



## **GSC Race Officer, Instructor & Safety Crew Instructions**

These procedures are *minimal guidelines* and should be understood in conjunction with the **Safety Statement** [www.gsc.ie/about-GSC/club-policies](http://www.gsc.ie/about-GSC/club-policies) which also covers:

- Procedure for dealing with Category 1 & 2 incidents
- Cancelling an activity before going on water, or in progress
- Methods for :
  - securing a tow – aft and alongside
  - retrieving a person from the water
  - dealing with an emergency situation
  - launching and recovering a powerboat from the slip

In this document, where :

- **(Principal) Race Officer / Race Officials** is used, it may also be understood to mean **Senior Instructor or Instructor**
- **Race** is used it may also be understood to mean **training activity**
- **Race area** is used, it may also be understood to mean **training area**
- **Competitors** is used, this may also be understood as **trainees**

### **1. Before Arriving at Club the Principal Race Officer (PRO) should:**

- 1.1. Contact Assistant Race Officer and safety boat crews **at least a week prior to duty** to ensure they are available and advise them to be at the club an hour and a half before the scheduled start time of the days racing (Check Dutyman roster for contact details).
- 1.2. Confirm that all boats to be used for activity management are seaworthy.
- 1.3. Request firmly that **no children or non-members** will be taken on board during racing.
- 1.4. All Safety crews are to dress for dinghy racing as they may be required to assist in recovery.
- 1.5. Check weather forecast, in advance and on the morning of your duty.
  - Online at <http://www.met.ie/forecasts/sea-area.asp>
  - Smart Phone <http://mobile.met.ie/mobile/sea.asp>
  - Windguru – Windguru pro is more up to date/

### **2. Safety Boat crews** should be familiar with the **Safety on the Water document** (website)

- 2.1. The Safety Boat Cox must assist the Race Officer in the implementation of the Club's Safety Procedure during a water-based activity.
- 2.2. In the course of an incident, circumstances may require the Safety Boat Cox to take control of a situation. At all times, all **Race officials** will adhere to the following order of priorities:
  - Safety of the crew of the safety boat itself
  - Safety of persons being assisted
  - Safety of other participating crews
  - Prevention of further damage to disabled or other boats
  - Recovery of disabled or capsized boat

### **3. At the Club**



- 3.1. Arrive at the club at least **an hour and a half** before first warning signal to ensure plenty of time to prepare equipment and pre-launch brief the safety crews.
- 3.2. Check the tide, local weather, visibility and sea conditions and write details into sign out/in book. Reset the weather station in the club. (Instructions at weather station located at top of stairs) and check the Club Weather station also online at: <http://www.weatherlink.com/user/greystones/>
- 3.3. **PRO to brief safety boat team and Shoremasters**, role clarity is key and some may be inexperienced:
  - Identify crew pairings, RIB allocation, race area and roles: mark laying, oversight of launch & recovery, progress to and from the race area
  - With reference to safety equipment, weather, sea state, and sailors, discuss policy re weak or inexperienced sailors e.g. to return ashore where relevant.
  - Ask safety team, Safety Officer, experienced sailors to convey any concerns they may have re sailors, particularly juniors, equipment, weather etc and **act upon these concerns**.
  - Highlight issues with launch & recovery where there is a swell in the harbor, waves breaking on the slip or where NE or Easterly winds are forecast that may result in difficulty with launch and recovery.
  - **DO NOT feel obliged** to go ahead with racing if you are uncomfortable in any way.
  - **SUNDAY SAILING**
    - Race officer is required to give all sailors a **briefing covering launch, recovery, wind, tide and race area**. He/she may gather information at the briefing as to skill set of sailors.
    - The Safety boat covering the harbour area during launch and recovery could drop the crew ashore to assist until all dinghies are launched.

- 3.4. Before you leave the Clubhouse, gather together the committee and safety boat equipment required for each of the boats, in the GSC wheelbarrow for transport to the marina:
  - Keys & kill cords
  - Fuel:
    - Re-fill red fuel tanks for Avons (Grey RIBs) Red and Orange RIBs **at the Club**
    - Committee boat requires 2-stroke pre-mixed fuel - tank with taped stripe
    - Blue RIB will require large funnel and green fuel can to fill with care at the marina
    - Orange RIB has bright orange/red tank with yellow sticker which will fit flat under seat.
  - Safety boxes (yellow box with red lid) for each boat – see list in Office for contents



- **Working** radios (check before leaving Clubhouse) in aquapacs Channel 72 (tie to buoyancy aid to avoid loss overboard). Ensure all caps are secure on M23 and M25 radios (at top of radio) to avoid water ingress.
- Race Officer dry-box. (White barrel, red top)
  - laminated SIs and race sheets are in dry box and cleared of previous results
  - Check dry box for 2 x pencils / hooters / whistles/ erasers / burgees.
- You will also need a **stopwatch** for time keeping and a **knife** in case of emergencies

**All of the above must be returned to the race office/ fuel store, and radios replaced in chargers after racing.**

3.5. Dress **warmly and appropriately**. You may be required to launching a RIB and even on warm days you may feel cold sitting inactive on the Race Committee boat.

3.6. Complete Race Sheets with Safety crew, weather and sea state details.

## 4. On the Marina

- Check oars/paddles, anchors and tow lines on each boat.
- Re-fuel blue RIB with care
- Leave the Club Wheel Barrow where it will not obstruct other Marina users
- Launch all boats ideally 40 minutes before the first warning signal to minimize delays, allow time to set the course and sailors to launch their dinghies
- Ensure all Safety Boats are properly equipped and in working order before leaving the marina.
- If RIBs are required to be launched from the slip, please follow the launch procedure set out in the Safety on the Water Statement and SOPs.

## 5. On The Water

- 5.1. Respect the 5 knot speed restriction in the marina and harbour.
- 5.2. Keep to Starboard and pass an oncoming boat to Port ie not as on roads.
- 5.3. Do not delay the start as it will encourage tardiness.
- 5.4. Review safety boat cover should weather deteriorate or boats on the water increase.
- 5.5. PRO to identify one **Safety Boat** to oversee launch at the harbour/harbour mouth and to regularly inform PRO of no. of boats that have left the harbour.

## 6. Set the course

- 6.1. Select a suitable location for the race area with reference to tide, wind direction and strength, sea state, sailors and keelboat activity. This should always allow other



harbour users to negotiate a **clear approach** to the harbour avoiding the dinghy race area.

6.1.1. An offshore breeze may cause gusts and shifts close to the shoreline, which may be an issue if the wind is strong. Laying marks too close to shore, with onshore wind or waves, can be hazardous. Assuming there is wind, further out to sea is usually preferable, allowing time and space for recovery after capsise and avoiding larger waves.

6.1.2. Where possible set the course up-tide from the harbour entrance, the current generally runs South except for 2 or 3 hours at low water.

6.2. PRO should direct mark laying by Safety boat crews, bearing in mind, tidal drift and anchor rope length.

- Anchor the Race Committee boat so the Windward and Leeward mark laying may begin. Ensure anchorage allows for intended length of beat to WW and for laying #3 leeward mark safely clear of the shore and harbour mouth.
- PRO to direct laying of Windward #1 mark (WW): upwind of anchored Committee boat to allow a 10 minute first beat for fastest boat. Burgees on OD boat.
- Committee boat may then direct RIB to lay yellow pin end of the Start/finish line square to the wind. Guide for start/finish line length: =1.5 boat lengths x # boats of largest fleet.
- Leeward mark #3 (LW): directly downwind from the windward mark at similar distance to #1 (WW) from RC Boat. Some prefer a slightly shorter length from LW Start/Finish line.
- Gybe mark #2 allowing enough distance from the windward and leeward marks for good angled reaches, generally in line with Start line but up to 6 times the distance, compensate for tidal effect by laying mark down-tide for first reach.

6.3. Assistant Race Officer should record all decisions to go ahead/cancel racing. He will also record on the race sheet any incidents during the activity.

6.3.1. Confirm numbers on the water with Safety Crew on harbour designated RIB and Shoremaster on Sundays.

6.3.2. Record sail numbers & helm names in pencil on race record sheet.

6.3.3. Make every attempt to get names for all juniors as they do not always sail the same boats, nor record boats correctly on sign out sheet.

6.3.4. Record and monitor all boats even if they are not racing.

## 7. Start the Race

7.1. PRO to begin the starting sequence, in accordance with Sailing Instructions (SIs), writing the start time on the record sheet.

7.2. Use a stop watch to record times either from the first fleet's warning signal or the elapsed time of the race clearly indicating on the race sheet which is used.



- 7.3. Check for competitors over the line and hoist individual recall, code flag "X" with one sound signal. You are not required to hail the culprit, but it is a nice thing to do.
- 7.4. If a boat was On Course Side (OCS) and does not restart, then he shall be marked as OCS on the race sheet.
- 7.5. Note all boats that started and did not finish (DNF) or boats that did not start (DNS) on the Race sheet.

## 8. During the Race

- 8.1. Check that the start/finish line is square to the wind and of appropriate length. If not, it may be repositioned either before the first boat rounds the LW mark for the last time or after the race.
- 8.2. Note if course legs are too short/long or reaches too tight or broad so that course can be adjusted for subsequent races.
- 8.3. Monitor competitors' progress. If progress is slow, proceed in accordance with SIs.
- 8.4. Monitor weather looking out for significant and sustained changes that may affect racing. Shorten course if necessary in accordance with SIs.
- 8.5. Record the number of laps when boats round the leeward #3 mark (3 laps 3 roundings).
- 8.6. As the lead boat approaches the Leeward mark in the final lap mark, hoist finishing flag (Blue).
- 8.7. Monitor the race and harbour area for boats that have gone ashore and/or retired from racing and record on the race sheet.
- 8.8. Safety Boat crews to request instruction of PRO if none given.

## 9. Safety Issues

- 9.1. The Race Officer may postpone, abandon or cancel racing if weather conditions deteriorate or where Safety Cover is deemed insufficient.
- 9.2. All Race officials should maintain look-out for capsized, drifting or boats that are sailing away from the race area and keep up a regular count of boats on the water.
- 9.3. Safety crews should proceed at a safe speed **facing into the wind** of the capsized or disabled boat, to stand by at a safe distance, particularly in a swell, to ensure the Safety Boat is not blown or carried onto the craft, and to avoid the propeller causing damage to boat and rigging.
- 9.4. Near dinghies and close to sailors in the water, powerboats must only be driven at very low speeds. Stop the engine immediately if you are in doubt about the safety of equipment or, especially, sailors, particularly in waves or a swell. The safety boat driver must maintain one hand on the throttle at all times to nudge boat in position while underway.
- 9.5. While at a safe and controlled distance, assess sailors' well-being and discuss and agree Safety Cox intervention to assist recovery.

If conditions allow:



- an approach to centreboard of a dinghy on its side will allow the Safety Boat cox to apply leverage to assist righting the boat.
- Approach the masthead and lift slowly
- Safety cox may enter the water and assist, but not in extreme conditions as his own safety is paramount.

**If sailors appear tired, weak, cold and/or scared, consider removing them from the water before retrieving the dinghy, particularly if they are children. They are your priority.**

9.6. Ensure appropriate assistance is given, even if refused, to avoid an incident developing. The Race Officer or Safety boat crew may direct a boat to go ashore if concerned for the safety of the crew or if it is tying up a safety boat for a disproportionate time.

## 10. Securing a Tow

10.1 Towing a boat ashore is time consuming and should not be considered if Safety boats are required elsewhere on the course. If necessary, a competent sailor from the Safety crew may return a boat ashore while tired or cold sailors are taken ashore by Safety boat. In survival conditions, a boat may be left to drift or tied to a mark. A safety boat crew's priority is the sailors.

10.2 The most common circumstance where a Safety Boat will be required to give assistance will involve towing a dinghy back to harbour. This could be due to a complete drop in wind, often accompanied with an adverse tidal direction; a capsize where the crew feel unable to continue racing either due to cold, exhaustion or gear failure. Remember after a capsize, the crew may be cold and exhausted. This may affect their performance so it is the responsibility of the Safety Boat Cox and Crew to prioritise their safety and if going ahead with the tow, to ENSURE THE TOW IS SECURE.

### 10.3 Securing a Tow from Stern of Safety Boat to Bow of Dinghy:

- Come alongside dinghy, ensuring fingers and hands are clear.
- Always ask helm if he/she requires a tow, unless it is an emergency situation in which the Safety Boat Cox takes control.
- Where possible and time allows, drop sails to avoid wear during the tow.
- Pass or cast tow line to dinghy.
- Dinghy crew to secure towrope to mast or other secure point, NEVER TO THE FORESTAY. Ensure it can be easily released eg a few wraps around the mast with dinghy crew holding the end.
- Agree basic signals for use between Safety Boat and dinghy.
- Raise centreboard/dagger board of dinghy.
- Ensure dinghy helm and crew ready to cast off.
- Cast off and engage forward slowly to pick up slack on towline.
- When slack picked up, proceed with care.
- Dinghy helm to maintain balance and steer towards the stern of the powerboat.
- Safety Boat Crew to sit on pillion seat with back to Cox to keep watch on towed



dinghy. Advise Cox of anything wrong or of any signals from dinghy helm or crew.

- Proceed direct to harbour unless necessary to tow other dinghies. Only 3 dinghies should be towed at one time.
- To let go tow, throttle back slowly, the crew taking up the slack towline.
- Bring towed dinghy alongside and untie towline.
- Secure tow line inboard.
- Cast off and bear away from dinghy.

#### **10.4 Securing a Tow from Alongside Safety Boat:**

- Come alongside dinghy, ensuring fingers and hands are clear.
- Always ask helm if he/she requires a tow, unless it is an emergency situation in which case the Safety Boat Cox takes control.
- Pass or cast tow line to dinghy.
- Manoeuvre dinghy forward so that Safety Boat Engine is farther aft than transom of towed dinghy to allow steerage.
- Secure a line from bow of Safety Boat to bow of dinghy.
- Secure a line from stern of Safety Boat to stern of dinghy.
- Secure a line from bow of Safety Boat to stern of dinghy.
- Secure a line from stern of Safety Boat to bow of dinghy.
- Ensure all towing lines are tight.
- Agree basic signals for use between Safety Boat and dinghy.
- Ensure dinghy helm and crew ready to proceed with tow.
- Engage forward slowly, picking up speed gradually.
- Crew to sit facing towed boat to keep watch on towed boat. Advise Cox of anything wrong or of any signals from dinghy helm or crew.
- Proceed direct to harbour unless necessary to tow other dinghies. Only 2 dinghies should be towed at one time when secured to side, one on each side.

#### **10.5 To let go tow**

- Throttle back slowly, the crew taking up the slack towline if towing from stern.
- Bring towed dinghy alongside and untie towline, or if already alongside, untie all lines, leaving the line from bow of Safety Boat to bow of dinghy until last.
- Secure tow lines inboard.
- Cast off and bear away from dinghy.

### **11. Retrieving a Person from the Water**

This is a very common situation and where the greatest care is required. A person in the water is at risk from injury by the propeller or the hull. If someone has been in the water for over 15 minutes, he/she will be very tired and cold. More so, if the sea conditions are challenging.

The following is the only safe way to avoid causing injury when retrieving a person from the water:

- 11.1 Approach person in water with Safety Boat facing into wind and at slow speed.
- 11.2 Gear into Neutral when about 2 boat lengths away from person in water and drift in.



Use forward gear if necessary to nudge forward.

- 11.3 Safety Boat crew to come forward of helm position on the wider side of the console to avoid getting in the way of the throttle.
- 11.5 Crew to grab person and call loudly to Cox "GOT HIM/HER".
- 11.6 Cox to **switch off engine** as soon as crew confirms that he/she has a hold of the person in the water (unless it is dangerous to do so, e.g. close to rocks where Safety Boat crew might be in danger, in which case, ensure engine is in neutral).
- 11.7 Bring person in the water back to mid-way down the boat. This is only safe when engine is OFF.
- 11.8 Bring person on board with back to sponson as this is easier.

IF SPINAL INJURY IS SUSPECTED, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PULL PERSON INTO BOAT. CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES.

IF PERSON HAS BEEN IN WATER FOR OVER FIFTEEN MINUTES, BRING INBOARD IN HORIZONTAL POSITION AND GET PERSON TO LIE DOWN ON THE DECK.

- 11.9 Apply first aid as necessary and return person ashore as necessary.

When approaching a person in the water, approach in a way you would like to see someone else approach you in the water. When retrieving anything from the water, approach as if it is a person. It is good practice.

## 12. Incident Reporting:

The Safety Boat Cox/PRO will record all incidents in the Incident Book including incidents where members were advised / ordered not to go afloat or to return ashore.

## 13. Free Sailing:

Members who choose to leave the race area must inform the RO. Such boats should be informed that they are no longer considered to be participating boats for the purpose of safety crew obligations. Trainees are at all times the responsibility of the Instructor team and should not be permitted to sail beyond the area of activity.

## 14. The Finish

- 14.1 As boats cross the finish line, hoot or whistle and record elapsed times.
- 14.2 Boats must finish within 20 minutes of first boat in their fleet.
- 14.3 Note, Race Officials may give instruction to encourage new or young sailors.

14.4 All boats on the water **SHOULD** have a DNS, DNF, OCS or a finish time recorded.

## 15. After Racing

- 15.1 When a second or third race is planned, assess the conditions, race area and course length and where necessary, swiftly relay marks (starting with the WW) to ensure sailors are not waiting unnecessarily. It is better to race a slightly skewed course, than significantly delay the start sequence.



- 15.2 As boats finish racing and return towards the harbour area, the Race Officer should again instruct a safety boat to standby near the harbour to oversee recovery.
- 15.3 As the last boat rounds marks for the final time, marks may be lifted.
- 15.4 Safety boats should remain on the water until all dinghies are ashore or have been notified that safety cover is ending and have the dinghies have clearly signaled their intention to stay on the water without Safety cover.

## **16 Dealing with an emergency situation:**

### **16.1 Situation Assessment**

Use common sense. Ask yourself is the situation one which you or another member of the club can cope with. Activating the Emergency Services is costly. Unnecessary call outs will get the Club a bad reputation for day to day activity management. However, the Emergency Services are the experts and they should be called before a situation develops which is beyond the capability of any Club members to resolve.

### **16.2 Request Assistance**

of Trained Members to Assist With an Incident on the Water If a situation occurs which is beyond the capability of the Race Officer, Safety Boat Cox and/or Crew, the Race Officer and/or Cox must enlist the help of any one or more of the Trained Members. They will take control and all members should follow any instructions given by them.

- 16.3 A list of qualified Safety Boat Coxs and Crews will be kept on the Club Notice Board and updated from time to time by the Executive.
- 16.4 The Race Officer must enter details in the OD log book of any incident where Trained Members were called to assist the Race Officer or Safety Boat Cox or any other member.

## **17 Dealing with an Injured Person**

- 17.1 In the event of an accident, call a trained First Aider.
- 17.2 If unable to find a First Aider, call an ambulance if the injury is serious.
- 17.3 The Race Officer must enter details of any accident or injury in the RO Log Book and ensure a debrief is followed by detailed review in incident report to inform policy.
- 17.4 If any items are used from the Club's First Aid Kit, the Safety Officer must be advised so that the Kit can be restocked.

## **18 Launch authority**

- 18.1 All available resources should be used when dealing with an incident on the water. The person in charge of an incident has authority to launch additional club boats if suitably experienced crews are available.
- 18.2 An incident ends when all participants have returned to shore and club boats have returned to the harbour. Only a member of the executive committee or the safety officer may authorise the launch or use of club boats once an incident has ended

## **17 Returning to the Marina**



On entering the harbour & marina ensure that Committee boat and safety boats respect the speed limit, minimize any wake and keep to starboard passing other boats to port.

## **18 Securing the boats in the Marina**

It is the PRO's and Safety crews' responsibility to ensure that all boats are secure.

- a. All boats to be securely tied up using bow painter (not tow line)
- b. All engines to be tilted so propeller and skeg are out of the water
- c. Batteries turned off on Race Committee Boat, Blue and Orange RIBs
- d. The following should all be removed from boats and placed in GSC wheelbarrow for return to the race office:

Fuel cans, keys, kill cords, safety boxes, VHF radios and Race Officer dry-box.

- e. Where directed by bosun, the Red RIB may need to be taken ashore.
- f. Tidy all tow ropes, mark lines and other equipment.
- g. **All drain plugs to be securely placed and RIB drain Socks to be up (2 on orange RIB)**
- h. Remove all personal affects or empty drink cans bottles or papers. Leave the boats as you would like to find them.

## **19 Race Officer Log Book and Results**

- a. **Before** changing, present results to the results co-ordinator who will assist you in entering the results in to Sailwave. Further instructions are in the Race officer log book.
- b. Note any incidents into the Incident Book or damages to equipment in the Equipment Register.
- c. Notify Sailing Secretary/Sailing Committee and any parties of protests lodged.
- d. Return race record sheet to race office in the Race officer log book.

Course Diagrams on next page:



**Course Diagrams**

