

Queen Mary Sailing Club – Club Racing Risk Assessment

Event: Club Racing	Date: For 01/04/2022 - 01/04/2023	
Risk Assessment	Completed By: Steve Bell (PRO), Liz Prescod (Chair of Sailing Committee) and Ross Malloy (Sailing Principal; Assistant Manager Sailing)	
QMSC has and will maintain up-to-date risk assessments for all activities to include racing.	QMSC Operating Procedures cover the actions taken to address the risks identified. These cover safety boat handling, child protection measures and major incidents.	See the extracts below relevant to racing.
QMSC has club byelaws, which refer to the safety of all operations afloat.	QMSC club byelaws state the named Duty Officer has overall authority over all on-water activities. In the event of disagreement as to the safety of proceeding with racing, the Duty Officer's assessment will prevail.	
Event Risk	Countermeasure	Specific Event Requirements
Unsuitable initial weather conditions	The Race Officer will assess conditions and shall consult the Duty Officer, and has the authority to postpone or abandon racing. The NOR reminds competitors that it is their responsibility to decide whether to launch. Where youths are racing, the decision to prevent or stop a youth racing due to unsuitable conditions, will lie with the DO, as per the club byelaws.	
Deteriorating weather conditions once afloat	The Race Officer will assess conditions and may consult the Duty Officer, and has the authority to postpone, shorten or abandon racing. The NOR reminds competitors that it is their responsibility to decide whether to continue to race. The Duty Officer has ultimate authority as to whether racing may continue either for the whole race/fleet or individuals within it, as per the club byelaws, bearing in mind the threshold for youths may be lower than for adults.	
Safety cover insufficient to support all dinghies in difficulty	Safety cover will be planned initially at two safety boats manned and on the water. On Sundays the Duty Officer's boat will also be on the water and the Duty Officer will be ready to assist if required. The Race Officer and Duty Officer will monitor conditions during the event.	
Loss of communication between RO and safety teams due to VHF radio failure	Race Officer to contact QM office by VHF or mobile phone on 01784-248881. Office will act as switchboard or send out replacement radios.	

Competitors, safety teams or Race Officials unaccounted for	Those staying afloat after racing fall under the provisions of the QMSC Safety Policy, a copy of which is available at the QM Office. A sweep of the reservoir and shoreline will be conducted at end of each day.	
Injury to Race Official	All Race Officials should be capable of operating a VHF (covered within the QM Race Officer course) in order to summon assistance for an injured colleague.	
Injuries arising from Powerboat usage	Only those with a minimum of RYA PBL2 to drive a PB at QM. A killcord must be worn on all PBs driven. Clear communication given to all aboard, especially when altering course/speed. When anyone forward of the cabin of one of the Committee Boats (ie to lay an anchor), slow speed must be maintained until everyone is back in the cabin. QM staff are always available if assistance needed in manoeuvring, mooring up, MOB situation etc.	
Youth in Club Racing	Signed parental consent will be collected at sign in, including an emergency contact number.	

Operating Procedures (Extract)

ROLE OF THE DUTY OFFICER

Definition

The Duty Officer (DO) is often referred to as the person "IC" (in charge). This person is either the Assistant Manager Sailing (AMS) or a full time Senior Instructor (SI) or a suitable person nominated by them. The person in the role of the Duty Officer should be noted on the Daily Information Board in the foyer.

Authority

The DO is in a role of senior responsibility at QM. The DO may prevent a person going afloat on QM or their own equipment at any time*. People should be encouraged, however, to make their own decision whether to go afloat or not, based on recommendations and a fair and realistic assessment of their own experience and limitations, together with an understanding of the prevailing or expected weather conditions. The DO has the authority to:

- 1) remove anyone from the water (or a particular area of the water) for a valid reason (such as an infringement of safety, for the safety of the person or others) *
- 2) request that a person leaves QM for a valid reason*, and an entry in the 'Incidents, Accidents and Near Misses Book' must be completed in these cases.

(*as per the Club Byelaws which state that the orders of the DO must be followed)

ROLE OF THE SAFETY HELM & CREW

Definition

For safety cover, the person who is in charge of a powerboat is defined as 'SAFETY HELM'. The second person aboard is defined as 'SAFETY CREW', regardless of who is driving at any particular time.

Overview

Safety Helms are typically experienced powerboat drivers (should be RYA Safety Boat qualified) who are in charge of the operation of a powerboat providing safety cover during Club Racing or Open Meetings (including Open Pursuit Races). Depending on the weather conditions and other considerations the Safety Helm may operate alone (less common) or with a Safety Crew (more common) as directed by the Duty Officer. Safety Crews may be a less-experienced powerboat driver but must have RYA Powerboat Level 2. Both must follow the directions of the DO and Race Officer in charge.

General procedures

Safety Helms must operate in a safe and responsible manner keeping a constant lookout and attending/observing any capsizes or signals for assistance. Priority should be given to capsized (especially inverted) boats and persons separated from their boat or board. Any physical or verbal assistance given to a competitor requires the competitor to complete a report form but no longer to retire from the race.

Safety boats should be positioned appropriate to the areas likely to need attention (i.e. gybe marks) and spread out to ensure the best cover to all sailors/course area – typically Safety 1 will take the lead on ensuring SBs are positioned correctly. The welfare of people must always be put before the welfare of boats and equipment. Safety Helms are responsible for the welfare of their safety crews, competitors and for observing other (non-racing) water users (with the exception of those under instruction). Safety Helms must call for backup as early as possible if:

- Racing or non-racing water users require attention that they cannot give without compromising the safety of the competitors
- If they are unable to temporarily cover safety for any reason such as they have a boat in tow
- If the situation is deteriorating (for example bad weather is approaching or the rate of capsizing is increasing)

The DO will always be prepared to break-off from what they are doing to provide backup safety. Safety Helms should keep an awareness of fatigued sailors, offshore winds, the approach of storms/squalls, darkness falling, sailors returning to shore via the other side of the reservoir to which the racing was taking place etc. and make a decision as to what to do in changing circumstances, (with the advice of the ROs and DO available on the VHF).

ABANDONING BOATS and/or RACING

Boats

Decision to abandon a dinghy is made by the Safety Helm. In this instance, clip the 'abandoned boat' buoy to a secure part of the boat, thus alerting other safety crews it has been abandoned **AND** communicate this via VHF

with an 'ALL STATIONS' broadcast with approximate position. If possible get clarification from the DO that the message has been received. In some cases (typically with large fleets) an alternative abandoned boat procedure may be implemented, this will be discussed within the event safety briefing.

Racing

Decision to abandon racing for a safety reason will be made by the Duty Officer with advice from the Safety Team and Race Officer. If a race is to be abandoned the 'N' Flag will be displayed in the following locations....

- 1) Committee boat: if practical and appropriate the committee boat will motor round the course making sound signals to alert the competitors
- 2) Safety Boats: each SB* will display a 'N' flag on a stick securely attached to the back of the seat/part of the SB in a way that gives it the most visibility. If the overall situation allows, SBs may motor through the fleet alerting the competitors. But if incidents need attending – this is the priority.

**in events where multiple SBs are used, typically it would be a up to 4 SBs carrying the portable 'N' flag*



Decision to abandon racing due to lower or upper wind limits will be made by the Race Officer.

VHF Call Signs & Communications

Call signs used:

'QM' – call sign for office. Please note this does not necessarily mean the Duty Officer.

'Duty Officer' – call sign for the Duty Officer

'Club Race' – call sign for the Club Race Officer

'Open Race' – call sign for the Open Race Officer

'(Open) Safety 1 (2/3/4 etc)' – call sign for (Open) Safety 1/2/3 etc

Emergency communication call signs (please note this is more for information than action by ROs)

- **CODE RED** on the radio means the emergency services are likely required

If you hear a **CODE RED** and you are not directly involved in the incident please avoid all unnecessary radio communications. The Duty Officer will oversee the allocation of staff to assist the incident should it be necessary. The Duty Officer will liaise with the safety boats for the race cover over whether to abandon racing or carry on. As a RO, as long as there is no immediate compromise to the competitors, please keep the race underway, until you hear otherwise.