

## **The UK 29er Class Association**

### **Major Event Safety Standard Operating Policy and Procedures**

Approved	
Version	3.1
Date	

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out best practice guidelines for the UK 29er Class Association for use at events where the class is part of the Organising Authority as defined in a Notice of Race and/or Sailing Instructions.

RRS Rule 3 as well as the 29er class's standard Major Event Sailing Instructions state that a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone, that they are aware of and accept the inherent risks in the sport and that they are responsible for their own safety. Nevertheless, these operating procedures have been developed as guidelines for good practice in the overall management of the safety of all those competing in UK 29er Class Association major events.

## 2. Scope & Limitations

This document does not replace or supersede a host club's specific standard safety policy or legal health and safety requirements for organisation of events on behalf of the UK 29er Class Association. The document does however set out a level of expectation by the UK 29er Class Association as to minimum requirements.

## 3. Objectives of the Safety Fleet

The objective of the Safety Fleet is to provide efficient, competent safety cover to allow competitors and all those involved maximum enjoyment whilst minimising the risks to sailors' safety.

The primary responsibility of the safety fleet is to ensure the safety of sailors, although the safety fleet may attempt to assist with protecting boats from damage where sailors' and members of the Safety Fleet's safety is not compromised by doing so.

## 4. Overall Organisational Structure

This structure is designed for single course events such as Grand Prix and 29er National Championships. Where multiple courses are required at an event, reference should be made to the current version of the equivalent RYA policy.

**PRO.** Overall safety management at a 29er event is the responsibility of the Principal Race Officer (PRO). The PRO will collaborate with the host club in carrying out this responsibility. The PRO shall be responsible for overall safety from the time the first participant is permitted to go on the water until the time that all competitors are off the water and accounted for.

**CSL.** The PRO will usually delegate co-ordination of the safety fleet to the UK 29er Class Safety Lead or a designated event Course Safety Lead (CSL). CSL will advise the PRO on specific 29er policy requirements and characteristics of the fleet. CSL will be afloat from the point that the first boat launches until all boats are off the water and accounted for. CSL will brief the safety fleet prior to launch and direct the activities of the safety fleet on the water, including any mark laying or jury boats who are re-assigned to safety duties.

**Bridge.** A VHF Radio Control Base ('Bridge') should be appointed who will monitor all calls on each VHF channel used in the event and log the whereabouts of all boats. The responsibilities of Bridge are set out below.

**Beach.** A beachmaster ('Beach') should be appointed who is responsible for operating the tally system and confirming to Bridge when all sailors are accounted for. Beach will also co-ordinate shore-side support for launching and recovery.

## 5. Qualifications

The Class or Organising Authority will appoint a PRO.

The CSL will be an experienced dinghy racer with valid RYA Power Boat Level 2 (PB2), RYA Safety Boat and RYA First Aid qualifications.

All safety boat helms will have valid RYA PB2.

## 6. Risk assessment

Prior to the decision to launch each day, the PRO and CSL will fill out and sign a risk assessment. This will usually use the class's standard format (Annex 1). Where the risk level is Very High the CSL and PRO should be confident that adequate mitigations are in place before allowing the fleet to launch.

The risk assessment should be photographed upon completion to create a digital time stamp.

## 7. Safety Fleet Size

The minimum Safety Boat / Competitor ratio should be 1 Safety Boat per 10 competing boats.

Mark laying boats, support boats, and jury boats may be counted towards this ratio so long as they are crewed and equipped adequately to perform safety duties if called upon.

Whereas the 1:10 ratio is the minimum, the PRO and CSL should be satisfied that there are adequate safety boats to provide safety cover on the course and to escort retiring competitors ashore, taking into account factors such as:

- Weather and sea state on the day
- Distance from racecourse to shore
- Experience of competitors
- Local risk factors

## 8. Briefing safety crews

Where possible, safety crews should be sent links ahead of the event to the Class's Safety Boat Guidance document, and to the ['RYA 29er Safety Boat Guidance'](#) video.

Every day prior to going afloat the CSL should give a verbal briefing to all safety crews which should include:

Responsibilities:

- Responsibilities and objectives of the safety fleet, including safeguarding responsibilities
- Responsibility of rescue crews to check equipment on their safety boat before leaving the dock
- Need to remain ready to go back afloat and with radio on until stood down

Plan for the day:

- Local hazards and known risks such as shipping movements
- Radio channel and call signs
- Plan to accompany the fleet out and back
- Safety boat positions on the course
- Emergency/Major Injury and Minor Injury drop-off point
- Refuelling and other logistics
- Any underlying medical conditions
- Plan for retiring boats (the need to report boats leaving the racecourse, and plan for accompanying retiring boats ashore)

Provision of safety cover:

- In what circumstances to provide assistance, including the ability under Rule 41(a) for safety boats to reunite sailors who are separated from their boats without crews being obliged to retire
- Principles of assisting capsized or inverted boats; how to lift a boat's bow if entrapment is suspected
- Methods for towing 29ers or bringing ashore alongside
- Procedures in event of major injury (CODE RED)
- (If there is a chance that these will be required) **Fog Procedures, Strong Wind Procedures**, instruction to **Prioritise Sailors over Boats**. (see sections below)
- Distribution of Red/White tape to attach to abandoned boats, if risk assessment is High or Very High

## 9. On-the-water operating procedures

The safety fleet will typically operate in accordance with the following procedures.

**Safeguarding.** Safety crews have a safeguarding responsibility towards sailors who are under 18. They should display appropriate behaviour and language at all times in accordance with the UK 29er Class Association [Code of Conduct for Members and Volunteers](#).

**Assistance.** During racing, safety crews should keep capsized or damaged boats under visual monitor but should not ordinarily intervene unless (i) requested to by competitors; (ii) they can only see one crew member and suspect an entrapment; (iii) a crew member has become separated from the boat or (iv) the boat obviously needs to retire due to damage. Between racing, any assistance may be provided to crews including assistance with repairs, so long as this is equally available to all boats in the fleet.

**VHF.** Race management and safety should communicate using different radio channels, except for small events. CSL should monitor both channels. Safety crews should call Bridge once afloat to complete a radio check and to report that they are

afloat and the number of people on board. Safety crews should call Bridge to report when they are back ashore.

**Kill cords.** Safety boat helms must wear kill cords at all times when the engine is on, including when it is in neutral.

**Launching and tallies.** A tally system should be used at all open water venues, and may be used at inland venues. Beach should report to Bridge and CSL when all boats have launched. Beach should report to Bridge when the fleet is ashore and all tallies have been accounted for. Safety crews should remain with radios on and in kit ready to go on the water until stood down by CSL after all competitors are accounted for.

**Delta flag.** CSL should confirm to Bridge that there is adequate safety cover on the water before Delta flag is displayed. Beach should report to Bridge who should record and then relay to CSL the number of boats tallied and the time when all boats are launched.

**Retiring boats.** Safety boats should report to CSL the sail number of each retiring boat. CSL should relay the sail numbers of retiring boats to Bridge, who will keep a record of which boats have left the racecourse. CSL should organise safety cover for boats retiring from the course: boats should not sail ashore without safety cover. This may involve instructing boats who wish to retire not to leave the race area until they can be accompanied as a batch. Bridge should confirm to CSL when retiring boats are safely ashore.

**Positions on the course.** CSL will organise the position of safety boats on the course. CSL will typically not assume a position on the course but act as overall co-ordinator of the safety fleet and substitute a safety boat where one of the safety fleet is dealing with a complex recovery or is away from the course area.

**CODE RED.** Safety boats should call a CODE RED over the radio where there is seriously injury, structural damage endangering the safety of a boat, or other serious incident. The procedures in the event of CODE RED are set out below.

**Support boats.** CSL shall determine where in the course area support boats are permitted. In order to be allowed in the vicinity of racing, support boats shall have a minimum of two people on board and shall have a radio tuned to the safety channel. CSL shall keep under review the ability of safety boats to provide an adequate level of safety cover, and if necessary request support boats to carry out safety duties.

**Use of mark layers, jury boats and support boats for additional safety cover.** CSL shall keep under review the ability of safety boats to provide an adequate level of safety cover, and if necessary request PRO to switch mark layers or jury boats to safety duties.

**Removing sailors from the racecourse.** It may be necessary for a safety boat to bring a sailor ashore, for example due to sickness or injury. In these cases, except in very light winds the remaining crew member should never be left unaccompanied with the boat.

**Unaccounted-for boats.** If Beach finds that one or more boats are unaccounted for, they should inform Bridge immediately, who will immediately alert the PRO and CSL. PRO should direct all available Safety boats back to the Race Area to start a search. Meanwhile, Beach should urgently investigate whether the missing individuals are

ashore. If crews remain unaccounted for after a period of time appropriate for the conditions, emergency services should be alerted.

## 10. Bridge

Bridge should monitor all radio channels. Instructions from the PRO or CSL may be passed through Bridge to ensure that all stations can hear and the information is correctly relayed.

Bridge will control shore-based flag signals.

Bridge will liaise with Beach and CSL to keep a log of what sailors are (i) launched; (ii) retiring from the race area and on their way back to shore; and (iii) safely ashore.

Bridge is responsible for arranging first aid or calling the emergency services for any injured sailors returning to shore, and liaison with CSL on the safe passage of boats retiring from the course.

If Strong Wind or Fog Procedures are enacted, where possible Bridge should use audio recording on their mobile phone to provide a log of radio communications for later reference.

In the event of a major safety incident, Bridge should co-opt a deputy from parents on shore to co-ordinate communications with parents on shore, informing parents about the progress of the incident and when sailors are confirmed as safe, even if they are not yet ashore.

## 11. Personnel and Equipment

All Safety Boats should have a minimum of two competent crew aboard. There is no maximum number of crew but Safety Boats should not be overloaded with crew and should be able to accommodate a minimum of 4 additional sailors. It would be unusual for a Safety Boat to have more than three crew members, and the CSL may instruct a Safety Boat to leave crew members ashore in this event.

Safety crews will wear personal buoyancy at all times when afloat and be appropriately dressed or equipped for the anticipated conditions.

The following equipment should be carried by all safety boats. It is the responsibility of the host club to ensure that these are in place, and safety crews to check their equipment before leaving shore.

1. Adequate fuel for at least 2 hours more than the maximum anticipated time on the water
2. Fully functional VHF radio with adequate battery life
3. A sound generator (whistle or fog horn)
4. Anchor and warp suitable for the race area
5. Sharp knife, preferably serrated and easily accessible
6. Kill cord and spare
7. Waterproof first aid kit, and survival bag or thermal protective aid
8. 2 x Tow rope, minimum 10m each

The following equipment should be carried by at least one safety boat (typically CSL). It is the responsibility of the host club to ensure that these are in place.

1. Wire Cutters, to cut away rigging and trapeze wires
2. 5-6 masthead floats (provided by 29er UK Class Association)

## 12. Fog procedures

If fog arrives before or between races, PRO and CSL should agree to postpone racing, and CSL should direct the Safety Fleet to implement Fog Procedures and advise Bridge that they have done so.

If fog arrives during a race, PRO and CSL should agree to shorten or abandon racing, and CSL should direct the Safety Fleet to implement Fog Procedures and advise Bridge that they have done so.

Fleets should be informed by the Safety Boats either at the finish or on each leg of the course to stop, and to stay close together near a known reference point such as a mark or safety boat. Safety Boats should count competitor boats near them and record sail numbers, and report to CSL.

CSL should calculate the total number of accounted-for boats and inform Bridge. If the total number does not equal the total of the boats that went afloat, Bridge will inform the CSL so that a search can commence.

If the race area has a boundary (for example, the seaward side of a bay), CSL should assign one or more safety boats to patrol the boundary to keep sailing boats on the course side.

Boats should be sent ashore in small groups, keeping in sight of accompanying RIBs. RIBs should report to CSL the sail numbers of all boats that they are escorting to shore. If a boat capsizes, all the group should stop whilst the boat is righted.

If fog is anticipated, competitors should be briefed on fog procedures in the morning before going afloat.

## 13. Strong wind procedures

If strong winds arrive or the sea state deteriorates when the fleet is afloat such that the safety fleet risks being unable to provide an adequate level of safety cover, CSL and PRO should agree to implement strong wind procedures.

CSL should inform the safety fleet that strong wind procedures are being implemented. CSL should instruct all support boats to join the safety fleet. PRO should instruct all mark laying and jury boats to join the safety fleet under instruction from CSL. Mark laying and jury boats should then switch onto the Safety Channel and report in to CSL.

If strong wind procedures are implemented during racing, PRO and CSL should agree whether to shorten course or abandon racing.

CSL should organise safety boats to form a corridor between the course area and

beach. The first safety boat should accompany the front of the fleet home and then remain on station at the end of the corridor; the next safety boat should accompany the next 10 boats and then remain on station to seaward of the first boat, until there is a chain of safety boats for the last boats.

CSL should assign a safety boat on the seaward side of the route home to require boats to tack or gybe to prevent them sailing too far from the rhum line back to beach.

CSL should remain behind the last boat to ensure that all boats return to shore. Safety Boats should remain afloat until released by the CSL.

## 14. Emergency (CODE RED) procedures

In the event of an emergency occurring (serious injury to a sailor or anyone at sea supporting the event, structural damage endangering the safety of a boat in the event, etc.), the first boat on the scene should inform all stations using the code words “**CODE RED**” and its location.

CSL should assign the nearest safety boat to assist and will typically proceed to scene to co-ordinate assistance. CSL should immediately assess the situation and may call appropriate support to the scene. CSL should keep PRO and Bridge informed of the situation.

Only the minimum number of safety boats should remain involved with the emergency. All other boats should continue to provide safety cover for the fleet(s) in the normal manner. CSL may deputise to another safety boat to co-ordinate the safety fleet while dealing with the emergency. All stations not involved in the emergency should minimise radio traffic.

If necessary, the casualty should be taken ashore in an appropriate boat to the designated emergency drop-off point. Any requirement for Emergency Services should be communicated through CSL who will inform Bridge. Bridge will then contact the Emergency Services and ensure that an appropriate person is assigned to receive the Emergency Services and direct them to the casualty. In the event that Bridge is either not contactable or not responding, CSL will directly contact the Emergency Services and liaise with Beach to arrange for them to be met and directed.

If the situation is considered by CSL to be hazardous to the rest of the fleet, CSL should request that the PRO shortens or abandons racing.

A CODE RED should be declared closed only when the situation has been resolved, the danger has been removed, the damaged boat made safe or the casualty evacuated to the safety of the shore. The CSL should inform all stations that CODE RED is cleared.

## 15. Procedures for prioritising people over boats

If there is a risk that the safety fleet (including marklaying, support, and jury boats which have joined it) risks being unable to provide an adequate level of safety cover, CSL should declare via VHF that sailors are to be prioritised over boats.

Following this advice, safety crews should judge whether sailors are likely to be able to sail to shore safely on their own. If not, safety crews should take crews onboard their safety boat and leave their 29er on the course area for recovery later.




Abandoned 29ers should have red/white tape tied to the rudder to signal to other safety crews and emergency services that the sailors are accounted for. Abandoned 29ers should where possible be tied to a mark or anchored. 29ers should ideally have a masthead float attached to make later recovery easier and damage less likely.

Safety crews should radio to Bridge the tally numbers of sailors who are in their RIB. Bridge should liaise with Beach to create a separate category of tally (alongside 'ashore' and 'at sea') for 'sailor safe and in a safety boat'.

CSL should instruct the Committee boat to remain on station near the furthest downwind boat, providing lookout for un-rescued boats, until all sailors are confirmed as accounted for.

## Annex 1: Risk assessment template (overleaf)

		UK 29er Class Event Risk Assessment		Event	Completed by	Date
Safety Lead:		VHF channel (race): VHF channel (safety):		Shore contact & tel:		
Entries registered:		Number of safety boats:		Including support/ marklayers:		
Start time:		Finish time:		Latest time ashore:		
Tide time:		Forecast obtained:				

Description	Risk Score:	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Very High (4)	Score
Wind Strength		0-10 knots	11-15 knots	16-20 knots	>20 knots	
Wind Direction (sea venues only – score '0' for inland/harbour venues)		Onshore	On / Cross shore	Off / Cross Shore	Offshore	
Venue		Inland	Open Water	Sea (no unusual hazards)	Sea with hazards (narrow entrance, shallows etc.)	
Air Temp (including wind chill)		15+°C	10-14°C	5-9°C	< 5°C	
Sea State (Choppy can be worse than waves)		Flat	Choppy / Small Waves	Medium Chop / Waves	Steep Chop / Large Waves	
Sailing Standard (use lowest)		Good Sailor 18+ yrs	Good Sailor u18	Intermediate sailor / inexperienced in 29er	Beginner sailor / new to 29er	
Total sailing time		0-2 hrs	2-4 hrs	4-5 hrs	>5 hrs	
Safety boat : dinghy boat (ratio) (include support/marklayers if agreed)		<1:8	1:10	1:13	1:16 +	
<b>Subtotal</b>						

Are there any other medium to high risk factors not identified above, e.g. - medical conditions - tide strength/direction - visibility - possibility of storms/lightning	Description				Score
	Subtotal				
	Overall Total (sum of this table and table above)				
Risk Rating	Low (<14)	Medium (14–20)	High (21–27)	Very High (28+)	

Signed (CSL)		Print name	
Signed (PRO)		Print name	