Crew may drive the Safety Boat.
- If the crew has not driven the safety boat prior to the race it is advisable that they are familiarised with the controls to allow them to drive back to the pontoon in case the Cox is incapacitated and unable to drive
- In the role of “supervised driver”, the Qualified Safety Boat Driver must take control in the event of an incident.
- Depending on the conditions, it is recommended that there should be minimum of two people in each Safety Boat afloat.

### ***The Week Before Dinghy Race***

- Contact the OOD & confirm you are able to do your duty & you have crew.
- Ensure there is sufficient fuel.
- Check the weather forecast before leaving home

### ***On The Day Of Dinghy Race***

- Arrive in time to prepare the boat(s) prior to race start (at least an hour before the race is due to start), discuss weather & sea conditions with the OOD and confirm whether the race will run or is to be postponed.

### ***Safety Boat & Engine Checks***

- Check equipment for example, First Aid Kit, spare kill cord, safety knife, tow lines, paddles, anchor etc. The fuel locker contains an equipment container for each safety boat.
- Check there is adequate fuel and fuel tanks are secured.
- Check the oil level (if necessary top up), flush RIB & ELC engines before & after use, using bin.
- Make sure any drain tubes/plugs are secured.
- Check engine starts and the tell-tale is working. Check that the kill cord works.
- Launch Safety Boats. Before driving off trailer, check steering is free and both reverse & forward gears work.
- Keep the Safety Boat moving around the course; running the engine steadily is far better than running for protracted periods on tick over. It is recommended to pick up a

mooring (with a good view of the course) and switch engine off once race has begun (subject to conditions). This saves fuel and wear and tear on the engine.

### ***Marks & Anchors.***

- Prepare the marks & anchors including the start buoy and flag. (Triangular buoys are stored partially deflated in the sail store. They do not have to be fully inflated but add air if required using the vacuum cleaner).
- Place the ground tackle, (stored in safety boat compound,) in the Safety Boat prior to launching
- When transporting any buoys, ensure they do not obscure your view forward and that they are secured to the safety boat. Attach the ground tackle. Where appropriate, the large buoys can be picked up from the pontoon.
- Lay the marks in accordance with OOD's course including starting mark. Lay the start mark first
- Ensure race marks are secured to anchor/ground tackle & have sufficient warp for the changing tide to avoid loss.
- Do not drag the buoys along the ground when moving them from the storage area to the safety boat.
- Recover marks at the end of race.

### ***Clothing***

- Always wear buoyancy aid.
- Wear suitable clothing appropriate for the time of year (i.e. dry suit, wetsuit, waterproofs, sailing gloves, hat, sun screen etc). You should be prepared to enter the water if necessary.

### ***Requirements When Afloat***

- Always wear the kill cord (normally around your leg) while under power.
- Keep one hand on the wheel and the other hand on the throttle at all times when under power.
- Always switch your engine off when dealing with a person in the water. Keep the Safety Boat Driver between the person & propeller.
- Do not allow anyone to sit on Safety Boat RIB in front of the console when moving.
- Travel at suitable speeds to avoid unnecessary wash. Make clear and early turns to allow other water users to anticipate the Safety Boat intentions. Travel at full speed should normally be reserved for when attending an incident..
- Keep a good lookout at all times.
- Know the number of boats taking part in race & know the course.
- Communicate your intentions to your crew & make sure they are holding on securely when Safety Boat is moving.
- Obey speed limits.
- Do not crash through the gears! Reduce the throttle gradually then then select neutral. Always depress the interlock lever before engaging forward or reverse gear.
- Avoid steering directly astern of a racing dinghy, in case of capsize, man overboard or unexpected change in course.

- If Safety Boat needs to come alongside wait until sailing dinghy has stopped on a close reach & Safety Boat can come in on windward side of dinghy & hold shroud.
- If approaching a moving dinghy let the helm know your intentions, communicate clearly, approach from the windward side.
- When approaching a capsized dinghy, it can be best to approach bow first, from up wind keeping the prop away from boat hazards & crew. Count heads.
- Once alongside dinghy or recovering man over board, turn engine off unless there is a compelling reason not to, for example on a lee shore.
- Methods of assisting boats and/or sailors should be in line with the current RYA guidelines.
- Any other requests for help, for example towing a dinghy, should only be undertaken if the safety of competitors is not impeded.
- People before equipment. Do not put yourself in danger or your Safety Boat Crew.
- Take care when lifting people & heavy weights over the side of Safety Boats.
- Don't overload Safety Boat with people & equipment, never exceed manufacturers CE plate.
- Always follow Collision Regulations i.e. "Rules of the Road".
- Be aware of tide & changing weather conditions.
- Safety Boats should be positioned appropriate to the areas likely to need attention (for example start line, gybe marks, main shipping channel etc.). Must not impede those racing. Be aware of the course taken by asymmetric dinghies downwind and other water users.
- Only recover Safety Boats once you know everyone is ashore.

### ***Dealing With a Serious Incident On the Water.***

- Inform OOD at the earliest opportunity. They will make the call on whether racing is to be abandoned.
- If you find someone is unconscious, radio OOD & request Ambulance attendance to Club using 999. Immediately return casualty to shore providing any emergency aid that is required. Ask for someone to be waiting to meet you at the shore and the Club gate is open for ambulance.
- Suspected Entrapment: right the boat in the standard way using the centreboard with the sailor(s) and/or safety crew. Never go underneath. (Refer to the RYA Safety Boat Course Book & RYA website for further information on entrapment advice).
- If abandoning a boat, mark the boat to alert other Safety Boat crews it has been abandoned and communicate this via VHF to all stations. Race Officer may wish to notify Southampton VTS.

### ***End of Day***

- Flush RIB & ELC engines after use.
- Disconnect fuel line and run engine dry (ensure the end of the fuel line is secured away from the bottom of the boat)
- Pack away Safety Boats & all equipment.
- Make sure any drain plugs/tubes are opened
- After use, wash down Safety Boats and replace boat covers if provided.
- Report any faults & record them in the book in Club's Wet Room.
- Padlock Jaffa & RIB trailers together (bow to bow).

### ***Use of Hand-Held VHF Radio***

- Use either channel 37A or M depending what is displayed on your radio.
- Do radio check before going afloat. Keep communications to minimum.
- Use the call sign displayed on each Safety Boat.
- Tie radio to person not boat.
- Take spare radio if available.

### ***Alcohol***

- Alcohol is not allowed on the Safety Boats at any time.
- You are not allowed to drive the Safety Boat under the influence of alcohol.

### ***Training & further information***

- It is the Club's intention to run a Refresher/briefing Course each year for all Safety Boat Drivers.
- Club will run RYA Safety Boat Course provided there is sufficient interest.
- Visit RYA website [www.rya.org.uk](http://www.rya.org.uk)
- Refer to RYA Safety Boat Handbook (code G16), RYA Start Powerboating (G48) RYA Powerboat Handbook (G13).

Revised March 2018