



## **Dabchicks Sailing Club 2024**

# **SAFETY STANDARD OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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## 1. Introduction

The DSC has a clear responsibility for the safety of all members, volunteers and staff when competing in a DSC-sponsored event. This responsibility is heightened where children are involved. A child is defined as being any person under the age of 18.

This document sets out the procedures to be used as the basis for conducting the Safety Cover in order to reduce the inherent risks associated with racing to a currently socially acceptable level. The DSC ensures that this level is reviewed regularly.

**Events** are defined as competitive sailing, coaching/training, social sailing, both large and small for all types of watercraft at the DSC. Titles such as Race Officers/Coaches/fleet leaders are interchangeable.

## 2. Objectives

The Objectives of the Safety Fleet is to provide efficient, competent safety cover at the event to allow all competitors, volunteer and family maximum enjoyment with minimum concern for the safety of the sailors and boats.

## 3. Overall Organisational Structure

The safety of all participants is the responsibility of the Event organiser and delegated to the Race Officers/Coaches/fleet leaders from the time the first participant is permitted to go on the water until the time that all the competitors are off the water and have been accounted for.

The Event Organisers and Race Officers/Coaches/fleet leaders have absolute authority to employ all the resources available to them as they see fit, and to direct the work of all those assisting. In discharging this responsibility, the Event Organiser should appoint a Safety Officer ("SO"). The SO will formulate policy and procedures for the event based around this document.

The SO may appoint separate Course Safety Leaders ("SO").

The SO should manage Beachmaster, the Motherships, safety boats, coach boats and any support boats. The ROs should liaise with the mark layers, jury boats.

The Safety Fleet will consist of dedicated Safety Boats. At the request of the SO to either the Event Organiser, or to a RO, the mark layers, pin end boats and jury boats may be brought into the Safety Fleet. They should then operate under the direction of the SO, or the SO for one fleet, until the need passes, where after, they should be released back to the RO.

Support Boats may be asked to join the safety fleet under the control of the SO in accordance with RRS 37

Each RO will have operational responsibility for the safety of competitors on their course. The RO should work with the SO to communicate the safety cover plan with their race and safety team. Each RO and SO should define and manage how cover should be handled on



each course and should manage the movement of their competitors from shore to the course area.

The SO will host a safety briefing for all the Safety Fleet drivers and crews at the beginning of the event. They should also attend the competitors briefing and give the competitors a safety briefing.

The SO should attend the daily Race Management briefing and should thereafter brief the Safety Fleet before sailing to ensure adequate communication of weather data, daily organisational plans, etc. At this meeting the daily Risk Assessment should be completed. The SO should also brief the Motherships as to their role – particularly with regard to retiring competitors.

The SO is responsible for the overall management of the Safety Fleet both on and off the water. This should include delivering the organisational structure, adherence to this document, and management of the Safety Fleet infrastructure (e.g. boat allocation, boat resourcing, refuelling, mooring, etc.).

All Safety Boats and all other Official Boats should tally daily with the SO and the Bridge should keep a schedule of the names of all safety crew afloat. The SOs or Bridge may perform a radio check with each boat in their fleet as it leaves the shore. The SO should decide when there is sufficient safety cover for his/her course and then advise Bridge. The RO should advise the SO when he is ready for the competitors to be launched. If the SO is satisfied that there is sufficient safety cover, they should advise the Bridge and SO that the launch flag may be hoisted and the competitors may leave the shore. Tally of competitors should be completed. The SO should then manage their respective fleets for that day's sailing from launch to return ashore at the end of the day.

At the end of the day, the SO's should escort their fleet ashore.

The Bridge should tally the fleet in and inform the SO when the whole fleet has been accounted for. The SO should inform the RO when the fleet is ashore. The SO should communicate with the Bridge and release each Safety Fleet when all that fleet's competitors are safely tallied ashore. When Tally is completed and all are accounted for Delta should be removed and the safety fleet stood down. No Safety Boat may go ashore until released by the SO.

#### **4. Radio Callsigns**

The SO should allocate callsigns to each Safety Boat, Medic Boat, Mothership and other safety related individuals. The Event Organiser should allocate call signs to race committee boats (committee boats, mark layers, pin boat, jury boat etc).

The SO should produce a comprehensive list of boats and their call signs that should be given to each member of the Safety Fleet. This list should include mobile telephone numbers.

#### **5. Radio Procedures**

The Event Organiser should allocate radio channels for each race course which should be used by the Race Teams for that course and the SO. The Beachmaster and Safety Team should operate on another channel ("the Safety Channel") which should also be used by the RO, Event Director and SO. in the event that either the Event Organiser or SO declare a fleet wide emergency covering all the courses. The Safety Boats, Race Team should monitor both the Safety Channel and their course's own channel.

The Event Director and SO should be contactable via the Safety Channel but should call up



the RO's on their appropriate course channels. The Event Organiser, SO, RO and Bridge should also have mobile telephones. The Motherships and support boats should monitor and be contactable on the Safety Channel. (Note: If allocated to a course, they should monitor the course channel as well).

**NB. Radio transmissions should be kept to a minimum to prevent clutter.**

## **6. Safety Boat Identification**

All Safety Boats should carry unique identification flags that should be issued by the SO. They must be returned to the SO at the end of the event. The SO should produce a schedule of flags that should be included.

## **7. Positions of Safety Boats during a Race**

Each Safety Boat should be allocated a position on the course that they should assume for the duration of the race. These positions should be allocated in advance but can be modified by the SO as necessary.

## **8. Personnel and Equipment**

All Safety Boats are to have a minimum of two competent adults aboard and no more than three. Safety Boats should be able to accommodate a minimum of 3 additional sailors. The SO may withdraw a Safety Boat from the Safety Fleet if he feels that it is inappropriately crewed.

It is not normal to require on-the-water medical support to a standard above that of First Aider. However, the Event Organiser should attempt to have a Doctor or trained Medic at the event who can be used for initial rapid response in the event of a medical emergency.

### **Essential Equipment which should be carried by all Safety Boats:**

1. Adequate fuel for approx. 9 hours on the water use.
2. Fully functional VHF radio which should operate for 9 hours (this may require spare batteries).
3. A sound generator (whistle or fog horn).
4. Compass and chartlet
5. Anchor and warp suitable for the race area.
6. Sharp knife, easily accessible.
7. Kill cord, which must be used by the driver at all times.
8. Personal buoyancy for the crew, to be worn at all times.
9. Safety Tape to identify abandoned boats (to be issued by the SO).
10. Paddles.
11. Drinking Water.
12. Tow rope (preferably made of floating line).

### **Desirable Equipment, which should be carried by at least two Safety Boats on each course:**

1. Wire Cutters, to cut away rigging and trapeze wires
2. Tool kit
3. GPS location equipment
4. Torch
5. First Aid Kit



6. Survival bag
7. Spare radios

The SO may compile a list of equipment carried by each boat. Through the process of tallying each day, each Safety Boat may be asked to certify that it is complying with these equipment requirements.

## 9. Operational Guidelines

1. SO should produce a schedule of briefings for Safety Fleet personnel and communicate this to the relevant attendees (Appendix 4).
2. SO should tally all Safety Boats and ensure that safety cover is provided in a timely manner.
3. SO may provide appropriate waypoints and bearings to the Safety Boats (Appendix 4). Additionally, each Safety Boat should take its own bearings and satisfy itself that it can independently navigate back to the launch area in the event of poor visibility.
4. SO may arrange for a radio check to be performed with each boat as it leaves the shore. they will decide when there is sufficient safety cover for each course
5. The RO should advise the SO when he is ready for the competitors to be launched. If the SO is satisfied that there is sufficient safety cover, he should advise the Bridge and RO's that the launch flag may be hoisted and the competitors may leave the shore.
6. When so stated in the official documents, the Bridge/Beachmaster shall tally all of the competitors afloat and confirms the number of boats afloat in each Fleet and informs SO, Bridge and RO. **This is critical to the safety of the fleet.**
7. The Safety Fleet's objective is to have a Safety Boat on station beside a capsized or otherwise distressed boat within 3 minutes of the incident occurring.
8. All retirements from racing are to be notified to the Bridge who should keep a record and inform the RO.
9. Once Beachmaster has informed SO that all boats are safely ashore, SO should inform the Safety Fleet that it can stand down.
10. If the Beachmaster finds that one or more boats are missing, he is to inform the SO immediately. SO should direct a number of Safety Boats back to the Race Area to start a search. Meanwhile, Beachmaster should urgently investigate the missing individuals – if they are not accounted for the SO should be informed immediately and, at this point, should probably declare an Emergency Situation.

## 10. Procedure to get boats to the race area

One of four methods should typically be used:

1. Hold the boats in separate fleets and then proceed as a controlled group with Safety Boats spread throughout the group.
2. Hold the boats in manageable groups of boats (10-15 boats) and then proceed in groups with a Safety Boat per group.
3. Provide a corridor down which the boats sail with Safety Boats spread out along the corridor.
4. In a particularly safe area and in safe conditions, simply provide safety cover spread out over the route that the boats sail to the race area.

The SO should confirm the method to be used at the Daily Safety Fleet Briefing.



### **11. Procedure to get boats back to the shore base**

One of four methods should typically be used:

1. Hold the boats in separate fleets and then proceed as a controlled group with Safety Boats spread throughout the group.
2. Hold the Boats in manageable groups of boats (10-15 boats) and then proceed in groups with a Safety Boat per group.
3. Hold the Boats at, but clear of, the Finish Area and, when ready, provide a corridor down which the Boats sail with Safety Boats spread out along the corridor.
4. In a particularly safe area and in safe conditions, simply provide safety cover spread out over the route that the Boats sail from the race area to the Club.

The SO should confirm the method to be used to the SO and SO for each fleet.

### **12. Procedure for retiring boats**

1. Retiring Boat informs a Safety Boat and/or proceeds to a Mothership, informs the Mothership of their intentions and stays in the vicinity of the Mothership or boards the Mothership. If Boat informs a Safety Boat, the Safety Boat decides whether to remove the sailor from the Boat. If the sailor is removed, the Boat must be taken to a Mothership or attached to a specially laid buoy. Leave the Boat with a plastic tape tied to the pintles. If the sailor needs to receive attention ashore, again leave the Boat with plastic tape tied to the pintles. The Safety Boat or Mothership must immediately inform the SO or Bridge that the Boat is retiring, confirm its location and that of its crew and identify it by sail number.
2. SO or Bridge informs Course RO.
3. If a group of retirees is formed and they wish to proceed ashore, the Mothership is to request the SO to provide cover to escort the group ashore.
4. If conditions permit and a Safety Boat can be freed from its duties to conduct the escort, the group is escorted ashore, handed over to the Beachmaster who confirms to SO and RO that they have been accounted for. If they are not accounted for, SO is to inform RO immediately and SO should deploy boats to commence a search.

**NB. Under no circumstances are Boats to proceed ashore unescorted!**

### **13. Guidelines for use when fog descends**

1. If fog arrives prior to the start of a race – Event Organiser/RO and SO agree to postpone racing and SO requests the Safety Fleet to implement Fog Guidelines. Fleets are informed by SO and Safety Boats to stay close to the Committee Boat and to take tows.
2. If fog arrives during a race – Event organiser/RO and SO agree to shorten or abandon racing and SO requests the Safety Fleet to implement Fog Guidelines. Fleets are informed by the Safety Boats on each leg of the course to stop, stay close together and to take tows. If a competitor cannot see a Safety Boat, they are to STOP, stay with any other boats that they can see and use a whistle to attract attention.
3. Safety Fleet gathers competitors together and take in tow. Each Safety Boat should need to secure up to 10 competitors. Safety Fleet stays in the vicinity of the Committee Boat. When Safety Boat has a full complement of competitors, the Safety Boat reports the sail numbers of Boats on tow to the SO and RO.
4. The SO calculates the total number of Boats in tow and informs RO. If the total number does not equal the total of the boats that went afloat, SO should instruct for a search to commence.



5. When all Boats are accounted for, SO should ask the Safety team to tow the boats back to the base.
6. Boats should be tallied ashore as normal.

**NB. Under no circumstances are Boats to proceed ashore unescorted.**

#### **14. Guidelines for use when strong winds arrive**

1. If strong winds arrive prior to the start of a race – the RO and SO agree to postpone racing and the SO requests Safety team to implement Strong Wind Guidelines. Fleets are informed by SOs and Safety Boats to stay close to the RIBs and to heave to.
2. If strong winds arrive during a race – the RO and SO agree to shorten or abandon racing and SO requests Safety Fleet to implement Strong Wind Guidelines. Fleets are informed by the Safety Boats on each leg of the course to stop, stay close together, to stay close to the RIBs and to heave to.
3. Safety Fleet gather competitors together in groups and once sensible groups are formed, SO should request each Safety Boat to get the competitors to safely sail to the vicinity of the committee boat. Each Safety Boat should be asked to escort approximately 10 competitors in a group. Whilst groups are being formed, the Safety Fleet must stay in the vicinity of the Committee Boat.
4. In the event of a capsize, the group should stop until the boat is righted and ready to sail again.
5. Once all the competitors are safely accounted for the SO should inform the RO and the SO should give instructions to the Safety Team for the competitors to be escorted ashore or to remain near their committee boat.
6. Once ashore, competitors should be tallied ashore as normal.

**NB. Under no circumstances are Boats to proceed ashore unescorted.**

#### **15. Emergency guidelines**

In the event of an emergency occurring (injury to a sailor or anyone at sea supporting the event, structural damage endangering the safety of a boat in the event, etc.), the first boat on the scene should inform the SO who should immediately assess the situation, call appropriate support to the scene, assist in stabilizing it and, if appropriate, inform the RO, who should decide whether to declare an Emergency Situation on the radio.

Only the minimum numbers of boats are to remain involved with the Emergency, all other Safety Boats are to continue to provide safety cover for the fleets in the normal manner. SO should, if appropriate, request the Emergency Services to attend. If necessary, the casualty should be taken ashore in an appropriate boat to the Emergency Drop off point to meet up with the Emergency Services.

SO should control the situation until it is handed over to the appropriate authority.

If the situation is considered by SO to be hazardous to the rest of the fleets, SO should request that the RO shortens or abandons racing. In this event, after the fleets have gathered, they should be instructed to make their way ashore under the control of the Safety team both the Bridge and the RO should be kept fully informed by the SO of progress.

An Emergency is only declared closed when the situation has been resolved, the danger has been removed, the damaged boat made safe or the casualty evacuated to the safety of the shore.



**The Safety Fleet is only able to stand down and to return ashore when the Beachmaster has confirmed that all boats and crews are safely ashore and permission to stand down is granted by SO.**

The following documents are considered an addition to the recognised safety plan. These additions are changed depending on the event being run. The appendices do not take precedent to the actions of the main text.

**Appendices:**

1. Document List
2. An Event Safety plan
3. Call Signs and Safety Fleet List
4. Radio Channels
5. Safety Fleet Briefing Schedule
6. Safety Fleet On-the-water Information Sheet
7. Safety Boat Registration Form
8. Safety Boat and Support Boat Briefing Check list
9. Competitor Safety briefing checklist





<b>Safety Boat Briefing check list</b>		
To be briefed to safety boats, support boats and race team boats before the first time they will come into effect. They should be updated daily	First time	Daily
Roll Call/Duties	Yes	Yes
Introduction	Yes	Yes
Review		Yes
Event weather forecast	Yes	
Daily Weather forecast		Yes
Tide times	Yes	Yes
Introduce Risk Assessment	Yes	Yes
Go through Safety Plan	Yes	
Emphasise Safety/First Aid afloat	Yes	Yes
Kill cords/Alcohol/Lifejackets/Suitable clothing	Yes	Yes
Tally Process Safety boats and competitors	Yes	
Delta Process	Yes	
Process to the course	Yes	
Process from the course	Yes	
Retirees	Yes	
Radio Channels & Call signs/Call sign flags	Yes	
Positioning on the course	Yes	
Schedule & expected ashore time	Yes	Yes
Obstructions	Yes	Yes
Shipping Movements	Yes	Yes
Any changes of mind?	Yes	Yes
Overnight mooring and ferry boat	Yes	Yes
Removing boats from moorings each day	Yes	Yes
Boat and equipment sign out/Sign back and damage report	Yes	Yes
Fuel and refuelling	Yes	Yes
Food and Drink	Yes	Yes
Questions	Yes	Yes
Emphasise have fun	Yes	Yes



<b>Competitor Safety Boat Briefing check list</b>	
To be briefed to competitors before the first time they will come into effect.	First time
Introduction	Yes
Event weather forecast	Yes
Tide times	Yes
Emphasise Safety/First Aid afloat	Yes
Emphasise the new Trapeze equipment rule RRS50.1 © came into force 1/1/23	Yes
Tally Process competitors	Yes
Delta Process	Yes
Process to the course	Yes
Process from the course	Yes
Retirees	Yes
Obstructions	Yes
Shipping Movements	Yes
Overnight mooring and ferry boat	Yes
Questions	Yes
Emphasise have fun	Yes