



RYA British Youth Sailing Safety Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Safety Policy is intended to set the framework for the various policies and principles by which RYA staff, contractors, volunteers and other representatives should discharge the RYA's responsibilities as an organiser of youth racing and race training events. A youth is defined as being any person under the age of 18.
- 1.2. The underlying documents listed or referred to in this Safety Policy comprise a series of guidelines, checklists and suggested templates which set out details concerning the implementation of the Safety Policy and fuller descriptions of the roles of key individuals involved with youth racing and training events.
- 1.3. It is the responsibility of RYA staff involved with a youth racing and training event to familiarise themselves with this Safety Policy and the underlying documents.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1. All organisers of youth racing race training activities have a clear responsibility for the safety of those involved. In legal terms this is referred to as a duty of care. The duty of care comprises two main elements: (i) the existence and extent of the duty and, (ii) the persons to whom it is owed. Both of these elements involve the concept of reasonableness. The duty is to take "reasonable care" to avoid acts or omissions likely to cause harm. The persons to whom this duty is owed are those who are in reasonable contemplation as likely to be affected by the acts or omissions.
- 2.2. Sailing, even without fault is inherently hazardous. Accidents can occur to competitors, participants, event staff, volunteers, spectators and onlookers without liability being established against anyone for their consequences. Errors of judgement and lapses of skill can occur even when reasonable care has been taken. What amounts to reasonable care and who the duty to take care is owed to, will depend entirely upon context. In the case of youth racing events and youth training the age and ability of the participants and the role played by the RYA as both an organiser and a governing body means that the expected safety standards are high. Accordingly whilst this Safety Policy and the underlying documents may be a useful reference for events organised by bodies other than the RYA it should not be taken as prescriptive.

3. SCOPE AND INTENT

- 3.1. This document sets out the policy and systems that are intended to mitigate the inherent risks associated with RYA British Youth Sailing events and training. The environment in which sailing takes place is dynamic and not always predictable. In addition the supervision of children in any activity but especially in and around water, boat parks etc. when parents and guardians are not always present requires care.

4. OBJECTIVES

- 4.1. The objective is to achieve a high standard of safety without unduly constraining the sailing activities. Where these aims conflict, the needs of safety will take precedence.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATION

- 5.1. Overall and final responsibility for safety policy within the domain of RYA British Youth Sailing racing and race training activity rests with the RYA Racing Manager.
- 5.2. The RYA Racing Manager will ordinarily delegate overall responsibility for a training event, competition or programme to an RYA Programme Manager, an appointed Event Director or an RYA Head Coach. The RYA Programme Manager, Event Director or RYA Head Coach may then further delegate specific responsibilities (e.g. race planning, safety boat cover, course design, sailing areas to be used, and the supervision of children onshore) to an Event Safety Officer, group activity leader, squad coach, house parent and so on.
- 5.3. It shall be the responsibility of the person making a delegation to ensure that the person(s) to whom they have delegated responsibility:
 - 5.3.1. clearly understands what responsibilities and tasks have been delegated to them; and
 - 5.3.2. have suitable competence, training and/or experience to deal with such responsibilities and task.; and

5.3.3. Are either aware or familiar with the terms of this RYA British Youth Sailing Safety Policy and/or the documents referred to in this RYA Safety Policy which may offer more practical guidance.

5.4. The various guidelines, policies and procedures referred to in this RYA British Youth Sailing Safety Policy are intended to assist in defining the delegated responsibilities. The intention is that they should apply unless alternative arrangements have been clearly defined.

6. RACING AND RACE TRAINING ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

6.1. An Activity Leader shall be identified for all activities within racing and race training events. This may be the Event Director, the Race Officer, the RYA Head Coach or RYA Squad Coaches (for group activities within a larger event) but should be clearly identified prior to the commencement of activity.

6.2. The safety of all participants will be the responsibility of the Activity Leader of the event from the time the first participant goes on the water until the time that all the participants are off the water and have been accounted for. In discharging this responsibility the Activity Leader will have absolute authority to employ all the resources available to them as they see fit, and to direct the work of all those assisting.

6.3. The **RYA Race Training Safety Guidance Notes** have been put together to assist the RYA Head Coach (or person fulfilling a similar role) in making a Risk Assessment, formulating a plan to mitigate the likely risks arising from activities within a squad coaching programme. The Guidance Notes also include useful checklists for suggested equipment to be carried by the RYA Head Coach.

The **RYA Major Event Safety Standard Operating Policy and Procedures** set out the procedures to be used as the basis for conducting the Safety Cover at Major Youth Racing Events. It includes a description of the suggested responsibilities between the Event Director, the Course Race Officers and the Event Safety Officer.

6.4. Participants should receive a briefing covering safety and the schedule for race training or the RYA Championship.

6.5. Not with-standing the obligations of the skipper outlined in the **Racing Rules of Sailing** and often duplicated within the Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions, the decision on whether to sail or not to sail, or to stop sailing lies with the Activity Leader and is to be made in the context of all the relevant factors including the conditions, sea state, present weather, the forecast weather, the class of boat, the experience of the sailors, the number of supervisors and their experience and the location of the intended programme. It may be that the Activity Leader decides to sail, but doesn't allow certain boats to join in. That is his decision, which is final.

6.6. No boat or windsurfer may participate in a sailing activity until the owner(s) or their representative has signed an indemnity certificate in the form determined by the RYA.

6.7. The Activity Leader shall ensure that a record is kept on the shore of all participants out on the water in dinghies, windsurfers or RIBs acting as support boats. This can be either by completion of a participants list or by a tally system. If a tally system is used all participants should be tallied as should their launching trolleys where appropriate.

6.8. All participants in dinghies, windsurfers and in open support boats should wear a buoyancy aid or life jacket to an appropriate standard at all times when afloat. Such aids should be correctly fastened.

6.9. Boats should be rigged appropriately to meet the safety standards of the class and only allowed to launch when adequate support boat cover is available on the water.

6.10. There should be sufficient support boats normally crewed by at least 1 suitably trained operator available to endeavour to ensure that a support boat can reach a capsized boat within 3 minutes. At least one crew member in each support boat should be prepared to enter the water immediately if necessary.

6.11. All participants should be monitored.

6.12. A kill cord should be used at all times, and where a kill cord is fitted to a support craft a spare kill cord should be carried.

- 6.13. Support boat engines should normally be stopped when a person is in the water beside the support boat, especially if abaft the console.
- 6.14. Any incident should be reported to the relevant RYA Programme Manager or Programme Administrator (depending on severity) as soon as reasonably practicable, irrespective of a verbal briefing incident forms should still be filled out and filed for record. The relevant Programme Manager will then review the forms identify any lessons learned and file within the RYA Safety Management area within SharePoint. The RYA Safety Management Committee shall maintain a log of all Incidents received and a file containing all completed incident report forms.

7. SUPERVISION

- 7.1. The RYA British Youth Sailing Sailor Supervision Guidelines provides guidelines to assist coaches and (principally) house parents who have volunteered to be appointed to supervise young sailors at RYA training events or supported international competitions. It clarifies supervision responsibilities , explains the behavioural standards expected by the RYA, sets out guidance and good practice and explains what should be done if an incident or emergency situation occurs.

8. INCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

- 8.1. Incidents and emergencies are covered in each of: **RYA Race Training Safety Guidance Notes; RYA Major Event Safety Standard Operating Policy and Procedures; and, RYA British Youth Sailing Sailor Supervision Guidelines**. Reference should be made to the appropriate document according to the nature of the event and where the incident occurs i.e. major event or not, on or off the water, medical or behavioural.
- 8.2. The Activity Leader should provide or ensure that first aid kits are available on the water and on shore. All support boat drivers should be briefed on the location of the first aid kits.
- 8.3. There should be a suitably qualified person available to administer First Aid.
- 8.4. In the event of any personal injuries, or significant near misses then the Activity Leader of the session is to be informed and he is to ensure that the injury is properly examined by a qualified person and, if necessary, the injured person taken to a hospital Accident and Emergency Department. The activity leader should inform the relevant programme manager, or programme administrator depending on severity and the activity leader or house parent should note all injuries on the incident report form and ensure it is filed accordingly to the RYA Youth Racing Department as soon as possible after the incident.

9. SAILING AREAS

- 9.1. All participants should be briefed on the sailing areas.
- 9.2. The Activity Leader of each session shall decide which area to use and ensure participants are briefed accordingly, taking into account such things as the current conditions, the weather forecast and the tide.

10. ABANDON PROCEDURE

- 10.1. If the Activity Leader decides that support boats resources are inadequate he should consider signalling "Abandon" and calling for assistance from external agencies such as the RNLI.
- 10.2. If conditions are such that the support boat personnel or the person in charge feels that there is a risk of injury or drowning to people in the water, the personnel should be recovered and the boats abandoned. At a coastal venue the coast guard should be informed, along with the location (GPS position) of any abandoned equipment if relevant.
- 10.3. An Abandon Signal should be agreed and all participants briefed before going afloat.

11. RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

- 11.1. The following documentation is relevant to the implementation of this policy:
 - RYA British Youth Sailing Sailor Supervision Guideline
 - RYA Incident Report Form
 - RYA Major Events Safety SOP & P's
 - RYA Race Training Safety Guidance

12. POLICY REVIEW

8.1. This policy will be reviewed regularly.

