

---

Royal Brighton Yacht Club



---

## Procedure

# Rescue Operations Procedure

---

Implementation Approval:  
General Committee  
R.B.Y.C.

Process Owner:  
Chairman  
Rescue Boat Sub-Committee

Implementation:

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. PURPOSE..... 4
- 2. SCOPE..... 4
- 3. PRIORITIES..... 4
- 4. DEFINITIONS ..... 4
- 5. PRE RACE/REGATTA ACTIONS ..... 4
  - 5.1. Pre race/Regatta Preparation. .... 4
  - 5.2. Pre-race communications ..... 4
    - 5.2.1. Rescue and Support Boats..... 5
    - 5.2.2. Multiple race Areas..... 5
  - 5.3. Race finishing times..... 5
- 6. RACE/REGATTA ACTIONS ..... 5
  - 6.1. Operational Activities ..... 5
  - 6.2. Initial Response ..... 5
  - 6.3. Management of a Major Incident. .... 6
  - 6.4. Medical Emergency ..... 6
  - 6.5. Race Abandoned ..... 6
  - 6.6. Towing Yachts ..... 7
  - 6.7. Crew Safe buoy ..... 7
  - 6.8. Rescue Boat Availability ..... 7
- 7. POST RACE/REGATTA ACTIONS..... 7
  - 7.1. Major Incident Completion ..... 7
  - 7.2. Operational Incident Debrief ..... 8
  - 7.3. Critical Incident Stress Management ..... 8
- 8. RESPONSIBILITIES ..... 8
  - 8.1. Rescue Boat Committee ..... 8
  - 8.2. Race Management Officer ..... 8
  - 8.3. On-Shore Duty Officer ..... 8
  - 8.4. Unfilled Positions ..... 9
- 9. DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET ..... 10

---

## 1. PURPOSE

This procedure is part of the series of documents which define the procedures to be followed by the Royal Brighton Yacht Club in the management any incidents that arise from on-water activities.

## 2. SCOPE

The Scope of this procedure is limited to defining those actions that relate to the management of incidents occurring during on-water activities. Management of races is specifically excluded from this procedure.

On-water activities include all races and other on-water activities managed by RBYC, including those managed from the Race Control Tower situated on the breakwater, and any activities managed from the Clubhouse.

## 3. PRIORITIES

On-water incidents will be managed according to the following priorities :-

1. The safety and well-being of rescue boat personnel.
2. The safety and well-being of skippers and crew involved in the incident(s).
3. The preservation of rescue boats and equipment.
4. The preservation of other boats involved in the incident(s).

## 4. DEFINITIONS

The following words, acronyms and abbreviations are referred to in this document.

Term	Meaning
RMO	Race Management Officer, also known as PRO
PRO	Principal Race Officer
Designated Swimmer	A designated rescue boat crew member capable and prepared to go into the water to assist where necessary.

## 5. PRE RACE/REGATTA ACTIONS

### 5.1. Pre race/Regatta Preparation.

The RMO (in conjunction with the Regatta Manager and after seeking advice from Patrol and Rescue personnel) will determine the number of rescue boats and personnel required to run the event safely. The RMO will give due notice of the type of craft being sailed and the necessary response required.

The Club Captain will see that the necessary rescue craft and qualified personnel are available.

These actions shall be initiated not more than four weeks after the event booking has been confirmed. They are to be completed as soon as possible after initiation, to ensure the availability of volunteers and equipment.

All rescue boat personnel will be briefed on the requirements of the race/regatta by the RMO prior to the event's commencement. Daily briefings will be held to provide an update on conditions and requirements. The allocation of "designated swimmer" responsibilities will form a part of the briefing.

This section applies to the Club's normal program as well as to special regattas.

### 5.2. Pre-race communications

---

### **5.2.1. Rescue and Support Boats**

All rescue and support boats will perform a radio check before the commencement of racing.

### **5.2.2. Multiple race Areas**

On all occasions when there are races being managed by two or more RMOs at the same times on the waters adjacent to the Club, they will all communicate by radio (Ch77) to ensure that the selected race areas do not pose a hazard or obstacle to competitors in other races.

The objectives here are :-

- To ensure communications are open if an on-water response is required by either RMO.
- To ensure that all racing is as fair and as safe as possible.

### **5.3. Race finishing times**

The last race for the afternoon shall start no later than 1600hr provided the race has a time limit of less than 90min.

This applies only to Home and Centre course races that have not been specifically planned to run past this time.

## **6. RACE/REGATTA ACTIONS**

### **6.1. Operational Activities**

As far as practicable the RMO will maintain or cause to be maintained a record of the position and activity of all rescue boats.

During the management of all incidents, the RMO will maintain a log of all reports received and instructions given. The log should be written, and taped if possible.

Rescue boats will patrol the area defined by the RMO. When leaving that area for any reason, they are to advise the RMO of their status and return time.

### **6.2. Initial Response**

The initial response to a potential or actual incident will be undertaken by the rescue boat positioned nearest to the incident. This vessel shall remain standing by until one of the following occurs :-

- The initial response vessel is relieved by another vessel, or
- The incident is controlled, or
- They are instructed by the RMO to attend elsewhere, or
- Conditions are such that the response vessel has to abandon the task.

The initial response vessel will assess the incident and immediately notify the RMO of :-

- The nature of the incident.
- Whether there are injuries to any crew, and an initial evaluation of their seriousness.
- The management of the incident by the yacht's crew.
- The requirement of further rescue resources.
- The intended response and rescue actions.
- Any other assistance required

The RMO will authorise the release of other rescue boats to enable an effective response. It is reasonable to expect that if an incident constitutes a 'man overboard' situation that the yacht's skipper will authorise the immediate implementation of a 'man overboard' procedure. The rescue boat will monitor this procedure and intervene only if required or requested by the yacht's skipper. In any rescue situation, the safety of personnel is paramount and if required, the rescue boat may intervene to assist with the retrieval of a person/s from the water, having told the yacht's skipper to keep clear.

---

### **6.3. Management of a Major Incident.**

- The RMO will be responsible for the declaration of a Major Incident, according to their assessment of the nature of the incident and the weather and conditions at the time.
- The on-course rescue boat operators will immediately communicate details of any incident to the RMO. This communication should include advice as to the nature and seriousness of the incident.
- On-water rescue operations may be supported by an On-Shore Support team.
- The RMO may seek advice from the on-water rescue personnel before determining if a yacht race should be abandoned due to unsafe conditions or the occurrence of an incident.
- The RMO will seek advice from the on-water rescue personnel before determining whether or not a race can continue without disrupting a required incident response operation.
- The RMO may allow a race to continue throughout an incident if the safety of other yacht skippers and crew is not compromised and the incident response operation is not impeded.
- In the situation of a missing person or yacht, the RMO will immediately contact the Victoria Water Police on VHF Ch. 16, or by phone. The coordination of the search and rescue operation will be transferred to the Victoria Water Police as soon as they are in a position to accept the responsibility. The RMO will communicate this information to the On-Shore Coordinator.

### **6.4. Medical Emergency**

If the rescue boat personnel, in conjunction with the RMO, decide that the incident is a medical emergency requiring ambulance support, the RMO will immediately telephone '000' or '112' to contact emergency services and request an ambulance to arrive at the nearest appropriate jetty.

Rescue boat personnel will notify the yacht involved that this has occurred and direct them to take the injured or ill person to the specific jetty.

If this is not possible then the rescue boat will initiate the evacuation of the injured or ill person, provided they deem it safe to do so.

If it is not possible to evacuate the injured crew, rescue boat personnel will advise the RMO of the situation, and request assistance from Emergency Services, such as Water Police.

If the nearest jetty is RBYC, the rescue boat personnel will contact the RBYC on-shore Duty Officer to ensure that the emergency vehicle has access to the pier and hardstand.

In a medical emergency it may be necessary for rescue boat operators to administer emergency first aid. A first aid kit is available on all RBYC rescue boats. It is assumed that all rescue boat operators will have basic training in first aid.

At all times, the rescue boat personnel will maintain communication with the RMO

### **6.5. Race Abandoned**

- If the race has been abandoned, the RMO will direct all rescue boat operators to scan and report the positions and status of distressed boats and their crew.
- If the RMO is located on the water, and, due to the severity of the conditions he is unable to effectively manage the incident, he is to direct the On-Shore Duty Officer to take control of the incident from the Race Control Tower. Handover of incident management is to occur as soon as practicable, allowing time for the On-shore Duty Officer to relocate to the Tower. Until management has been transferred, the RMO remains in charge of incident response.
- The RMO will communicate the commencement of this activity to the On-Shore Duty Officer

- 
- The On-Shore Duty Officer may then co-opt two club members to act as 'spotters' from the Race Start Tower, to provide back-up monitoring of the position and status of competing yachts and the rescue operation. These 'spotters' will be provided with binoculars and a VHF radio.
  - The On-Shore Duty Officer will ensure that the "retirement/declaration" sheets are placed on the Race Regatta Administration desk and monitor the sign-off process until all competitors have been accounted for.
  - If the RMO or Rescue Boat Operator believes that as a result of an incident, further resources are required to ensure the safety of the competing sailors and yachts, details of the required resources will be radioed to the On-Shore Coordinator who will access the resources as quickly as possible.
  - The On-Shore Duty Officer will ensure that all necessary emergency medical and support assistance is provided as soon as sailors/ yachts/rescue boat operators reach the jetty.
  - The recovery and mooring of boats may require extra club volunteers to be co-opted to assist with this activity. Members need to be aware that they may be called upon to render any assistance as required by the On-Shore Duty Officer.
  - The RMO may, at his sole discretion and taking current circumstances into account, transfer control of the incident to the On-Shore Duty Officer.

## **6.6. Towing Yachts**

The priority of the RBYC Rescue Boat personnel during response to an emergency is to ensure the safety of personnel. The rescue boat personnel may be required to rescue an injured or unconscious person from a yacht or the water, administer emergency first aid and transfer them to the nearest jetty/port. As a secondary task, after ensuring the safety of personnel, the RBYC rescue boat may be requested to tow a yacht to safety.

The RBYC rescue boat will tow a yacht to the nearest jetty as part of its secondary emergency rescue response. If the yacht's skipper or owner requests a tow and assistance to another jetty, this will only be done if circumstances allow. This role will not constitute a rescue response role and towing charges may be charged to the yacht's owner at commercial rates.

## **6.7. Crew Safe buoy**

If the crew of a yacht need to be evacuated as a result of an emergency, the rescue boat personnel will attach a 'crew safe' buoy (tear drop orange buoy with black words, or other clearly marked buoy) to the yacht to indicate that all crew have been evacuated to safety.

## **6.8. Rescue Boat Availability**

If an incident occurs at a time when there are no rescue boats available (eg during twilight racing), the RMO should initially request assistance from any nearby boat. If assistance is not forthcoming, then the RMO should immediately contact the Victorian Water Police for assistance.

# **7. POST RACE/REGATTA ACTIONS**

## **7.1. Major Incident Completion**

It is likely that both sailors and rescue boat personnel will be exhausted as a result of an incident and subsequent rescue operation.

The On-shore Duty Officer needs to ensure that food, refreshments and dry clothing are available for all relevant personnel and a space is available for people to gather and rest.

A first-aid person needs to be assigned by the On-shore Duty Officer to assess the medical conditions and requirements of all skippers and crew. In particular, observing for signs of hypothermia, fatigue and stress.

---

The RMO and On-shore Duty Officer need to ensure that the details of personnel who have required medical attention are recorded.

All rescue boat documentation needs to be completed.

The RMO and On-shore Duty Officer need to document the nature of the incident and the rescue and recovery response operation.

## **7.2. Operational Incident Debrief**

If the rescue boats have been involved in a rescue response, an operational debrief will be convened by the RMO or at the request of the operators.

The operational debrief will allow all rescue boat personnel who were active on the day to discuss the nature of the incident and the subsequent operational response. The debrief will be conducted in a “blame-free” manner, to encourage the review of the correct procedures and recommendation of future actions.

## **7.3. Critical Incident Stress Management**

A critical incident is defined as a rescue, which is likely to cause rescue personnel to experience very strong emotions. The incidents could involve a fatality or serious injury to people involved in sailing activities, extremely complex rescue operations, and equipment or rescue failure. At the completion of a critical incident, all rescue boat personnel will attend a compulsory debrief. This debrief will be facilitated initially as an operational debrief but will include the discussion of critical incident stress symptoms and stress management.

# **8. RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **8.1. Rescue Boat Committee**

It is the responsibility of the Rescue Boat Committee to see that the rescue equipment is current and that deficiencies are rectified. This is not subject to theft or accident caused by outside influence. It is the responsibility of the Rescue Boat Committee to make sure deficiencies are rectified at the earliest opportunity.

## **8.2. Race Management Officer**

The Race Management Officer (RMO) is responsible for managing the Race Operations on the day. The position is also known as the Principal Race Officer (PRO). The responsibilities of the RMO continue after a race has been abandoned until all boats are recorded as safe, or the responsibility for managing the incident has been transferred.

The Race Management Officer (RMO) is responsible for convening a briefing before each sailing event or regatta. The RMO is responsible for deciding if a briefing is necessary before normal Club events, taking into account the weather forecast, expected race conditions, available rescue personnel and other relevant factors.

The RMO is charged with informing the Patrol and Rescue coordinator of the requirements for an event as described in 4.1.

## **8.3. On-Shore Duty Officer**

- To respond to RMO communications during an incident or in other circumstances requiring an on-shore response.
- To ensure that all required emergency service vehicles and personnel have unimpeded access to the RBYC jetty and hard-stand in order to undertake emergency response and recovery activities.
- Monitor communications and record the position and status of all rescue and support boats.

- 
- Co-ordinate and facilitate on-shore rescue and support operations.

## **8.4. Unfilled Positions**

There may be times when specific positions are unfilled and therefore the process will be temporarily modified to suit the then existing conditions.

---

## 9. DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

### Contact for Enquiries and Proposed Changes

If you have any questions regarding this document contact:

Designation: Chairman, Rescue Boat Committee

Phone:

Fax:

### Record of Issues

Issue No	Issue Date	Nature of Amendment
1.01	20/09/2005	Initial draft
1.11	08/09/2006	Combined with Actions from Race Management Procedure. Updated after comments from RBYC Rescue personnel.
1.12.	15/09/2006	Revised after review by past Emergency Services officer.
1.13	20/03/2007	Revised following incident management exercise.