



***POWERBOAT RACING***

# **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR SAFETY OFFICER**

**VERSION 1**

01/03/2011

Royal Yachting Association

## THE SAFETY OFFICER:

The Safety Officer is the deputy to the Officer of the Day. He/She co ordinates the safety services on shore, on the water and in the air. The primary duty of the Safety Officer is to ensure that activities on land, water and in the air are planned and that appropriate risk assessments are created in advance.

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## PERSONAL

### 1.1 KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

The Safety Officer must be experienced in running events of this nature and must be suitably qualified and approved by the RYA. The Safety Officer must be capable of producing a comprehensive Port Marine Risk Assessment to the satisfaction of the RYA and all authorities involved in the event. The Safety Officer must implement this plan and work in conjunction with the OOD.

### 1.2 VHF RADIO

The Safety Officer must be experienced and suitably qualified in radio procedure and able to communicate on VHF/UHF radio with all key race officials and local authorities such as harbour masters, police and port officials throughout the event.

### 1.3 CHART WORK

The Safety Officer must have good knowledge of how to read chart information, be able to plot courses and identify positions by Latitude and Longitude. This is extremely important when deploying safety assets and co-ordinating rescues.

### 1.4 RACE PROCEDURE CHECK LIST

The details given below provide the Safety Officer with a list of action points that must be followed at every race.

## 2 BEFORE THE EVENT

### 2.1 LIAISON WITH THE EVENT ORGANISERS

The Safety Officer must work with the Event Organisers during the planning stage on all aspects affecting the racing and compliance with the current rules. Before the Event the Safety Officer must check the following:

- a. the facilities and safety assets identified on the event risk assessment are in place at the venue
- b. the proposed timetable is achievable, to be agreed by Event Director following discussions with Safety Officer and OOD
- c. the proposed course has been agreed and approved by the RYA
- d. all necessary local authorities have given their permissions
- e. the event Risk Assessment has been prepared and agreed and approved by the RYA

### 2.2 LIAISON WITH HARBOUR & OTHER AUTHORITIES

The Safety Officer must be aware of the requirements of the Harbour Master, local Council and any other local authority with jurisdiction over the event area. These include the police, fire brigade, coastguard, ambulance and hospitals and local yacht clubs. Any areas of concern must be addressed before the final Race Instructions are issued. Consider any Notice To Mariners or similar local official

marine notices.

### 2.3 SUPERVISION OF COURSE PLANNING

It is the primary responsibility of the OOD in conjunction with the Safety Officer and the organising body to ensure that the proposed courses are safe and that they comply with the current RYA/UIM rules as published. Proposed courses must be plotted on electronic and/or paper charts. Important factors to consider are as follows:

- a. The course is as free of hazards as possible and that a minimum depth of 4 meters is available over the entire course. UIM Offshore Rule 800.8.2 9 (Water Depth)
- b. The course must be set so that soft easy turns are incorporated into its design; sharp turns of more than 90 degrees should not be included in the course design however in special circumstances if a turn of more than 90 degrees has to be considered this should be set in two stages using additional race marks. No turns of more than 120 degrees however must be included in any course design. No reciprocal courses are permitted on courses of less than 10 miles lap length. Reciprocal courses may be permitted in long distance Marathon races however these must be approved by RYA Race approvals committee and fully briefed by the OOD. Note the distance from the wet pits to the muster area. This is extremely important when considering how damaged race boats will be returned to the wet/dry pits.
- c. Ensure that the length of the start run complies with class requirements as published in RYA PB1 Rules. The minimum permitted distance from the start line to the first turn mark must be no less than specified in PB1 or UIM rules if applicable
- d. The angle of the line from the first turn mark should not be too acute and race boats must have enough sea room at the first turn mark to enable them to swing wide of the mark as it is highly likely that race boats will converge on this first turn together.
- e. Careful attention must be given to safety clearances between race boats on opposite courses of the race, and turns where different laps either converge or diverge. The OOD and Safety Officer must be sure that best recommended practice is being followed at all times and that with the benefit of their experience the safety clearances and safety buffer zones are adequate for the particular venue.
- f. The Safety Officer must ensure that the course can be adequately controlled from Race Control with good radio communication capability and where possible a good view of the course is available for both the Safety Officer and the OOD.
- g. The Timekeepers must have a close and clear view of the lap line.

- h. Consider the location from which to clearly display the race finish flags.
- i. Consider the affect of the density of commercial traffic, local ferries, strong tides, depths of water, rocks and other hazards.
- j. Careful attention must be given to how the race marks will be laid and what implications deep water and strong tides will have on the security of the marks.
- k. Consider the implications of large numbers of waterborne spectators being present at an event. It is imperative that a comprehensive safety plan be agreed with the OOD which must be incorporated into the event Risk Assessment. The Safety Officer must ensure that sufficient safety assets are available in order to maximise the safety of spectators and competitors alike.
- l. The Safety Officer must also ensure that adequate fast response medical teams fully equipped to RYA recommendations are deployed together with sufficient dedicated Tow boats, Marshal boats and Officials
- m. Ensure that a safety buffer zone can be maintained around the entire course, keeping spectators clear of the course area. It may be necessary to create a safety corridor for spectators and other vessels to use when passing around the course.
- n. Ensure a suitable emergency extraction point is established close to the race course. This should be where possible a private jetty out of public view.
- o. Establish a suitable helicopter extraction point, again this should be private and away from the public

#### **2.4 SET UP A MAJOR INCIDENT PLAN**

The Safety Officer must liaise with the OOD to ensure that a comprehensive major incident plan is set up as per the event Risk Assessment. The principal points to consider are as follows:

- a. Contact details for emergency services and harbour authorities.
- b. A suitable point of extraction for casualties close to main race course.
- c. Distance to local hospitals.
- d. Number of ambulances required.
- e. If a helicopter is available, its contact details, location and landing site.
- f. A quiet room for relatives with counselling support.
- g. Appoint a dedicated RYA Press Officer/spokesperson with the responsibility of dealing with the media.

See MAJOR INCIDENT GUIDELINES in Section 8.

### **3. AT THE START OF THE EVENT**

#### **3.1 LIAISON WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

On arrival at the race site the Safety Officer must check as soon as possible that there have been no changes to any notified shipping movements that may adversely affect the smooth running or the timetable of the event. Any such changes must be immediately conveyed to both the OOD. All competitors must be advised of all such changes by a Race Bulletin issued by the OOD

#### **3.2. ON WATER SAFETY FLEET**

The event safety fleet should consist of the following assets, Safety Medical support vessels, marshals, tow boats and observer boats and where possible boats from the local police, maritime authorities, coastguards and the military. All on water safety assets must be equipped with VHF Radio and UHF if appropriate given a designated call sign and the Safety Officer should also take note of all on board mobile telephone contact numbers. In addition to this all such boats must be provided with a RYA Identification flag. It is mandatory for crews of all such vessels to attend the Safety Briefing prior to the event. An attendance log must be signed by crews attending the safety briefing and the Safety Officer must record the numbers of persons on each such boat when deployed on the water. All crews must be given accurate details of their required position

#### **3.3. SAFETY MEDICAL BOATS**

These boats must be fast response craft and large enough to carry a casualty on a stretcher and if possible allow for easy boarding of such a stretcher. They should be comprehensively equipped with medical support facilities and be manned by at least one Professional Paramedic. A Paramedic is defined as someone who holds national state registration on the "Health Professions Council" register as a professional Paramedic. Any person who is calling themselves a Paramedic who is not on that register is bogus and is not permitted to use that title. A list of all such qualified Professionals in the UK can be found at [www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org)). Alongside the on-call medic there should be at least 2 persons that have received training in the use of the extended medical equipment to assist this medic. These persons do not need to have any formal medical qualifications but must be current (and to the satisfaction of the medic) in pre-hospital care. The equipment on scene must include the following plus any additional medical equipment the medic feels necessary:

- a. Advanced airway management equipment including intubation Cervical spine (neck) collars and spinal immobilisation
- b. Respiratory resuscitation equipment e.g. Bag and Mask with supplementary oxygen and re-breathing bag
- c. Defibrillator and cardiac monitor and full range of cardiac arrest drugs
- d. Relevant equipment for affecting a diagnosis and subsequent equipment for treatment, this must comply with local Ambulance standards.

- e. Immobilisation equipment for fractures IV fluids and full range of drug therapy including pain relief (morphine not required unless security rules complied with
- f. Oral pain relief.
- g. Standard medical equipment and response bag with relevant medical equipment.

An excellent optional extra is the aquatic vacuum spinal mattress. Every rescue team must in addition have a medical person that is prepared and qualified to enter the water to treat an injured individual that requires such intervention.

The required numbers of the fast response Safety Boats and their deployment must be agreed between the Safety Officer and the OOD, these numbers will vary depending on the lengths of the race courses and the local conditions at the venue. A qualified Safety Boat driver must be used at all times. **Under no circumstances should minors be allowed to join Safety Boat crews at any time.** Each Safety Boat must be given a designated call sign which must be recorded on the safety plot in race control.

### **3.4. MARSHALL BOATS**

All marshal boats used must be allocated a distinctive call sign. These call signs must be retained throughout the event so that OOD and SO can immediately identify the crews of each boat. These safety/marshalling assets must be deployed with the agreement of the OOD and they should be given agreed freedom of operation in their designated patrol sector thus best utilising their skills and abilities. These boats and crews will also be used to assist in the laying and recovery of race marks. The details of this operation are more fully explained under the standard operational procedures of Marshal Boats.

### **3.5. MARSHAL BOAT POSITIONING**

The required numbers of volunteer marshal boats will vary from venue to venue but at all time sufficient numbers must be provided in order to give sufficient marshal cover to the race course. These boats should be positioned at strategic points around the race course by the Safety Officer, the number and positioning of such boats is at the discretion of the Safety Officer but the numbers deployed must not be less than those stipulated on the RYA race approvals form. All crews must be fully briefed by the Safety Officer concerning their duties; they must be given clear instructions of where they are to be deployed. They must be warned of the dangers associated with working close to the racing line. All such boats should be equipped with VHF Radio and given a call sign and advised of their designated patrol sector at the safety boat drivers briefing. It is acceptable to use Jet Skis to fulfil the role of some of these volunteer marshal boats but the Safety Officer should not allow these to be used exclusively.

### **3.6. TOW BOATS**

The Safety Officer should carefully select these boats as they must be of suitable size and carry sufficient equipment to enable them to carryout their duties. A minimum recommended size should be 10 meters with minimum of 200hp. Boats



with inboard diesel engines are ideal as they can tow in more difficult conditions. All tow boats are recommended to carry a minimum of 100 meters of tow line; they must be equipped with tow bridles and should be manned with crews experienced in towing boats. These recommendations may change for some classes but it should be the responsibility of the Safety Officer to agree the minimum safety requirements for each event. The numbers of safety boats required at each race will also vary depending on the course but a minimum of two tow boats must be available at all times. Tow boats must be given a distinctive call sign by the Safety Officer and again must be comprehensively briefed on their duties and location.

### **3.7. OBSERVER OR MARK BOATS**

These boats should be deployed by the safety Officer to the race marks of the course. The sole job of these crews is to record the race boats as they pass their designated mark and to record if any race boat passes the wrong side of the mark. An accurate written record of the race should be maintained and the crews should report any rule infringements to the OOD at the end of the race. This information will be used by the OOD to apply the appropriate penalties to the race results. These reports can be challenged by race teams through the protest procedure.

### **3.8. OFFICIAL BOATS – POLICE – COASTGUARD – MILITARY**

The Safety Officer should co ordinate his safety deployment in such a way that these assets (if available) are used in locations where the largest numbers of spectator craft will be found. Official boats are the most effective way of moving or controlling spectators.

### **3.9. LIAISON WITH UIM COMMISSIONER**

The Safety Officer should work closely with the UIM Commissioner and ensure that the safety aspects of the event comply with the requirements of the RYA/UIM.

#### **3.9.1. WET AND DRY PITS**

- a) Contact local emergency services to ensure required ambulances and personnel arrive at the required times
- b) Check that all required safety measures are deployed in the dry and wet pit areas, these must include:
  - c) All required security fencing to closed areas is positioned in accordance with the safety plan
  - d) Establish crane operating area in accordance with safety plan, ensure hard hats are available and sufficient marshals to ensure area is kept clear at all times
  - e) All fire extinguishers are located as per safety plan throughout the dry pit area
  - f) All no smoking signs are positioned as per safety plan



- g) Re fuelling facilities are in accordance with safety plan, adequate fire extinguishers, no smoking signs, and marshals present
- h) Establish a de fuelling area to cater for damaged boats, this area to be fenced off and provided with oil absorbing mats, containers in which to transfer fuel, adequate fire extinguishers and no smoking signs
- i) Ensure that protective oil booms or similar are provided to restrict fuel contamination in wet pits area from damaged boats
- j) Suitable high capacity pumps to be provided in wet pit area to deal with sinking or damaged boats
- k) RYA divers to be on call in wet pit area to assist in rigging of slings to damaged boats prior to lifting. Lifting air bags should also be available.

## **4 BEFORE THE RACE**

### **4.1 SAFETY ASSETS**

The Safety Officer must ensure that all safety assets are deployed in accordance with the event Risk Assessment. The Safety Officer must check that all boats are suitably crewed and equipped with all necessary flags and safety equipment and that the driver is fully briefed on all aspects of the race.

### **4.2 SPECTATOR CRAFT DESIGNATED VIEWING AREAS**

It is extremely important that areas around the course are designated safe viewing areas for waterborne spectators. The Safety Officer must ensure adequate marshal boats are positioned around the entire course to restrict spectator boats from entering the race course. A safety buffer zone must be created around the full course, no spectator boats must be allowed inside this area. The size of this safety buffer zone will vary from venue to venue and the Safety Officer must agree the size of this zone with the OOD, and the RYA in the planning stages of the event. Particular caution should be exercised concerning spectator boats close to turn marks, the most dangerous part of any race course is at turn marks and on the outside of the turns. No spectator boats must be allowed close to the first turn mark in any race. The Safety Officer must direct his safety assets to ensure these areas are kept clear of spectators at all times.

### **4.3 BRIEFING FOR SAFETY BOAT CREWS**

The briefing to the safety fleet is extremely important and the Safety Officer must ensure that at the conclusion of the briefing he is confident that his safety team know what their responsibilities are, what part of the course they are expected to patrol and how to deal with emergency situations. It must be remembered that many of those safety crews assisting at the event are volunteers and may have limited experience of powerboat racing events. Information concerning location, call signs, timetable, and emergency contacts must be additionally provided on safety action cards and given to every safety team prior to the race.

#### 4.4 BRIEFING PRESENTATIONAL MECHANICS

The briefing room should be in an appropriate location away from all distractions and not within a public area such as a bar. The room must be set up completely prior to the briefing taking place, including ensuring there is the correct number of seats etc.

All the appropriate equipment should be in place and correctly configured; recommended equipment includes the P.A. system, chart, white boards, notice boards and audio/visual apparatus to enable the briefing to be recorded.

Entry to the room should be strictly controlled, only safety boat crews allowed in. A register of attendees should be completed.

- a. The Safety Officer must properly prepare for the Briefing; a detailed PowerPoint presentation is recommended. It is important to stick to the template to maintain structure and flow. (See below)
- b. Keep control of the Briefing. Ask for mobile phones to be switched off or silenced. Ensure questions are held back until the end and minimised.
- c. Be brief and concise. The Safety Officer should seek to complete the Briefing within 15 minutes and ideally no longer than 20 minutes.
- d. Present a comprehensive overview of the safety plan to all those present.
- e. Provide details of different levels of safety cover, Safety Boats (medical), marshal boats, tow boats, mark boats and blue light local authorities such as coast guard, and police.
- f. Confirm that all safety boat crews have received their own personal safety action and deployment information packs.
- g. Fully brief all crews on VHF procedure, all crews to report to safety control when on station, all crews to advise safety control if they have to leave their designated position.
- h. Fully brief flag procedures, yellow, red, and white flares if used
- i. Advise all crews of danger points on course; stress the importance of self protection. Remind all crews not to enter the race course unless directed by the Safety Officer and then only when safe to do so.
- j. Confirm safety timetable and stress importance of being on station in good time
- k. Provide all crews with current weather forecast
- l. Summarise key elements for all safety crews to observe Know your allocated marshal position at all times, Be on station by the required time, Only use your call sign, Keep all radio communications to a minimum

- m. Pro actively patrol your sector, do not endanger your craft or crew
- n. Keep all spectators back behind the agreed safety buffer zones
- o. Do not cross the racing line whilst racing is in progress. Do not travel against the racing line at any time.

### SAFETY OFFICER BRIEFING TEMPLATE

Safety Officer	01.	<b>3.2 Welcome</b>	<i>Safety Boat Crews – VIPs – Harbour Authority – Sponsors</i>
			<i>Accommodate non-English speakers if appropriate</i>
	02.	<b>Introductions</b>	<i>Self – then official Top Table/OOD/RYA/UIM Commissioner</i>
	03.	<b>Attendance</b>	<i>Check Signing In sheet for absentees. Only use roll-call if all else fails.</i>
	04.	<b>Safety information packs</b>	<i>Confirm everyone has received copy / is currently in possession of /has read / understood the information packs</i>
	05.	<b>Weather Report</b>	<i>Safety Officer to Highlight any difficult sections of the course</i>
	06.	<b>Timetable</b>	<i>Running to timings</i>
			<i>Highlight delays or changes (*)</i>
	10.	<b>Race Details</b>	<i>Highlight start times for practice,</i>
			<i>Distance between wet Pits &amp; Muster area</i>
			<i>Highlight times that all safety boats are required to be on station</i>
	11.	<b>Course Details</b>	<i>Fully explain course details and highlight danger points on course</i>
			<i>Highlight any local hazards</i>
			<i>Highlight signalling flag procedures</i>
			<i>Highlight any local harbour regulations</i>
			<i>Fully explain function of different safety assets, marshal boats, safety boats, observer boats Tow boats etc</i>
	12.	<b>Safety Buffer Zones</b>	<i>Fully brief all crews on how to patrol these areas, safety boat crews must be proactive when patrolling the course</i>
	12.	<b>VHF Channels</b>	<i>Fully detail VHF channels in use and function</i>
	13.	<b>Start Boat</b>	<i>Describe start boat Picture etc</i>
	14.	<b>Recovery</b>	<i>Highlight waiting area/s&amp; recovery priorities</i>
	14.	<b>Safety Coverage</b>	<i>Safety network of boats / medics/divers / helicopter</i>
	15.		<i>Emergency recovery procedures</i>
			<i>Detail emergency Race Control telephone numbers</i>
			<i>Highlight safety flag procedures</i>
	15.	<b>Special Instructions</b>	<i>Highlight issues encountered in previous races (*)</i>
	16.		<b>Emphasise importance of self protection</b>
		<i>Safety boat ID</i>	<i>Emphasise the importance of flying this flag</i>
		<i>Flags</i>	
	17.	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Final Sweep</b>
	18.	<b>Time Check</b>	
	19.	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Thanks to all for much appreciated support and assistance</b>
	20.	<b>Novices (*)</b>	<b>Extra advice session</b>

(\*) = if applicable

#### **4.5 SAFETY BOAT FLAGS:**

- a. All safety boats working within the course and patrolling the safety buffer zones must be identified and provided with an RYA Safety Boat Identification flag.
- b. All safety boats to be provided with a yellow caution flag and a red race abort flag
- c. RYA Safety boats may additionally be provided with white collision avoidance flares, used for stopping race in conjunction with red flag if required in event risk assessment.

#### **4.6 BRIEFING OF COMPETITORS WITH OOD:**

The Safety Officer should be present at the Drivers Briefing and be prepared to provide a detailed weather forecast. In addition to this he/she should highlight any immediate safety hazards such as shipping movements or safety requirements from local harbour master or port authorities.

#### **4.7 MEDICAL SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS:**

The Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that all required medical support as detailed in the event risk assessment is in place. This must include the following:

- a. On site ambulances (when required by RYA/UIM rules) and paramedics to deal with all on land risks
- b. Paramedics deployed on water with all required support equipment
- c. A qualified race doctor is on site at all times with pre arranged direct links with the local hospital
- d. Arrangements in place for helicopter evacuation to local hospital
- e. A dedicated emergency jetty (away from the public) close to the race track and accessible by ambulances and emergency services

#### **4.8 RACE CONTROL**

A suitable location must be selected from which to run race control. This location should have a clear view of the race track and should be high enough to ensure that all VHF Radio transmissions are clearly heard over the entire race venue. Race control will require the following minimum equipment:

- a) Sufficient VHF Radios, min two base stations 25 watt capacity to control the race

- b) A plotting table with a detailed chart of the course
- c) Plotting pins showing all available safety assets, these to be positioned in the allocated positions as safety assets become available.
- d) Sufficient personnel to record all VHF radio transmissions and responsible for maintaining a comprehensive VHF Radio log
- e) Race control should also have adequate back up facilities to support a team of up to 10 persons for a day.

## **5 DURING THE RACE**

### **5.1 RACE START**

- a. Confer with the OOD to confirm that all Safety Assets are in position as per the Risk Assessment prior to the start of the race.
- b. Safety Officer to seek final approval (if required) from local authorities to start race.
- c. Do not permit any unauthorised personnel into Race Safety Control.
- d. Check with Start Boat that all the race boats are present in the muster area.
- e. Advise OOD when safe to start race start race on time providing course is clear and it is safe to do so.
- f. Monitor the first turn mark very carefully and watch for incidents.
- g. Monitor VHF radio traffic for any safety related incidents.

### **5.2 CONDUCT OF THE RACE**

The Safety Officer is responsible for safety during the race. The Safety Officer must direct the safety assets to positions as required throughout the race and ensure that at all times the safety of the event complies with the event risk assessment. Close co operation with the OOD and the RYA/ UIM Commissioner on all matters relating to safety must be maintained at all times.

### **5.3 CURTAILMENT/TERMINATION OF RACE**

It may be necessary to curtail the race before the finish due to deteriorating weather conditions or other factors that affect the safety of the event. The Safety Officer should consult with the OOD and if possible with the Commissioner. The decision to curtail rests with the OOD and in some circumstances it may not be possible to seek further opinions. In exceptional circumstances the Safety Officer may curtail the race if the OOD is unavailable. Caution should be exercised in reaching this decision and a race must only be curtailed if there are strong and compelling reasons for doing so. In 'force majeure' circumstances, the whole race can be stopped by the red flag procedure.

## **6 AFTER THE RACE**

### **6.1 STAND DOWN CHECKS**

- a. Safety Officer to liaise with OOD to confirm that all race boats are accounted for.
- b. Check the status and location of any casualties.
- c. Request information from mark boats concerning any missed marks. Convey all information to OOD
- d. Advise all safety assets that the race has finished
- e. Advise local authorities that the race has finished
- f. Stand down safety boat crews in an orderly manner
- g. Organise removal of all race marks and transportation back to pits
- h. Ensure that all safety boats are accounted for and that all have safely returned to the pits.
- i. Follow up any incidents particularly those involving accidents or injuries.
- j. Advise the RYA/UIM Commissioner of status of casualties
- k. Oversee the completion of any accident report forms and advise the OOD
- l. Stand down race control team

## **7 THE END OF THE EVENT**

### **7.1 FINAL TASKS**

The Safety Officer must ensure that all safety related matters have been successfully concluded and that all outstanding paperwork has been dealt with by the Race Secretary.

The Safety Officer must ensure that the RYA/UIM Commissioner has all necessary safety related paperwork in order for him to complete his report. This report must make any recommendations for future races and should include the following documentation:

- a. Incident Report Forms with applicable attachments
- b. Licence withdrawal forms stating medical reasons for rescinding of licence
- c. Any recommendations to be implemented prior to the next race

The Safety Officer should thank the Commissioner, all the Race Officials and the competitors for their contributions to the success of the event.

## **8 MAJOR INCIDENT GUIDELINES**

### **8.1 GENERAL**

The trend in Offshore racing has been towards higher and yet higher speeds resulting inevitably in a greater likelihood of serious accidents.

Therefore, organisers and officials must prepare themselves for the possibility of having to deal with such an accident. Forethought and planning is essential and will ease the handling of a serious situation to the benefit of all concerned. Do not forget that our handling of such situations has a direct bearing on the face of competence we present to the authorities, the media, and the competitors and to the general public.

Be aware that incidents may occur other than at sea - i.e. car parks, pit areas, craning areas etc. These Guidelines are equally applicable to all eventualities.

It is emphasised that all officials have a responsibility not only to obtain a complete picture of the incident but also to decline to draw any conclusion as to the cause or responsibility.

### **8.2 IN THE EVENT OF A SERIOUS ACCIDENT**

It is common sense, but the most obvious signs of an incident are either a large splash or a plume of smoke; these are usually the first signs of an incident and are examples of what to look out for. The following points are important:

#### **VHF SILENCE**

As soon the incident has been discovered, it is essential that the Safety Officer is informed. All communications via VHF must be either strictly controlled or silenced. Sensitive matters can be communicated via mobile telephone to ensure privacy. As the incident may be serious and outside assistance may be required from parties such as the Coastguard, full details of local rescue services must be included in the Major Incident Plan.

The Safety Officer will decide if outside assistance is required.

#### **ACCURATE POSITION**

This is a fundamental part of the guidelines, although is often overlooked as a first point of call. It is essential to primarily establish exactly where the incident has occurred, and then to make sure the Safety Officer is informed. Position should be given as either the bearing and distance from a mark (e.g. 2.4 nm 185° from Mark 4) or Latitude/Longitude.

#### **RACE NUMBERS**

Again, a very important piece of information, it is essential to establish the race numbers of the boats that have been involved in the incident.

#### **NUMBER OF CREW**

How many crew have been involved in the incident?



### **CREW STATUS**

Are all the crew visible? Are they all conscious? Are they still onboard or in the water?

Assess medical and/or diver requirements.

### **INFORM MEDICAL / EMERGENCY SERVICES**

This is only as and when applicable, as incidents do not always require medical attention or the emergency services.

### **RECOVERY**

Ensure the boat(s) that have been involved in the incident are safely brought back to shore. If the boats have lost their propulsion, then boats can either drop anchor and wait until the end of the race or be towed in immediately if there is the means to do so. Check for fuel leakage/spillage issues.

### **CONSIDER RACE ABORT OR CURTAILMENT**

To ensure the race is still safe, does it require curtailment or a total race abort?

In all circumstances the **OOD MUST** be available for such a decision. In exceptional circumstances the Safety Officer may abort a race if the OOD is unavailable. The OOD should confer with the Safety Officer and where possible the RYA/ UIM Commissioner concerning race abort or curtailment decisions. This full process may not always be possible and the OOD should remember that this decision is ultimately his/hers and frequently these decisions have to be made quickly in the interests of safety.

### **INFORMATION:**

Keep a careful note of all boats involved throughout the incident. Collate and keep all radio logs and recordings to facilitate the compilation of post-race reports.

## **8.3 IN THE CASE OF A FATALITY**

When the injured party is brought ashore, death must not be presumed until pronounced officially by a doctor at the site or the hospital. This will automatically set in motion a sequence of events, as those pronouncing death will have to notify the Police immediately as death was not due to natural causes.

**NOTE: As soon as exact details are established the RYA must be informed immediately.**

BE AWARE: It will be necessary to provide both the RYA and the UIM (if applicable) with an accurate account of the incident using eye witness statements) and any other sources of reliable information so that a detailed picture of the incident can be conveyed. This information will also be required by RYA Insurers and legal representatives.

When a fatality is confirmed, the following statement can be released

through the event Spokesperson to the media:

**“There has been a fatal accident. We are not prepared to release the name until we have received confirmation from the Police that the next of kin have been informed. We hope to issue details soon in a written statement.”**

NOTE: The Police may not wish always to inform the next of kin, if a more suitable person is present. But it is imperative that relatives are informed from an official source - not by media persons, paparazzi etc. hoping for sensational reactions and intruding on private grief.

The following should be implemented as soon as possible:

a. If recovered, the boat/s must be impounded together with any equipment. Arrange for photographs to be taken of any damage to the boat/s. (Everyone has an obligation to retain any material evidence relating to an unnatural death).

b. The OOD must arrange for all documents pertinent to the casualty and any other parties involved with the incident to be collected and kept in a file. (This file will be used by the Coroner and the RYA/ UIM.) To include:

Entry form, licences, test papers if applicable, next of kin form, signing-on indemnity, briefing sign-in, and scrutineering sheet.

c. The Safety Officer’s log will be called for. (This is vital documentary evidence.)

d. Eye witness reports must be obtained. (The Police will also want to interview those witnesses).

e. A detailed plan of the incident must be recorded – RYA Incident Report Form refers.

f. Note any involvement of Third Parties; collect their details if injury or damage has been sustained by them.

g. Notify the relevant authorities – see “Major Incident Prompt/Report Form”

h. There will inevitably be media pressure for more details. The nominated spokesperson should respond as follows:

**“We will be issuing a statement on today’s accident at..... Hours in room ..... where there will be an opportunity of interviewing the OOD/Safety Officer ”**

Ensure that this is a realistic time, and bear in mind press deadlines.

i. Choose a suitable private meeting place away from crowds, relatives,

competitors and supporters etc.

j. Give the official title of the designated official responsible for speaking on behalf of the RYA/UIM

k. Because of its negative content, this meeting should NOT be referred to as a "Press Conference". The following format is suggested for a "Press Statement" and NOT a "Press Release". A "Press Release" tells a story whereas a "Press Statement" purely gives facts.

l.

#### **DRAFT CONTENT FOR PRESS STATEMENT IN EVENT OF FATALITY**

*RYA Headed paper*

*Time and Date*

*The RYA regret to announce that Bill Smith was fatally injured during the second lap (avoid being too specific) of the RYA National Championships(date)*

*It appears that his craft overturned at high speed subjecting the crew to severe water impact. The driver/navigator/co-driver escaped with minor injuries and shock.*

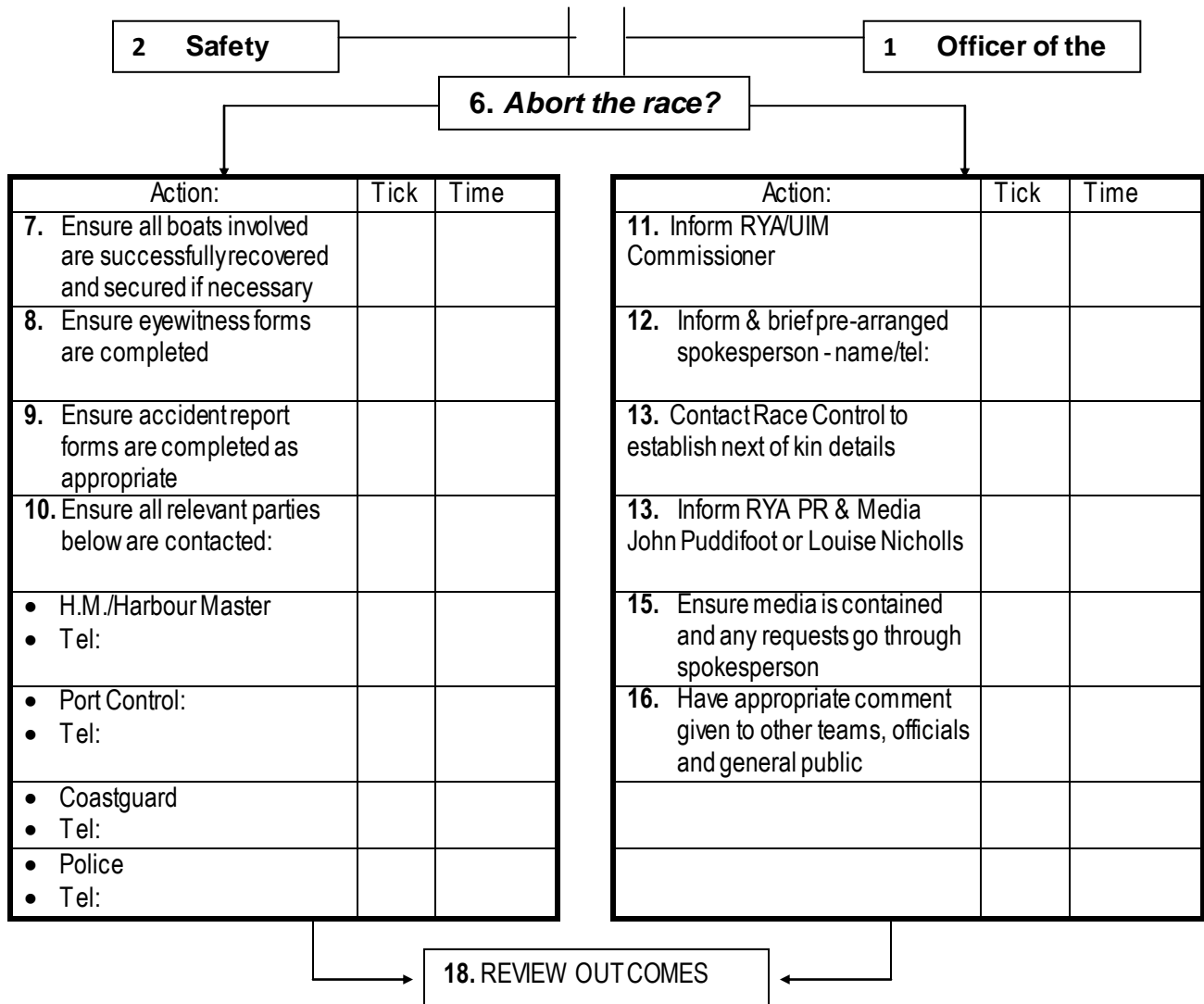
*Married with two children Bill Smith age 42 came from Birmingham where he was employed as an engineer. He has been successfully racing powerboats since 2004.*

*Ends*

*Information can be given verbally*

## MAJOR INCIDENT PLAN

<b>1. MAJOR INCIDENT</b>		
Action:	Tick	Time
<b>2. Radio communication from Safety Boat to Safety Officer using pre-arranged code on emergency (secure) channel</b>		
<b>3. Safety Officer to co-ordinate initial response and call for immediate medical assistance and rescue of casualties</b>		
<b>4. Appropriate emergency services to be contacted:</b>		
• Police - Tel:		
• Fire - Tel:		
• Ambulance - Tel:		
• Coastguard - Tel:		
<b>5. Safety Officer to inform OOD</b>		



Signed by Safety Officer----- Signed by OOD-----

## 8.5 FINAL CHECK LIST

Priority	Tasks to be completed by event Safety Officer	Date completed or details of meetings held
	Pre Event Planning	
	On water safety fleet	
	Safety aspects of course planning	
	Dry Pit/Wet Pit safety arrangements	
	Liaison with Harbour authorities	
	Liaison with RYA/ UIM Commissioner	
	Designated area/s for spectator craft	
	Briefing of safety fleet	
	Issue of safety flags	
	Briefing of Competitors with OOD	
	Medical support arrangements	
	Major Incident Plan Incident Guide lines	