LILLIPUT SAILING CLUB

Risk Assessment for Dinghy and Cruiser Racing.

Overview

1. Background/Introduction

This document is a risk assessment of the dinghy and cruiser racing activities organised by Lilliput Sailing Club. Lilliput Sailing Club is affiliated to the RYA and has ~~used~~ reviewed their guidelines[1] alongside the racing guidance from Poole Harbour Commissioners[2] in the preparation of this document. The racing programme runs from March until the end of December. The racing takes place on weekday evenings and at weekends. In recent years (2019-2025~~4~~) approximately 30 dinghies and 15 cruisers took part in the various series. The club also organises its annual Regatta in the summer (between June and August).

The series and open events organised by Lilliput Sailing Club are deemed to have a low impact on the operation of the harbour and be classed as '**Small Events**' having little or no impact on other harbour users and minimal risk to non-participants.

In addition to the standard dinghy racing Risk Assessment, during 2021 additional risk mitigation measures were included to ensure that events can be run in a COVID-safe manner during the ongoing Pandemic. These measures have now been formally removed, but if it becomes necessary, any formal measures that may be reintroduced will be notified to members via the appropriate WhatsApp groups and the club website.

2. Start area

Dinghy races are normally started in the area between the Blue Lagoon entrance and the North Channel, and (rarely) at other points in the harbour away from the main channel and commercial shipping. Cruiser harbour races will be started between agreed marks in the North Channel. Cruiser bay races and passage races are started in the vicinity of the "The Rig Shop" buoy in the bay. The Lilliput Sailing Club annual dinghy regatta is normally held in the area between the northern shore of the harbour and the main channel.

[1] RYA ~~COVID-19 FAQ Feb 2022 :~~ Advice and guidance : Managing Safety on the Water | Managing on water activities

[2] Poole Harbour Sail Racing Procedures V10~~8~~: link here and PHC Safety Boat Emergency Protocol V5~~4~~ : link here

3. Race Area

Dinghy races are normally held in the area between the northern shore of the harbour and the Main Channel. Cruiser Harbour races are in all the navigable channels within the Harbour. Cruiser bay races are started and finished in the bay. No courses for dinghies or cruisers are used that go through the harbour entrance or cross the main channel.

The main hazards encountered by all racing craft are large commercial shipping, Harbour ferries, large numbers of pleasure craft, other racing fleets and strong tidal flows in some areas during spring tides.

4. Finishing Area

In nearly all cases dinghy and cruiser races are finished at the same location as the start.

5. Manning and Race Control

Race management for **dinghy racing** is by teams of club members consisting of a Race Officer of the day (RO) and 2-5 assistants manning the committee boat "Little Holly" and one or two patrol boats[3] (depending on entry numbers). The RO is responsible to the management committee of LSC through the Dinghy Captain.

Cruiser races are managed by a RO, a club member on his or her own boat, and started using the gate start method in the vicinity of "The Rig Shop" or an ad-hoc ~~in harbour~~ start line. Prior to leaving shore the RO will check up to date weather reports, wind strengths and direction and tidal state and collect any required communication and safety equipment.

At least one patrol boat is always deployed for dinghy racing. Prior to dinghy and cruiser harbour races the RO will contact Poole VTS (formerly Harbour Control) by telephone (01202 440230) to provide details of the intended racing and obtain information on commercial shipping movements etc. during the anticipated duration of the race.

The dinghy racing Patrol Boat drivers must hold a relevant qualification to drive. This is usually RYA Powerboat Level 2, and this ~~i~~has been mandatory ~~from~~ since 2023. Other qualifications (or appropriate prior experience) may be accepted with the explicit consent of the Dinghy Captain.

[3] 'Patrol Boat' is used Synonymously with 'Support Boat'. In other LSC documents 'Support Boat' may be used. Both terms refer to the rigiflex boats OrangeAid and MarmalAid.

6. Safety Control Measures

The control measures used to mitigate risks, as described in section 7 below are as follows:

Reference	Measures	General Comments	Applicability
1 Planning			
1.1	Use of Tidal Prediction Information	Time events to suit tidal range and streams.	All events
1.2	Limit competitor numbers	Match entry numbers to resources, as in Sailing Instructions.	All events
1.3	Planning of Starting Sequence	Separate classes and avoid risk of collision (for larger events)	All events
1.4	Advance Briefing of Race Management	Brief race officers and assistants at start of season, Provide club sailing instructions	All events
1.5	Advance Safety Briefing with Authorities.	Liaise with Poole Yachting Association, other clubs & harbour authorities	All events
1.6	Shipping Movement Monitoring	Check details of relevant shipping movements & monitoring ~~Harbour control~~Poole VTS radio traffic (VHF Ch14)	All events
1.7	Weather monitoring.	Use up-to-date weather forecast and Live weather date (Parkstone start online weather monitor) before proceeding with planned race	All events
1.8	Race management training & manning	Ensure adequate competent personnel for race management, including Patrol Boat driver training	All events
1.9	Emergency /Contingency Procedures	Establishment of action plan for emergencies, including written instructions in RO box and on Console of Patrol Boats	All events
1.1	Race Management Team Welfare	Ensure race management volunteers are equipped for the event.	All events
2. Communications			
2.1	Notice of Race.	Specify conditions and safety requirements to competitors.	All events
2.2	Sailing Instructions/Amendments.	Provide instructions to competitors including specifying governing rules and amendments, compliance with Harbour Bylaws & Collision Regulations etc. Issue of amendments to sailing instructions	All events
2.3	Safety Briefing.	Safety briefing to the race management team before each event, and to competitors for non-standard events (such as ad-hoc or longer harbour races)~~.~~	All events

2.4	Competitors' Shore Contact.	For Open meetings, record details of all crew members on board.	All events
2.5	Shore Signals.	Shore signals are impractical and not used for dinghy or cruiser racing.	All events
2.6	VHF Radio Announcements.	Designated VHF channel for announcements.	All events(C)
2.7	Communication with Authorities.	Port Control.	All events
2.8	Communication with emergency services	In accordance with the "Small Craft Emergency Protocol" published by Poole Harbour Commissioners.	All events
2.9	Mobile Telephones and VHF	Communication with race management, PHC and coastguard	All events
2.1	International Collisions Regulations	For right of way between racing and non-racing traffic.	All events
3. Control Measures before start			
3.1	Safety inspections.	Spot checks of on-board safety equipment, including checklists for equipment on Patrol Boats.	All events
3.2	Marshalling and Patrol Boats	Safety craft for traffic control during starts and at finish.	All events
3.3	Postponement/suspension of Starts	In the event of commercial or other traffic movements.	All events
3.4	Length of Starting Line	Matched to competitor no's as per RYA recommendations.	All events
3.5	Avoiding Ferry/Commercial Traffic	~~Dinghy~~ Racing does not take place in the vicinity of the chain ferry.~~,~~ Cross channel ferry and commercial shipping movements checked with PHC prior to race starts.	All events
3.6	Competitors Sign Out/ Sign In	Record of vessels and competitors taken by RO. For dinghy racing, launch trolley numbers are recorded as well as boat details.	All events
4. Additional Control Measures after start and during race			
4.1	Abandonment.	In the event of adverse weather or other factors.	All events
4.2	Shortening course.	In the event of lack of wind or other factors.	All events
4.3	Race Observers.	ROs assistants to monitor progress of racing vessels	All events(D)
4.4	Patrol Boats	During dinghy racing, ~~P~~patrol Boats ~~to~~ continuously monitor ~~patrol~~the race area and watch for potential problems, including dinghies retiring and/or returning to shore. Patrol boats liaise with each other and RO.	All events(D)
4.5	Monitoring of wind/sea conditions	By communication with observers and escort vessels.	All events
5. Additional Control Measures at Finish			
5.1	Finish Line Length	Matched to number/size of competing boats.	All events

5.2	Retirement monitoring.	Reporting by yachts retiring(C) monitoring of retirements by patrol boat(s) (D)	All events
5.3	Patrol Boat Deployment	Patrol Boat to remain in finish area until RO satisfied all vessels accounted for (D) and monitor/accompany dinghies from the finish line to the slipway.	All events
5.4	Post-race check by Race Officer	The Race Officer will check that all boats on the Competitors Sheet are ~~ashore, or~~ashore or otherwise accounted for. RO will record each dinghy finish (or retirement), and patrol boats will monitor dinghies returning to the club, which is within sight of the usual finish line.	All events
6. Special Control Measures			
6.1	Harbour procedures for race officers	Consultation with ~~Harbour control~~Poole VTS for any "special courses" e.g. Round the islands.	As required
6.2	Slipway clearance	Regular weed/algae removal to reduce risk of slipping	As required
6.3	Patrol Boat handling training	Drivers of the Patrol Boats must hold an appropriate qualification to drive a power boat. This is usually RYA Powerboat Level 2, and the club provide subsidised training to ensure this. From the 2023 season this qualification is mandatory. Annual refresher training is offered to race support teams to promote best practices in supporting dinghy racing and assisting dinghy sailors requiring assistance during a race.	All Events (D)
6.4	Patrol boat selection and management	Appropriate boat selection for likely conditions and usage, with additional second boat as backup. Training of crew and practice sessions. Support boats are rated to carry a ~~minimum~~ maximum of 3 crew in Category 'C' conditions (See UKCA / CE definitions https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recreational_Craft_Directive). Guidance to Race Officers emphasises safe loading	All Events (D)

~~9.~~7. Risk Assessment

In the tabular summary of risks and mitigating controls below, the following abbreviations are used:

Areas of elevated risk:

Abbreviation	Location
M	Main Channel
O	Other harbour channels
D	Docks & Ferry Terminal
P	Poole bay
S	Sandbanks & mudflats
S/F	Start/Finish
W	Windward Mark
L	Leeward Mark
G	Gybe Mark

Risk/Impact Levels:

Abbreviation	Description
Risk Levels	
1	Low Risk
2	Medium Risk
3	High Risk
Impact level (life)	
1	First aid only
2	Paramedic/Ambulance
3	Serious Injury/Death

Impact level (property)	
1	Minor damage
2	Repairable damage
3	Total write-off

Identified risks and mitigation:

Hazard Category	Ref	Description	Risk locations	Estimated risk level before measures (n)	Likely Impact (m)	Risk Factor (n x m)	Primary Control Measures	Specific relevant controls	Residual Risk Acceptable / Unacceptable
Collisions	1.1	Racing boat with racing boat	S/F, W, L, G, M, O	1	1	1	ISAF Racing Rules, IRPCS	Planning; Communications; Controls before start; Additional Control measures during race; Control Measures at Finish	Accepted
	1.2	Racing boat with pleasure boat	M, O, D	1	2	2	IRPCS, course selection	Planning; Communications; Controls before start; Additional Control measures during race	Accepted
	1.3	Racing boat with commercial vessel	M, O, D	1	3	3	IRPCS, Patrol boat deployment(s); PYA/PHC Code of conduct	Planning; Communications; Controls before start; Additional Control measures during race	Accepted
Grounding	2.1	Racing boat aground	S, PB	1	1	1	Course selection relevant to tidal state	Planning; Control measures during race	Accepted
Capsize /Sinking	3.1	Single capsize	All areas	1	1	1	Patrol boat deployment(s)	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
	3.2	Multiple capsize	All areas	2	2	4	Patrol boat deployment(s)	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
	3.3	Sinking Dinghy	All areas	1	2	2	Patrol boat deployment(s); Personal buoyancy	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
	3.4	Sinking cruiser	All areas	1	3	3	Personal buoyancy; Safety equipment carried; on board.VHF /Mobile phone; communication, other competitors	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted

	3.5	Patrol Boat capsize/inundation/incapacitation	All areas	1	3	3	Driver and crew training, patrol boat selection appropriate for conditions (CE/UKCA recreational boat Category C), patrol boat loading with operational limits with safety margin, second patrol boat as backup, proximity of shore/moorings and external help, communications via VHF	Control measures during race, start and finish, Special Control Measures	Accepted
Boat damage	4.1	Rig/equipment failure	All areas	1	1	1	Patrol boat deployment(s)	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
Personal Injury	5.1	Minor injury	All areas	1	1	1	Patrol boat first aid kit(s)/competitors first aid kit	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
	5.2	Injury requiring emergency services	All areas	2	2	4	Casualty to be taken to agreed emergency pick up point, usually Parkstone Yacht Club	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
Other Hazards	6.1	High winds	All areas	2	2	4	Patrol boat deployment(s)	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
	6.2	High waves	All areas	2	2	4	Patrol boat deployment(s); Personal buoyancy Shorten course/abandon race	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
	6.3	Calm /Drifting boats	All areas	1	1	1	Patrol boat deployment(s); cruisers aux.engines	Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
	6.4	Missing competitors from dinghies	All areas	1	2	2	Patrol boat deployment(s); signing on procedures	Planning, Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted
	6.5	Missing competitors from cruisers	All areas	1	3	3	Cruisers own safety equipment; communication, other competitors; emergency services	Planning, Control measures during race, start and finish	Accepted

8. Resources

The tables contained above are stored and maintained separately in the Dropbox Fleet Admin area and included in the final version of this document.

The RYA website contains the template risk assessments on which much of this document and the analysis tables were based, see here: https://www.rya.org.uk/network/clubs-and-affiliates/legal-advice/health-safety/ and here: https://www.rya.org.uk/network/clubs-and-affiliates/managing-activities/safety-on-the-water/

~~10.~~9. Document Revision History

Version	Date	Author / reviewer	Update notes
	May-02	Sailing Sec	LSC Risk Assessment May 2002
	Dec-15	Sailing Sec	Reviewed December 2003
	Jan-05	Sailing Sec	Reviewed January 2005
	Jan-06	Sailing Sec	Reviewed January 2006
	Mar-07	Sailing Sec	Reviewed March 2007
	Feb-08	Sailing Sec	Reviewed February 2008
	Mar-09	Sailing Sec	Reviewed March 2009
	Apr-10	Sailing Sec	Reviewed April 2010
	Apr-11	Sailing Sec	Reviewed April 2011
	Apr-12	Sailing Sec	Reviewed April 2012
	Mar-13	Sailing Sec	Reviewed March 2013
	Apr-14	Sailing Sec	Reviewed April 2014
	Mar-15	Sailing Sec	Reviewed March 2015
	Dec-15	Sailing Sec	Reviewed December 2015
	Feb-17	Sailing Sec	Reviewed February 2017
	Mar-18	Sailing Sec (Alex Clapperton)	Reviewed March 2018
	Mar-19	Sailing Sec (Alex Clapperton)	Reviewed March 2019
	Jul-20	Acting Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Combined separate Overview, Control Measures and Risk Assessment into a single document. Updated to include COVID-19 secure dinghy racing risk mitigation, with reference to the club's updated Sailing Instructions and guidelines for competitors.
	Aug 20	Acting Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Updated to reflect latest RYA guidance allowing mixed-household boats with mitigation (https://www.rya.org.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/clubs/RYA%20Sailing%20%26%20Racing%20in%20Mixed%20Households.pdf)
1.3	Apr 21	Acting Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Reviewed for 2021

1.3.1	Mar 22	Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Reviewed for 2022: • Clarified references to Small Boat Emergency Protocol • Added references to PB2 Patrol Boat driver training • ~~Removed COVID-19 specific risks/mitigations~~ •
1.4	Mar 23	Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Reviewed for 2023: • Support boat driver qualifications now mandatory
1.5	Aug 2023	Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	
1.6	Feb 2024	Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Reviewed for 2024
1.7	Jan 2025~~4~~	Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Reviewed for 2025 Includes updates on SB suitability following a 'near miss' review
1.8	Mar 2026	Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Reviewed with minor updates (and formatting) for 2026: • Reviewed PHC updated guidance • Updated hyperlinks to PHC and RYA resources
1.9	Mar 2026	Sailing Sec (Andy Bethell)	Minor updates and rewording after review by Dinghy and Cruiser captains, including: • Clarification of no club races through the harbour entrance • Clarification of starting arrangements for cruisers and for longer dinghy harbour races • Clarification of no signals made ashore • Clarifications of current practice for dinghies re race briefings, monitoring of dinghies returning ashore, longer harbour races • Updated 'Poole Harbour Control' to 'Poole VTS'

~~11. Resources~~

~~The tables contained above are stored and maintained separately in the Dropbox Fleet Admin area and included in the final version of this document.~~

~~The RYA Club Zone contains the template risk assessments on which much of this document and the analysis tables are based, see here: https://www.rya.org.uk/the-club-zone/Pages/health-safety.aspx#3~~