H&D SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE
Recommendations for Safety boat crews.

1. All safety boat crews should hold RYA Level 2 National Powerboat Certificates.
2. At least one of the crew should hold a RYA Level 3 National Powerboat Certificates.
3. That at least one of the crew be conversant with basic First Aid and resuscitation procedures.
4. The crew be fully conversant with the guidelines and recommendations contained within the RYA Safety Boat handbook.
5. The crew be fully conversant with the guidelines and recommendations of BR RowSafe with regard to safety boats.
6. That Regatta Committees take every step to ensure that adequate safety boat cover is provided with due concern to the size of the regatta course, possible weather conditions, landing sites and the possible number of participants in any one race.

The following guidelines are an abbreviation of those contained in the RYA Safety Boat Handbook with additional observations pertinent to providing rescue cover and equipment recovery at rowing events.

ROWING BOAT RESCUE

Priorities.

- First priority is not to put yourself at risk or further increase the risk to those in trouble.
- Second priority is to save life.
- Third priority, and only if the first and second priorities have been taken care of, is equipment recovery.

Approaching rowing craft.

Assess the situation - It is quite often appropriate for a safety boat to stand by rather than intervene immediately. If this is the case, then the most appropriate position would be within earshot but not so positioned as to run the risk of coming together with the other boat. Consider the following questions.

- Do I need to come alongside.
- Are all the crew visible and in no distress requiring removal or rescue.
- Is it safe - for you and the crew.
- Best side to approach - direction and speed, escape route.
- What is the wave strength and direction.

Water filled rowing craft.

In the case of a boat that has filled with water.

- Instruct the crew to make progress to shore although drift, water and weather conditions must be considered.
- Be wary of the coxswain being 'floated' out of the boat by their natural buoyancy.
- Consider instructing the coxswain to remove tiller lines from around his body, if not internally fitted to the boat, and if possible secure them to prevent fouling rescue boat propellers.
- Remain in attendance until crew are ashore.
- Radio regatta control to inform crews club that they may require help on reaching shore.

Rescue of personnel from a boat.

- Approach the boat from the opposite side to the persons blade i.e. if a bowside rower approach from strokeside.
- Instruct all crew members to sit with blades at right angle to the boat and feathered to maintain stability and to enable the rescue boat to approach the boat between the blades.
- If conscious, instruct casualty to free their feet from foot straps/shoes and to push their blade down the side of the boat.
- If unconscious or incapacitated, instruct the person in front to free the casualty's feet.
- Lift casualty from the boat over the bow of the rescue craft.
- First Aid assess but waste no time in removing casualty to shore. If possible, radio ahead to regatta control to forewarn emergency services.
- Consider need to remove all crew from boat.

Rescue of personnel from the water.

- On approaching a sinking or capsize, ascertain the size of the craft involved to determine how many casualties their possible are i.e. a pair = two people.
- Approach casualty from downwind so speed of approach can be controlled.
- Decide which side of the boat the casualty should be picked up on considering visibility and obstructions.
- Cut engine.
- Turn the casualty so that their back is towards the rescue craft.
- Position crew members either side of the casualty.
- Lift the casualty into the boat by placing arms right under the casualty's armpits.
- First Aid assess but waste no time in getting the casualty ashore. If possible, radio ahead to regatta control to forewarn emergency services.

Securing of rescued craft.

If the situation is such that the rescued craft must be abandoned, if time and conditions allow, secure rescued craft with spare anchor and warp to prevent drifting into danger and to enable recovery at a subsequent time.

BOAT RECOVERY

Righting capsized boats.

Righting upturned boats is made easier if blades are removed first. If not possible, beware of blades spinning over onto rescue boat and personnel. Care should also be taken that the rescue boat is not damaged or punctured by rigger bolts etc.
Righting capsized boats can be achieved by pushing down on near side riggers/blades and pulling on the upper saxboard/riggers/blades as they lift out of the water. Alternatively, a rope can be tied to a rigger on the far side of the boat and pulled on to roll boat over. Smaller boats such as sculls and pairs may be righted by twisting at either the stern or bow depending on conditions.

Sculls.

Can be recovered by pulling across bows of rescue boat, by spinning boat over onto one side of rescue boat or by pulling near side rigger over side of rescue boat and being held there. If conditions allow, all these options are made easier by the removal of the sculls.
Tow by either supporting the bow over the stern of the rescue boat or by holding the bow halfway along the rescue boat. Either way, the rescue boat can only turn towards the side on which the scull is positioned.

Pairs.

Depending on size of rescue boat it may be possible to turn the pair over onto one side of the rescue boat for recovery once blades have been removed.
Otherwise, tow by positioning rescue boat alongside and under bowside rigger and either holding or securing in position.
If conditions are calm and the pair not full of water, tow by holding onto the pairs bow over the stern of the rescue boat or by holding the pairs bow halfway along the rescue boat. In this instance the blades can be left in the gates and allow to trail. Either way, the rescue boat can only turn towards the side on which the pair is positioned.

Fours.

If boat has overturned, turn boat over. Removing blades will make recovery easier.
Recover by positioning rescue boat alongside and between strokeside riggers and either holding in position or securing with a bow line (from bow of rescue boat to forward position on tow) and back spring (from bow of rescue boat to near side rear of tow) as minimum. The addition of a head spring (from forward position on tow to rear near side of rescue boat) and a stern line (from near side rear of tow to near side rear of rescue boat) will make manoeuvring easier.
If conditions are calm and the four has not filled with water, towing can be achieved by positioning the rescue boat alongside and under the bow rigger and holding it there. Extreme care must be taken in manoeuvring so as not to put too much stress on the parts of the tow extending in front and behind the rescue boat.

Safety Boat Equipment Checklist.

Engine.

- Kill-cord.
- Engine spares/tools stowed.
- Full fuel supply.

Crew.

- Personal buoyancy.
- At least one of the crew dressed to enter water (wet/dry suit).

Safety Boat.

- Alternative means of propulsion (e.g. oars).
- Painter shorter than boat.
- Anchor and warp stowed.
- Bucket/bailer stowed.
- Warps/lines/fenders ready for use
- Sufficient cleats fore and aft to secure lines.
- Inflation pump and spare inflation valve.
- Handholds fixed to side of boat to assist getting into boat.

Emergency Equipment.

- Sound signalling device (e.g. whistle, air horn).
- Rescue/heaving line (at least 15m long).
- Thermal/exposure bags/blankets.
- Life Jackets.
- First Aid kit.
- Sharp knife in carrying sheath.
- Spare anchor/warp stowed - to anchor rescued craft, prevent drifting into danger if unable to tow.
- Spare line for securing and towing.
- Radio (suitably protected) and spare battery.

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