

### Introduction

This Safety Protocol is intended to cover all major dinghy regattas run by Saundersfoot Sailing Club (SSC) and it sets out the procedures to be used as the basis for managing the safety resources available. Not all guidance listed in this protocol applies to all events and it must be read in conjunction with and form part of the specific Risk Assessments for that event and the relevant Sailing Instructions.

It is important to remember however, that sailing is by its very nature, accompanied by a degree of risk which as with many other adventure sports cannot be fully eliminated. The Racing Rules of Sailing at Rule 4 - Decision to Race make it clear that ***“The responsibility for a boat’s decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone.”*** In addition the Clubs Sailing Instructions reiterate this fact at SI 2. Conditions of Entry and further states that: ***“It is for the boat to decide whether it is fit to sail in the conditions in which it finds itself. By launching or going to sea the boat confirms that it is fit for those conditions and that its crew is competent to sail and compete in them.”***

However SSC has a clear responsibility to run its events in a responsible manner taking fully into account the results of any risk assessment undertaken and the conditions and forecast on the day in order to reduce any risks to reasonable and acceptable levels in the interests for both the competitors and the volunteers staffing any event run by the Club. This protocol forms an important and integral part of that process.

### References

The following documents were used in the preparation of this protocol:  
RYA Risk Assessment for Organised Sailing Events.  
SSC Dinghy Regatta Risk Assessments  
SSC Event COVID Risk Assessment  
SSC Sailing Instructions and Notice of Race.

### Objectives

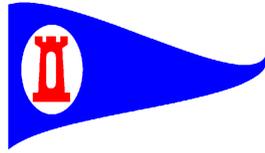
The objective is to provide a well run regatta and with efficient and competent race management and safety cover ensuring competitors and all involved in staffing it have maximum enjoyment with minimum concern for the safety of the sailors and boats.

### Overall organisational structure

The safety of all participants will be the responsibility of the Principal Race Officer (PRO) and the Event Safety Officer (ESO), from the time the first participant is permitted to go on the water until the time all competitors and safety crew are off the water and have been accounted for.

The PRO will have operational responsibility for race management and the safety of competitors and volunteers he has absolute authority to employ all the resources available to him as he sees fit and to direct the work of all those assisting.

The PRO in conjunction with the ESO may appoint a Course Safety Officer (CSO) to assist with safety issues on the water. If the ESO takes on a specific role on the water (such as manning one of the safety boats or supporting the PRO and race management team), then



on water responsibility may still remain with the CSO. All race/safety crew will be advised of this at the pre-race briefing to avoid any confusion as to who is the responsible safety officer on the water.

The PRO will work with the ESO and any CSO to communicate the safety cover plan with their race and safety team. They should define and manage how safety cover should be handled and should manage the movement of the competitors from shore to the course area.

The ESO will be responsible for the overall management of the safety fleet both on and off the water. The Safety Fleet will consist of Safety Boats and Mother ships and at the request of the ESO or CSO to the PRO, any mark layers and committee boats may also be brought into the Safety Fleet. They will then operate under the direction of the ESO until the need passes when they will be passed back to the PRO.

### **Daily Briefing**

The ESO and/or CSO will conduct a daily briefing outside the clubhouse building approximately 30 minutes before the launch of rescue and committee boats. The briefing will cover

- Weather
- Tides
- Racing schedule
- Allocation of specific tasks
- Safety concerns
- Any other relevant matters

### **Safety Boat Launching**

All safety boat crews must report their availability to the ESO no later than one hour before scheduled start. All Safety boats and other Official Boats should tally on and off by radio with the Beach master daily, to advise when they have left shore and are on the water and again when all crew return to shore safely.

All Safety boats must be launched and fully manned one hour before the scheduled start time and a Ferry Rib must be available at the water's edge one and a half hours before the scheduled start time on those days when boats are left afloat.

### **Safety Boat Storage**

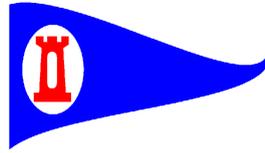
All safety boats to be stored on SSC Club or other approved mooring(s) or if conditions allow be left at anchor. If bad weather is expected then they will be stored in the Harbour. Crews must ensure that their fuel tanks are refilled at the end of each day and stored in the fuel bin if not on a mooring or at anchor in the bay.

### **Safety Boat Recovery**

As soon as Safety Fleet is stood down on last day (or each day if poor weather forecast overnight), all crews must assist in recovering RIBs, freshwater running and storage tasks.

### **Standing Down**

No safety boat crews will be stood down until all tasks have been completed each day.



### Radios VHF Channel 37

All safety boats will carry a VHF radio and will operate under the guidance from the ESO. Call signs will be allocated to each Safety Boat, Mothership, Committee Boat and a list of boats and their call signs to include mobile phone numbers where possible will be provided. **Transmission should be kept to a minimum to avoid clutter.**

**Where possible two radios per safety boat should be used.**

**At the end of each day all radios should be cleaned with the antiseptic wipe and spray provided.**

### Personnel

All safety Boats are to have a minimum of two competent crew on board, one of which must be over the age of sixteen. In recognition of current COVID restrictions no more than two crew will be allowed on any of the Safety Boats and be able to take a minimum of 2 additional sailors. The ESO may withdraw a Safety Boat from the Safety Fleet if he feels it is inappropriately crewed.

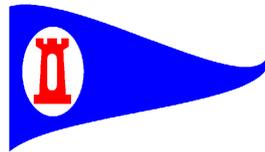
Safety boat crews must arrive suitably dressed for the conditions and the time they are expected to be afloat and must wear personal buoyancy at all times. They should take a drink and snack with them and also their mobile phones as a backup communication device if possible.

Due to the COVID restrictions safety boat crews are encouraged to use their own equipment, In exceptional cases the club will provide buoyancy aids. Where this is the case these must be cleaned using the cleaning solution available within the club garage and left to dry for use on subsequent days.

It is desirable to have at least one member of each safety boat suitably dressed in the unlikely event that, as a safety craft, they must enter the water to assist a sailor. **IT MUST BE STRESSED THAT CREWS ARE TO ENTER THE WATER ONLY WHEN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. IF A CREW DOES SO THE ESO MUST BE INFORMED.**

### **Essential Equipment, which must be available on each safety boat**

- Adequate fuel for approx 6 hours on the water
- Fully functional VHF radio
- A sound generator (whistle or fog horn)
- Compass
- Laminated chart of the race area
- Tide tables
- Anchor and warp for the safety boat
- Spare anchor and warp for abandoned boats
- Sharp knife, **easily accessible**
- Kill cord and a spare, **which must be used by the driver**
- Crew Safe Markers to identify abandoned boats
- Paddles or oars
- Floating Tow Lines
- Wire Cutters, to cut away rigging
- Tool Kit



- Flares
- First Aid Kit
- Survival bag

### **Additional COVID related items \***

- 1 x pack of disposable face coverings
  - 1 x antibacterial spray
  - 1 x pack antiseptic wipes
  - 1 x pack of disposable gloves
- 
- \* will be provided for each rescue and committee boat and will be available for the club garage on the first and subsequent days of the event.

### **Position of Safety Boats and Visual Scanning**

Each Safety Boat will be allocated a position on the course or a task that they will assume for the duration of the race. These positions will be allocated by the ESO in advance, normally at the pre-race briefing, but will be modified as necessary. Safety boats need to avoid grouping together to ensure maximum coverage of the race area. One crew per safety boat must continually visually scan the whole of their allotted area and avoid becoming over focused on one area or activity.

### **COVID Protocols**

In addition to the event COVID Risk assessments the following are to be adhered to by all event participants including Race Management and Safety Crews.

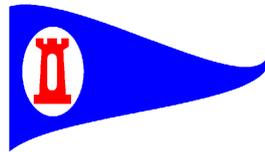
The highest risks are associated with circumstances when sailors and race management personnel ignore COVID protocols and continue to mix with other people engaged with the event.

Wherever possible, the relevant UK Government social distancing guidance should be adhered to. In circumstances afloat, where social distancing is not feasible, mitigations should be implemented in line with the advice within this document

### **Essential first steps**

All participants prior to crewing a rescue or committee boat with people from other households should:

- Self-symptom check before leaving home
- Assess personal risk and that of your team
- Limit car sharing
- Register your attendance with the host club for test and trace
- Arrive in sailing kit as there will be no inside changing facilities
- Sanitise hands on arrival and prior to touching any shared surface
- Maintain social distancing at all times whilst ashore before launching after recovery



All competitors and race management personnel should remember the RYA COVID-19 Principle **Be considerate**:

- will be mindful of the potential impact that we could have on other water users and local communities.
- Take an extra cautious approach to the event and not to place unnecessary extra strain on the RNLI and emergency services.

The clubhouse including changing rooms will remain closed for the duration of the event, eliminating the risk of any internal contamination / contraction of the COVID infection.

Records to enable effective track and trace actions will be kept for all competitors and volunteers engaged with the event.

Based on our risk assessments, we believe that the following should be considered as close contacts for the purpose of test & trace in the context of sailing:

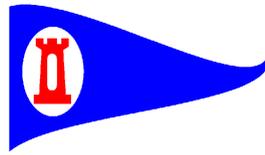
1. Those who have sat within 1m of each other on the side deck for more than 15 minutes;
2. Those who have been below deck at the same time for a total of more than 5 minutes;
3. Those who have recovered someone or been recovered from the water;
4. Those who have had non-fleeting face to face interaction within 1m of another crewmember

In addition to the Essential First Steps above the Race Management and Safety crews should mitigate the risk of airborne transmission by the appropriate use of face coverings when in close proximity to others.

Safety boats should be cleaned at the end of each day using the antiseptic wash provided by the Club.

### **General Protocols**

- ESO will brief the safety fleet personnel at the beginning of the event and daily as required.
- The Beachmaster will not allow the competitors to Tally on or launch until adequate safety cover is provided.
- Each safety fleet 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.
- Beach master confirms the number of boats afloat and informs ESO/CSO and PRO. This is critical to the safety of the fleets.
- The Safety Fleet's objective is support to a challenging but enjoyable event making it as safe as reasonably practical.



- All retirements from racing are to be notified to either ESO or CSO who will keep a record and inform the PRO and Beach master.
- Once the Beachmaster has informed ESO/CSO that all boats are safely ashore, the ESO/CSO will inform the Safety Fleet that it can stand down. No Safety boats or crews are to leave boats or come ashore until advised by the ESO/CSO.
- If the Beachmaster finds that any boats are missing, ESO/CSO is to be informed immediately. ESO /CSO will direct a number of Safety Boats back to the Race Area to start a search. Meanwhile, Beachmaster will urgently investigate the missing individuals - if they are not accounted for, ESO/CSO will be informed immediately and, at this point, should probably declare an Emergency Situation.

**Please note that VHF Channels 37a are monitored by local officials. Any information that may be of a sensitive nature, please use discretion. Mobile telephone numbers are posted and should be used when possible.**

### **Procedures to get boats to and from the race area**

The ESO/CSO should nominate safety boats to accompany the racing fleet to the race area, the Beachmaster should advise the number of boats afloat, the number of tallies posted and the time the last boat leaves the beach.

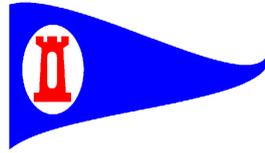
The racing fleet will head back to the beach on completion of the last race of the day or once the PRO has signalled that no more racing will take place, and the ESO/CSO should nominate Safety Boats to accompany the fleet towards the beach. A designated sweeper should remain until the last boats have finished and follow the fleet home. Other boats may be involved in mark recovery and they should also then escort the racing fleet back towards the beach.

There may be disabled boats to tow home and the ESO/CSO may allow this process to commence as soon as the boats start finishing as they will always take a longer time to get back ashore.

### **PROCEDURE FOR RETIRING BOATS**

A retiring Boat must, in accordance with the Sailing Instructions, inform a Safety Boat or other Official Boat as soon as practical and always before leaving the course area. If they are capable of returning ashore unaided then the most inshore of the safety boats will monitor their progress and the Beachmaster informed of their intention. Beachmaster will then advise PRO and ESO/CSO of every boat that returns ashore.

Any Disabled Boat unable to return ashore under her own power should be either attached to one of the Motherships, a nearby buoy, or be anchored (clear of the course) using one of the spare anchors on the safety boat. The Safety Boat may decide to remove a sailor from the boat (for instance if cold or not coping) the boat must then be tagged with a plastic tape around the rudder or transom or a clearly marked 'crew safe' buoy and the ESO/CSO informed of tally number and sail number. The abandoned boat should be recovered later when racing is over.



If a sailor needs attention ashore, again leave the boat tagged and anchored and inform the ESO/CSO of the situation and care required.

### **GUIDELINES FOR USE IN FOG**

If fog arrives prior to the start of the race the PRO will postpone racing, the racing fleet will be advised by the Safety Fleet to stay close to the Committee Boat.

If fog arrives during a race the PRO may decide to shorten or abandon racing. If the race has been abandoned, the fleet are to be 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 will count boats near them and report to ESO/CSO or PRO. They calculate the total number of boats and if the total number does not equal the total of boats that went afloat, the ESO/CSO will instruct for a search to commence.

If no further racing intended, then the ESO/CSO will make the decision whether to tow boats home or not. If not towing they will be sent ashore and requested to stay together and to keep in sight of accompanying Safety Boats.

### **GUIDELINES FOR STRONG WINDS**

If strong winds arrive prior to a start of a race, the PRO will postpone racing and request the racing fleet to stay close to Safety Boats until the length of the postponement is determined.

If strong winds arrive during a race, the PRO will shorten or abandon racing. The racing fleet is instructed at the finish or on each leg if the race has been abandoned to either proceed slowly ashore or to stay in close proximity to an official boat.

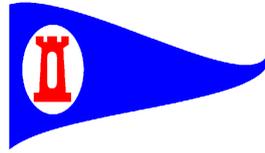
If no further racing intended then the ESO/CSO will make the decision whether to tow boats home or not. If not towing they will be sent ashore and requested to stay together and to keep in sight of accompanying Safety Boats.

### **TOWING**

Care must be taken when towing lines of dinghies that painters and towlines are strong enough for the task. Placing lines under strain can cause serious personal injury if they snap. Towing speed should be appropriate to the number of boats and communication must be open between the tug and the towed dinghy crews. If being towed then boats should be asked to furl headsails and drop mainsails if possible and raise their centreboards

### **ENTRAPMENT**

Safety crews should be aware of the risk of entrapment in rigging and harness lines. If a sailor is not visible or not moving, safety crews should expect entrapment and be prepared to deal with this (knife and/or wire cutters ready). **The most effective rescue of a trapped sailor is to right the boat as rapidly as possible (RYA August 19, 2009);**



### ABANDONING BOATS

If a dinghy has to be abandoned a 'crew safe' buoy must be tied to the bow, or a 'crew safe' notice attached to the rudder/transom, so that other crews know the sailor has been taken and isn't lost. If all buoys/notices are used, safety boats should attach red/white marker tape in a visible position on the abandoned boat. The ESO/CSO and PRO must be informed of any abandoned boats. It may be appropriate at this time to advise the Coastguard of any abandoned boats particularly if they are well off the course area.

### 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 safety boat on the scene should inform all stations using the code words "**CODE RED**" and give its location. The safety or mark boats nearest to the "Code Red" should immediately proceed to help. All other safety boats should minimise radio traffic. The ESO/CSO should immediately assess the situation, may call appropriate support to the scene, to assist in stabilizing it and, if appropriate inform the PRO to decide whether to declare an Emergency Situation on the radio.

Only the minimum number of safety boats is to remain involved with the Emergency, all other Safety Boats are to continue to provide safety cover for the fleet in the normal manner.

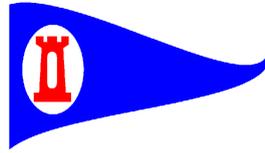
The ESO/CSO will decide whether to request the Emergency Services to attend, however any Safety Boat should, if absolutely essential, make such a request. If necessary, the casualty should be taken ashore in an appropriate Safety Boat to the EMERGENCY DROP OFF POINT (Beach or Slip) to meet with the Emergency Services. The Beachmaster must also be advised of the situation in order to assist with the situation on shore.

Safety boat crews need to be aware that radio transmissions can be overheard, and the impact of that can have serious consequences in the management of the Emergency. If at all possible try to use guarded language or preferably a mobile phone to communicate urgent serious messages. It is often faster for the Safety Boat to dial 999 from the boat as it proceeds ashore, to arrange an ambulance to meet at the shore. **IF THIS IS THE CASE; YOU MUST CONTACT THE ESO/CSO IMMEDIATELY AFTER CONTACTING EMERGENCY SERVICES**

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 ESO/CSO then informs all stations that "**CODE RED IS CLEARED**".

**The Safety Fleet is only able to stand down and return ashore when the Beachmaster has confirmed that all boats and crews are safely ashore and permission to stand down is granted by ESO/CSO.**

**Guidance Notes for Beach Masters and On Shore Crews Assisting Launching.**



**BEACHMASTER.** The 'Beachmaster' has responsibility and control for all persons and action on the 'Shore Side' of all sailing events.

### **Duties and responsibilities:**

1. Control the 'Tally Board'
2. Displaying official notices.
3. Medical problems.
4. Protest forms
5. Weather reports.
6. Beach Crew.
7. Dinghy parking
8. Release boats for launching.
9. Communications with Race Officer

**Tally Board** The 'Tally Board' is located with the Beachmaster either on the beach. The 'Tally' system is for the safety of the competitors. The Tally On / Off will be done in line with the CoVID risk assessment and method statement outlined in the SI's

Directly on coming ashore and no later than within 20 minutes of the completion of the race, or races if sailed back to back, competitors shall notify the beach master of their safe return. It is the responsibility of every helm to ensure that this procedure is strictly adhered to.

**Display Official Notices** All official notices to competitors will be posted on the notice board with the Beachmaster, loaded on the SSC web and Facebook sites and emailed to all competitors. No notices will be placed on the board without his permission.

**Medical Problems** Competitors with any medical problems or are taking medication should inform the Beachmaster (In confidence)

A 'First Aid' case will be head by the beachmaster for use during the event.

**Protest Forms** The Beachmaster will issue and collect protest forms and post times of protest hearings. He will record the time of issue and receipt of forms, then hand them to the chairman of the 'Protest Committee'.

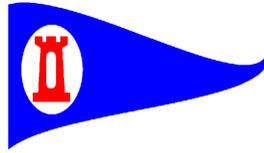
**Weather Reports** Will be displayed each day prior to the launching of boats.

**Dinghy Parking** The Beachmaster is responsible for overseeing dinghy parking on the beach in accordance with the 'Welcome to Saundersfoot' notice.

**Launching of Competitors Boats** Boats must not be launched for the race without the Beachmaster's permission (after conferring with the PRO/ESO/CSO). This is for safety reasons, to ensure all safety boats are in position on the water.

**Communications with the PRO and ESO/CSO** The Beachmaster will communicate all messages to and from the shore with the PRO and ESO/CSO.

# SAUNDERSFOOT SAILING CLUB



## Regatta Safety Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SSC Safety Protocol)

**Helms of All Vessels** It should be noted that all persons who are operating a boat, whether under power or sail, must comply with all applicable Maritime Laws, Local Bye Laws and Regulations.