

WEST WITTERING SAILING CLUB

Operating Instructions for Safety Officers and Coxswains

Thank you for volunteering to be part of our safety team. These notes set out to describe the roles of safety officers and coxswains. They should be read in conjunction with separate notes describing the club patrol boats, radios and the role of the Race Officer.

- Reporting** - Please be at the Club Hut at least one and a half hours before the start of the race to meet with the Race Officer (RO), Assistant RO. It is good practice for Race Officers to hold a short pre-race briefing with the safety team providing an opportunity to clarify roles for the day and highlight any specific issues which are likely to arise. On occasions, perhaps as a result of members swapping duties, there may be an imbalance of experience within the safety team. If so consider whether this needs to be redressed. Suitably qualified junior members aged 16 or 17 may undertake duties provided that they are accompanied by an adult.
- Dress** - The Safety Officer should be prepared to go in the water if necessary so please be sure to wear a wet suit and/or warm and adequate clothing. If a weather conditions are good then consider taking sun cream, water etc. When on the water a buoyancy aid is compulsory at all times.
- Decision to Race** - It is the decision of the Race Officer, in consultation with the Safety Officer, as to whether or not racing takes place. The following are the major criteria that will govern this decision. Other criteria can be added if relevant.
 - ✓ Wind speed in relation to the competency of those taking part and the temperature of both the air and water. Winds that are consistently in excess of 20 knots are usually considered to be too much especially earlier in the season when it is cold.
 - ✓ Visibility – will the crew of the patrol boats be able see far enough.
 - ✓ Competency of available Patrol Boat crew.
 - ✓ Number of entries – if there are less than four boats in total racing is usually cancelled but this is at the discretion of the Race Officer. The minimum number for a race to be scored is two.
- Radios** – will be found on charge in the clubhouse. Each Safety Officer/ should have a radio. The call signs used are:

Patrol Boat 1 (RIB):	Wittering Yellow
Patrol Boat 2 (Chilli Pepper):	Wittering Red
Committee Boat:	Wittering White
Patrol Boat 3 (Lima)	Wittering Orange

Please see the Instructions for Using ICOM-M31 Handheld Radios and ensure that correct radio procedure is used at all times.

- Collect Keys, Kill Cord, Fuel and the appropriate safety kit for you boat.** The keys and kill cords for all Committee Boat and Patrol Boat(s) are kept in the key box. Fuel is kept in the store at the beach end of the car park. The padlock combination for this is the same as for the car park. Neat petrol is stored in green cans; red cans contain pre-mixed fuel for 2 stroke engines. For each of the patrol boats there is a rigid yellow container in which you will find various items of safety equipment which you may need. Familiarise yourself with the contents before you go out on the water and identify if anything is missing. These are kept in the clubhouse.

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Safety Equipment for each of the Patrol Boats. Items kept in the yellow containers unless indicated otherwise.		
RIB	Chilli Pepper	Lima (small container)
3 Smoke flares	3 smoke flares	1 smoke flare
Mineral water	Mineral water	Mineral water
Thermal Blanket	Thermal Blanket	Thermal Blanket
First Aid Kit	First Aid Kit	First Aid Kit
Knife	Knife*	Knife
Fire extinguisher	Fire Extinguisher*	
Tool kit*		
* Asterisked items are kept aboard. A safety kit is also kept aboard the committee boat.		

6. **Getting out to the Patrol Boat** - The race team will generally be taken out to the Patrol boats and Committee Boat in Lima (Jeanneau Rigiflex). This boat uses the 4HP engine that is kept in the engine shed mounted on a trolley. This engine uses 2-stroke fuel that is kept in the red plastic cans. You will also need the two rigid paddles to help manoeuvre the boat when starting the engine. An alternative option is to use the Club Tender and oars with the 2HP outboard engine. Take care starting this engine as it has no neutral gear and will be in drive as soon as the engine starts. When starting this engine you must ensure you have sufficient water and are well clear of legs and toes.
7. **Events requiring three Patrol Boats** – Lima may be used as a supplementary patrol boat for larger events, for this type of use the larger 15HP Suzuki engine is required. This has no header tank and must be used with a red external fuel tank which will be found in the fuel store.
8. **Race Entries** - The RO will leave entry forms in triplicate at the Hard by the steps. Once participants have signed on and 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the race one copy should be ferried to the RO in the Committee boat, the other copy retained by the Safety Officer, together with a copy of the course.
9. **Course(s)** – the Safety Officer should liaise with the RO regarding the choice of course(s) and the course(s) should be written down for future reference. Thought needs to be given, especially in rough conditions, as to how the Patrol Boats are going to cover a fleet that can become quite spread out. If there are two or more Patrol Boats operating there needs to be a clear understanding of who is covering what with the radios being used to make changes as and when appropriate.
10. **On board the RIB** – you should find 2 anchors with warps, additional towing warp, bailing bucket, ground tackle for HUT, first aid kit, tools including a sailing knife.
11. **Maintaining Watch** - during the Race the Patrol Boats should maintain watch over the competitors. It is helpful for the Race Officer to be kept informed of competitors' progress around the course as well as any change in prevailing conditions. Wind conditions in the harbour can be very localised and the RO may need to consider shortening the course. The Race Officer should also be advised of any retirements
12. **Rendering Assistance** – Your assistance will automatically disqualify a competitor from a race so initially stand off and allow the crew time to sort themselves out. Your presence will be reassuring. When working with persons in the water the engine must be switched off. The prime requirement is to ensure that individuals are removed from

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the water when judged to be unable to continue to sail their boat through tiredness, cold, or overwhelmed by conditions. Judgement must be applied in any decision to extract crews under these conditions and the safety officer's decision will be final. Naturally due account will be taken of the experience levels and particular attention paid to junior crews.

13. **Scoop and Run** – The key priority is the safety of people. Where other crews require assistance their safety will take precedence over the recovery of boats. This may mean abandoning craft to deal with other crews. This is quite acceptable – the worst that will happen is that boats will end up in the mud. If possible tie some ribbon on to a visible part of any abandoned boat before it is left. This will avoid attracting other patrol boats.
14. **Summoning Professional Assistance** -In serious situations you must be prepared to call in professional assistance. The relevant emergency service is the Coastguard who can be contacted on Channel 16 or by dialling 999 or 112 on a mobile phone. Remember you will need to be able to give a clear description of your location. In non 'life and limb' cases it may be more appropriate to contact the Chichester Harbour Patrol (Harbour Master) which operates on Channel 14. Make sure you are familiar with the instructions on how to unlock and change channels on the radio before such an occasion arises.
15. **Conditions during the Race** - should conditions deteriorate during the race and, in the opinion of the Safety Officer and Race Officer become unsafe for the completion of the race, the race should be shortened / abandoned. The Safety Officer is responsible for rounding up participants and shepherding them to the Hard.
16. **Ensuring Everyone has Returned** - Before returning the Patrol Boat to its mooring, confirm with the R.O. that all competitors have declared as retired or completed, if someone is missing it is your duty to establish that they are safe, or declare a search. You may wish to involve all those present in this task.
17. **Safety Log** – Maintaining effective safety procedures is an iterative process and we want to learn from your experience. Dangerous incidents and observed hazards should be noted in the safety log, which is kept in the clubhouse, this is reviewed by WWSC's committee at every meeting. If you have any observations about the boat or equipment you can:
 - ✓ Leave a comment on club white board
 - ✓ Contact one of the Rear Commodores Andy Taylor 07717 852607 or Ivan Western 0784 320 6458
 - ✓ Speak to another committee member.