

Howth Yacht Club, Howth, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

Waterborne Safety – Emergency Plan 2016(Version 6)

An emergency is defined as one in which a sailor has been injured, suffers a heart attack, becomes sick, suffers water inhalation, in shock, cramp or hypothermia to such an extent that medical attention is required.

Three types of emergencies are envisaged:-

Level 1 An emergency with a number of casualties where the safety facilities of HYC are inadequate to deal with the situation.

Level 2 An emergency with a number of casualties where the safety facilities of HYC are adequate to deal with the situation.

Level 3 An emergency involving a small number of casualties where the safety facilities of HYC are adequate to deal with the situation.

In all cases the safety objective is to preserve life. Accordingly, when a Level 1 situation arises, the Principal Race Officer (PRO), the Safety Officer or the appointed Senior Club Official must immediately request whatever additional emergency services are required from Dublin Coast Guard via VHF CH 16 (or phone 999/112, or other appropriate service.

The following rescue principles shall apply:

- Attend to the casualty immediately.
- Recover the casualty ashore as quickly as possible.
- Advise the Marina Office on VHF CH 37, as early as possible, to the condition of the casualty and his/her medical requirements (doctor, ambulance, cardiac ambulance, etc). **Note:** The Club doctor has recommended that the most appropriate way of dealing with the majority of injuries /illnesses is to call the emergency service on 999/112.
- The Marina staff member on duty shall call the appropriate medical service and advise the Senior Club Official (General Manager, Marine Manager or Senior Marina staff) on duty of the situation.
- For dinghy events, the Beachmaster will coordinate rescue activities ashore and is the on shore 'Point Of Contact'. This official will ensure that an accurate record is kept of sailors recovered and returning to the shore. For events not requiring a Beachmaster, the Senior Club Official ashore shall be the 'Point of Contact' and maintain the record of sailors recovered ashore.
- In the case of death or suspected criminality, the Garda must also be informed immediately.

On (999/112).

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Level 1 This situation is most likely during a large regatta with unforeseen heavy weather. However, it could also result from a collision between keelboats during a race. The PRO or Safety Officer will launch the HYC Emergency Plan.

Level 2 This emergency is a possible scenario during a race where a number of sailors overestimate their ability to handle the conditions. In this case the PRO or Safety Officer will launch the HYC Emergency Plan and coordinate and control activities.

Level 3 This situation is typically where a single dinghy gets into trouble. The crew is observed in difficulty and a HYC safety boat is dispatched. The sailor is recovered into the safety boat and brought ashore for appropriate medical attention.

The following guidelines for HYC dinghy events are produced to assist in providing safe sailing and minimising the occurrence of emergencies that would be categorised as Level 1, 2 or 3.

It must be borne in mind that there may be some confusion during an emergency at Level 1 or 2. It is therefore important that the Point of Contact ashore is an experienced person and can be clearly identified, by means of an armband available from the Marina Office, to those taking part in the rescue effort.

The Organising Committee shall nominate a Safety Officer to take charge of rescue when planning the event. The Safety Officer should be a full member of the Race Committee and is responsible for co-ordinating both the provision and the activities of all safety boats, mother ships and safety equipment, under the direction and overall control of the PRO whilst the fleet is afloat. The Organising Committee should nominate a beach master for dinghy events. It is the responsibility of the PRO or Safety Officer to brief all mark laying boats, safety boats and mother ships prior to and, where deemed necessary, during the event.

National/Regional/Dinghy Regatta Guidelines

It must be borne in mind that “the responsibility for a boat’s decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone”. Against that, the relative age, competence and experience of the sailors must be balanced, Bearing in mind that ultimately the objective for HYC is to provide enjoyable sailing whilst managing the inherent risks as well as is possible in the circumstances encountered.

1.0 General.

1.1 There should be a dedicated fleet of safety craft at any particular time whilst the dinghy fleet is afloat that are free of any other duties such as mark laying or jury duty. This dedicated fleet shall be called safety boats.

2.0 Safety and Rescue.

2.1 The PRO is the final authority for all safety boats and mother ship on the water. The PRO should have due regard to the requirements and wishes of the Safety Officer regarding the safety boats and mother ships.

2.2 Should an emergency be declared by the PRO, he may delegate this task to the Safety Officer and all boats should then come under the his/ ,her control. This includes, but is not restricted to, mark-laying boats and finishing boats. All boats so assigned shall remain under the control of the Safety Officer until all competitors are safely ashore or the PRO determines that the emergency is over.

2.3 The Safety Officer should at all times keep the PRO and the Beachmaster/official ashore informed of any incident.

3.0 Communications.

3.1 A dedicated channel for safety ships and mother ships should be assigned by the Safety Officer.

3.2 In an emergency all communications should be on this safety channel.

3.3 The beach master should be equipped with a VHF radio to enable him/her to communicate with the PRO and Safety Officer..

4.0 Safety Boats

- 4.1 The ratio of safety boats to competitors will depend on the weather forecast, the age of the competitors and the sea state.
- 4.2 All safety boats shall carry a white flag with “R” on it for identification.
- 4.3 All safety boats shall carry the standard HYC Safety equipment (see appendix 1).
- 4.4 All safety boats shall have an operational VHF radio.
- 4.5 On arriving at the race course, safety boats should (1) check in with the appropriate committee boat and (2) establish VHF contact with the Safety Officer. Safety boat crew should keep a listening watch on the allocated VHF channel. At the pre-race briefing, safety boat crews should be made aware of the difficulties that arise in communicating via hand held VHF in windy conditions and of the need to listen out at all times.
- 4.6 Safety boats should not leave the race area until racing is over, unless permitted to do so by the Safety Officer / PRO, and should then comply with any instructions given or arrangements previously made about how the fleet is to be shepherded ashore.
- 4.7 Notwithstanding the general obligation on competitors to be responsible for their own safety, there may be an expectation that, when there are safety boats present, they will respond to competitors requiring assistance. The obligations of those organising, and assisting at, events for Juniors are more onerous. Therefore whilst competitors are on the water, safety boats should act as if they are responsible for them. A look out should be kept for capsizes and where the crew appear to be having difficulty, are not visible or the capsize is prolonged or repeated, they should be attended to immediately and offered assistance. The safety priority is people – not equipment. Only when sailors are safe and no others require assistance should equipment be recovered.
- 4.8 Where relevant, lunches should be collected from the designated committee boat when advised by the Safety Officer or PRO and the safety boat should immediately proceed back to its station where the food is eaten. Under no circumstances should safety boats raft up during an event unless expressly permitted to do so by the Safety Officer. Rafting should only occur for operational reasons such as transfer of personnel or where the transfer marks, tackle, fuel, etc. between boats is unavoidable.

5.0 Mother Ships

- 5.1 The requirement for mother ships should be decided upon by the Organising Committee after considering the need for them. Factors influencing their use and the number required include the size of the fleet, distance of the racing area from the Club, length of time the fleet is expected to be afloat, the experience of the sailors expected to participate, the impact on the safety cover if boats had to be tasked to bring injured competitors ashore during racing, etc. For some events it may be possible for the Committee Boat to also function as a mother ship.
- 5.2 The mother ship(s) should be anchored where specified by the Safety Officer.
- 5.3 Mother ships should be identified by a white flag carried on the forestay.
- 5.4 Mother ships should be equipped with a working toilet, standard first aid kit, aluminium hypothermia blankets and facilities to make hot drinks.
- 5.5 Mother ships should be equipped with a floating towline, not less than 50 metres long, with a fender attached to the end. This towline should have tie-on loops at 10 foot intervals.
- 5.6 A mixed crew of male and female is required on mother ships when Junior sailors are competing.

6.0 Facilities ashore

- 6.1 There should be a doctor on call for the duration of the regatta.
- 6.2 Emergency telephone numbers should be readily accessible at all times in the Race Office.

7.0 Launching

7.1 No competitor should be allowed to launch by the Beachmaster until:

(a) The PRO or Safety Officer advises that the competitors should launch.

(b) There is the required number of safety boats on the water.

7.2 Where the distance from launching point to the race area is in excess of one nautical mile, safety boats should be positioned along the route to the race area and competitors advised to stay within the monitored area, The Baldoyle Spit should be treated as a particular hazard in the event of strong winds or breaking waves.

7.4 One safety boat should be stationed at the harbour entrance until the fleet is clear of it. It may also be advisable, depending on the fleet and conditions, to have a safety boat at the end of the slip. The last group of boats should be escorted to the race area by a safety boat. 7.5 The Beachmaster should inform the PRO and the Safety Officer of the number of boats that have launched and, when requested to, of the sail numbers of the competitors who have not launched.

8.0 During racing.

8.1 During racing, safety boats should be positioned at each of the rounding marks as allocated by the Safety Officer. Safety boats should normally follow the fleet and must, in normal circumstances, keep well clear of any competitor, although remaining close enough to see when assistance might be required.

8.2 Safety boats should remain at the position or in the area assigned to them by the Safety Officer at the briefing prior to the race, or at such other position assigned during the race.

8.3 Where a mother ship is in use, retiring competitors should be directed to it:

If retiring from that race only, direct it to the mother ship area pending the next race.

If assistance is required, act accordingly, tow it to a mother ship and then resume safety duties.

The sail number should be relayed to the Committee Boat and safety officer

8.4 No competitor, unless permitted by the Safety Officer, should return to the shore prior to the conclusion of racing. If permission is given, the boat should be accompanied by a safety boat. It is preferable to wait until a number of competitors wish to go ashore before tasking a safety boat to accompany them in order to avoid reducing the safety cover available for the general fleet.

8.5 Safety boats have the right of way over all competitors.

8.6 In the event of a severe squall, competing crews may be put on a mother ship for their own safety and their boat left unattended. In this case red and white plastic tape should be tied to the toe strap or, if the boat has capsized, it should be marked with an "X" on the hull to avoid an unjustified search for the crew being initiated. Unattended boats should be anchored to stop them drifting.

9.0 Returning to shore after racing.

9.1 Safety boats should be positioned along the route to the shore as racing ends.

9.2 At least one safety boat should be nominated as a sweeper to cover the back end of the fleet until the last competitor has reached the HYC slip area.

9.3 Unless otherwise instructed by the Safety Officer / PRO, all safety boats and mother ships should remain afloat until all competitors are accounted for and until they are released by the Safety Officer

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Appendix 1

Safety boat Equipment:

1. Two crew, one of whom must hold at least an ISA National powerboat certificate or equivalent.
2. VHF radio
3. 2 anchors and warps sufficient for the depths and forecasted operating conditions. One 50m towing warp.(For Feva events two 10m towing warps are required).
4. Small roll of red and white plastic tape.
5. First Aid kit.
6. Fire extinguisher.

7. Paddles.
10. Adequate clothing for the current/forecasted weather conditions including a suitable buoyancy aid.

Appendix 2.

Waterborne Safety Plan:

1. For planning purposes the Coast Guard require:
 - (a) The Notice of Race.
 - (b) The name of the beachmaster – with mobile phone contact number.
 - (c) Numbers of boats competing (if juniors – the age groups)
2. If an emergency is called, listen carefully on the VHF radio as you may be requested to go to another working channel.
3. In emergency – Dublin Coast Guard to be called on VHF Ch. 16 or land line 999/112.
4. The Beachmaster must wear a distinguishing armband.

(Current Howth Coast Guard Station no. 086 8501753.)