

Blakeney Sailing Club

Guidance Notes for Patrol Boat Crews

These notes provide guidance for those concerned carrying out Patrol Boat duties for organised events, including Club Races, Open Meetings, Regattas and Flotilla Sailing. These notes are not a replacement for informed decisions made “on the day”, but will assist in the safe and orderly conduct of activities.

1. Patrol Boat Helms:

- Must be on the approved Patrol Boat Helms List of the Blakeney Sailing Club Committee (copy to be kept in the Club Hut for inspection).
- Must hold a minimum of RYA Level 2 Power Boat Certificate or by virtue of experience accepted by the committee.
- Must hold Safety Boat qualification or by virtue of experience accepted by the committee.
- Must be familiar with the club craft, equipment and VHF radio procedures.
- The club encourages PB Helms (and crews) to seek appropriate training for the RYA Marine VHF Short Range Certificate since otherwise they are legally limited to using channel M (37a) and M2 and not the international channels (including 16) unless under supervision.
- Consider taking a mobile phone with you for use in emergencies. A waterproof case is available in the hut if required.

2. Pre-launch Procedures

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before launch of Patrol Boat. For a Lapwing start helm and crew should arrive 60 minutes before the published start time.
- Discuss with Race Officer/Event Organiser the Risk Assessment of the day.
- Undertake VHF radio check with Race Officer/Event Organiser and other Patrol Boats.
- It is the responsibility of the Patrol Boat helm to ensure the boat is seaworthy and carrying all the required safety equipment (see appendix A).
- Patrol Boat helm and crew to wear personal buoyancy aids and appropriate clothing at all times after launching (wet suits/dry suits should be worn October to May).

3. When Afloat:

- Patrol Boat helms and crew must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, driving the boat at a safe and appropriate speed at all times.
- Helms to wear kill cord attached to their person whilst the engine is running. It is recommended that the cord is attached around the leg above the knee. The kill cord should be checked to be functional at the beginning of each session.
- Helm to proceed at appropriate speed at all times and use every effort to comply with Blakeney Harbour Association speed limits and to avoid unnecessary wash in the channels.
- Helms to switch off engine when in close proximity to a person in the water
- Helms are responsible for dealing with an incident in a safe and appropriate manner.
- In the event of a suspected entrapment right the boat as quickly as possible using the dagger/centreboard, mast or any other means. If necessary use the knife/cutters stored in the boat to free crew from under their vessel.
- People are deemed more important than boats/equipment. If necessary, recover crew and abandon vessel. Update Race Officer/Event Organiser of status of incident.
- In the event of multiple demands on Patrol Boat, transfer rescued personnel/boats to Lapwing (committee boat) Unless casualty needs to come ashore immediately
- The Race Officer/Event Organiser has overall responsibility for safety on the day and should therefore decide rescue priorities after discussions with Patrol Helm. This includes a decision to abandon an event if deemed necessary.
- If a serious incident occurs where it becomes necessary to call emergency services either a mobile phone should be used to contact the coastguard via 999 or 112 or VHF radio channel 16. Instructions on the correct procedure to use both a mobile and radio in an emergency/distress situation are kept in the Hut, on the patrol boats and Lapwing. Generally contact should initially be made with the coastguard who will coordinate the appropriate response between the RNLI , air sea rescue and ambulance services

4. Return to Shore:

- Confirm with the Race Officer/Event Organiser that all boats and crews from boats participating on the event are accounted for.
- Patrol Boats should be packed up and secured as they were found, and all equipment returned and stowed in the club hut.

- Patrol Boat helms to report any matters regarding the patrol boats or their equipment to the bosun.
- Patrol Boat helm should liaise with the Race Officer/Event Organiser to complete the PB Log/Accident Book.

5. First Aid:

- In the event of an accident, assess the situation using your judgement to ensure the safety of other participants.
- Administer First Aid if appropriate and capable. Ensure no harm can come to the casualty.
- In the event of a serious injury get the casualty to shore as soon as possible, unless moving them will do more harm. Keep them warm using a space blanket.
- If you cannot move the casualty monitor them. If unconscious, do not leave them on their back. In liaison with Race Officer/Event consider contacting the emergency services.
- Ensure Emergency Services have medical details of casualty (if available).
- Be aware of the risk of hypothermia if crews are in the water for a long period (see appendix B. Use space/thermal blanket to keep crews warm if necessary.

Appendix A

Safety Equipment to be carried in Patrol Boat:

- 2 x Working VHF radio
- Kill cord and spare
- Full tank of petrol
- Parbuckle Sling
- Boat hook
- Paddle
- Space/thermal blanket
- Selection of floating towing lines
- Rope ladder
- Anchor
- Spare bung
- Fenders
- Throw Line
- First Aid kit
- Knife, wire cutters and shackle key
- 2 x Anchor, chain and warps
- Bridle with carbine hooks to attach to transom
- Instructions for making an emergency / distress call using a mobile phone and vhf radio.

All items will either be in the front locker or the box.

Crews should also have a course card and means to write down the course for race events.

Note: Patrol boat to be maintained by bosun/BSC Committee.

Appendix B

Sudden, unexpected immersion in cold water below 15 C is potentially dangerous. The coastal and inland waters of the UK remain cold all year round and a peak of drowning deaths often occurs in the summer, as the hot weather tempts people into the cold water. The effects of the cold water mean that even healthy individuals, who are good swimmers, can still drown within a short period of time, often only a few feet from the shore. Be aware of one minute – one degree rule. If the water is 10°C you can assume you have 10 minutes to get the individual out of the water. Rough handling of the individual in the rescue is dangerous, handle carefully, lift them out horizontally, wrap in space blankets to prevent further heat loss. Shield individual from cooling effect from wind, e.g. returning to shore in speeding Patrol Boats.