



LYME REGIS SAILING CLUB Ltd

Safety Boat Handbook Update: Driver's Role and Responsibilities

- Safety boat drivers work during organised sailing under the direction of an Officer of the Day (OOD), a Senior Instructor or a Senior Organiser (for simplicity the term OOD will be used in this document to refer to all three roles).
- People choosing to sail at times other than during organised Club/Sea School events cannot expect to be provided with safety boat cover.
- The responsibilities of the OOD cover all aspects of the control of organised, on water activity, including, for example: assessing whether sailing takes place; the nature of the sailing/racing; instruction to launch safety boats and dinghies; and the provision and extent of safety boat cover.
- Therefore, during organised events the OOD should have reasonable knowledge of the capability of the safety boat drivers and crew to handle rescue situations in the likely conditions to be expected during the current race/session.
- On no account should OODs coerce safety boat drivers and crew to operate in conditions which the drivers and crew feel are beyond their capabilities.
- In turn, safety boat drivers and crew must inform the OOD if they consider that the conditions are beyond their capabilities (refer to LRSC Ltd Safety Boat Driver Training Policy).
- To be effective during rescues, safety boat drivers will be required to exercise their judgement and skills without necessarily having to refer to the OOD. However, the OOD may well require that a particular rescue is aborted in response to a more serious situation.
- Because a particular rescue might put safety boats in danger, the safety boat driver's priorities are listed in the following order of importance:
 - 1 The safety of the driver and crew
 - 2 The safety of the sailors being rescued

3 The prevention of damage to boats and equipment

- In a rescue situation sailors must follow the safety boat driver's instructions if they are to retain the support of the safety boat.
- In the event that a safety boat driver assesses a rescue situation as potentially hazardous to themselves and crew, they must instruct the sailors to abandon their dinghy and to enter the RIB.
- Should the sailors fail to comply, the safety boat should leave the rescue and stand-off at a safe distance.
- On no account should a RIB be operated without a crew in other than the most benign of conditions. The Club boats render rescue virtually impossible without a crew.
- Safety boat drivers must at all times maintain clear communication with their crew, who should act as an observer and respond to the drivers' instructions.
- Safety boat drivers should also continually assess the potential risks of all situations taking account of weather, sea state, lea shore and other hazards. Larger waves occur infrequently, but the margin of safety must take account of these.
- Particular care must be taken when waves are breaking in shallow water and avoiding action should be taken if at all possible. Boats are most vulnerable to swamping when aft or beam on to breaking waves.
- Early action is always preferable and it is up to the safety boat driver to assess the risk of the casualty entering a dangerous area of breaking waves and render suitable assistance before that occurs.
- This could be achieved by:
 - Anchoring the boat
 - Towing or preventing further down wind drift
 - Directly assisting to right the dinghy
 - Leaving the dinghy with a view to later recovery.
- Using a RIB to rescue boats from lea shores should be undertaken with great care using the floated line method outlined in the RYA Safety Boat Handbook.

- All Club RIBs and PJ are equipped with throwing lines which may assist the recovery of individuals in the water and possibly in boats. This is to be added to the Safety Boat Check List.
- Safety boat drivers should establish radio communication with the Beach Master at or before launching.
- When conditions are at all challenging, a handheld radio should be carried by at least one of the crew in case the safety boat rolls over resulting in the RIB radio being out of reach.

ENTRAPMENT

- Over the past year or so the RYA have been monitoring incidents of entrapment.
- A few occur each year and there have been a very small number of fatalities.
- The incidents cover a range of different boats, although it is probably fair to say that trapeze harnesses getting caught is the most common single cause.
- Other boats involved in entrapment situations have included inverted day boats and catamarans.
- The Club is now listed for trapeze and spinnaker and have taken note of the recommendations. Only the Laser 2000s have trapeze wires and they have been fitted with large buoyancy bags to prevent inversion. Testing has shown that as far as we can ascertain, it is not possible to make them invert, because of the amount of buoyancy in the bags. Trapeze harnesses are of the new type with a hook release button.
- Despite the many capsizes of our other boats (Wayfarers, Fevas, Lasers, Toppers and Picos) we are unaware of any entrapment problems either in Lyme or in other centres using these boats. We therefore feel that we do not need to add this to our list of controls.
- An additional hazard is the lack of an air pocket under more modern inverted dinghies. Since privately owned boats may be more prone to this problem, all safety boat drivers should be aware of the RYA recommendations.

PROCEDURE

- This is taken from the RYA Safety Boat Handbook.
- From the RYA's work in studying entrapment situations, these are often due to trapeze hooks becoming caught in the rigging. The RYA advice is that attention should be paid to righting the boat rather than entering the water to release the person. Based on past situations, the RYA judge that the former is more likely to be quickly and successfully completed than the latter.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

- On approaching a suspected entrapment the RIB crew should get onto the inverted hull and use the standard method to right the dinghy.
- This is the only rescue situation where a single person in the RIB is permissible.
- For a two-hander dinghy, the non-trapped crew should also mount the inverted hull and assist.
- The RIB should go to the side of the boat being raised and attempt to lift the bow and view the entrapped person.
- Many modern boats with under floor buoyancy invert with very little air space underneath. Since the air pocket inside is reduced, when a person gets on the inverted hull, the situation can be helped by applying the weight of the crew as far aft as possible.

[Written by Chris Joyner and Sally Holman (January 2016) and edited by Hilton Davis (November 2016)]