



## UK 29er Class Safety Boat Guidance

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*The objective of this document is to give guidance to individual volunteers who assist the class with event safety as a safety boat driver or crew. These guidelines are also intended to help provide the best quality event support to all our sailors. The guidelines here are subordinate to the Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) and the class Major Event Instructions (MEIs). The UK class defines the role and behaviour of safety and support boats in these documents and volunteers should familiarise themselves with them.*

1. Familiarise yourself in advance with the class safety operating procedures (*ME Safety SOP*), which can be found on the website. That document is based on the RYA's generic version but adapted for the 29er class and is regularly updated. Key sections deal with procedures in the event of strong winds, fog and other hazardous situations as well as RIB safety equipment, roles and responsibilities etc.
2. Please attend all safety briefings, as it is important to ensure that everyone is briefed and working to a common plan.
3. Check your boat over before you set off. If you identify any issues please report these to the CSL. If you are bringing your own RIB, please ensure that is in good order and properly equipped.
4. The MEIs set out, that towing late comers out to the race area does require the permission of the CSL, unless you already get specifically instructed to do so by the PRO.
5. Listen to the radio. Keep it dry and close enough to your ears (and turned up enough) so that you can hear it.
6. Talk to the CSL. If you are engaged for a prolonged period with a damaged or distressed boat let the team know, we can plug the gap while you deal with them. If there are multiple capsizes near you, even if they all look OK share that; it is important to communicate so that resources can be moved around as appropriate.
7. Operating VHF's in bad weather is much more difficult to normal weather conditions. Keeping your back to the wind AND shielding the microphone with your hands AND blowing water out of the microphone before every transmission are the only way to make yourself understood in bad weather.

8. It is important to be in your allocated position on the race course. The CSL will rely on safety boats being in the allocated position fulfilling their allocated role. If you feel there is more need for you in an adjacent area let the Course Safety Leader know and seek their agreement before relocating.

If you are allocated duty as a food boat, try to be in position as soon as each race has finished and remain accessible to boats to collect or return their bags right up until the 5 minute warning. From experience the best location is to the right of committee boat and finish line. Cruising up and down slowly, beam on to the wind, makes it easy for boats to come in to leeward of you.

9. As per MEIs. do not communicate in any way with any boat after the 4 minute warning. To be on the safe side you should be leaving the start area to retire well behind the line (50metres minimum) at the five minute gun. The only exceptions are those allocated windward mark positions (who should be leaving the start area and heading up the course as soon as the orange attention flag is raised) and those controlling a second start fleet at the committee boat end. When observing the start from the pin end you should be at least 100 metres beyond the pin end boat and downwind the extension of the line – not bang on it where others may assume you are providing a transit for your team.
10. Between races if you have no other duties it is acceptable to have a boat alongside for a short period while they fix gear or eat/drink. It is however, not appropriate to have your own sailors alongside for long periods between races unless they are in real need of such assistance. Your principal duty is to be available to assist the whole fleet and especially those new to 29er sailing. You are specifically not there to coach the sailors.
11. Safety boats allocated a position at or near the windward mark should proceed upwind prior to the start (orange flag displayed) and must ensure that their wake does not interfere with the race. Safety boats should not leave their allocated positions until the tail-end of the fleet is finishing unless allocated specific duty as a food boat.
12. The safety team must stay on the water until the CSL advises that you may stand down. This often means waiting for tallies to be counted in or the for inland events until all boats have been accounted for. It is frustrating but important.

## **29er Safety Boat procedures and on-water fixes**

*The suggested techniques below complement the normal safety boat procedures. Safety boat drivers will have a RYA Power Boat 2 qualification or equivalent and ideally a Safety Boat certificate or, at least be familiar with the safety boat syllabus. We stress here two things: As a driver always ensure that you (sat on your seat) are between your engine and any sailors in the water from whatever direction you approach and secondly, as soon as you have a hold of the boat you are engaging with (or a casualty in the water) stop your engine. If you miss first time kill the engine, drift away and try again. Never have your engine running near a sailor in the water, even if out of gear. Always wear a kill cord!*

1. Entrapment and righting an inverted boat in an emergency. It is vital when you observe a turtled boat you determine that two heads are visible to confirm that no one is trapped. Where you have to deal with a fully inverted boat with a crew trapped beneath the hull it is important to act quickly to provide an airspace under the hull. Approach the bow of the boat and with the assistance of your crew grab the bowsprit of the inverted boat (kill the engine as soon as you have a hold), pull it out and lift it and the bow of the boat onto the tube of your safety boat. This will create an airspace under the hull. If the trapped crewmember does not immediately emerge have the other sailor climb on the hull on the side opposite to that which the trapped person is believed to be and right the boat. The boat will right much quicker with the bow lifted up on your RIB. At the stage where the bow is lifted if there is no sign of the trapped sailor call the CSL and ask for immediate assistance, do not wait for the remaining sailor to right the boat as it may waste valuable time, if they are unable to do this. A second RIB will be able to right the inverted boat by use of a tow line off the bow over the hull to the far shroud. Try to identify which side the trapped sailor is and guide the second RIB into the opposite side, If possible have the 29er sailor pass the tow rope around the shroud and pass it back to the second RIB.
2. Towing a 29er. The easiest way to tow is alongside with the wing of the 29er sat on the side of your RIB. Put (windward) wing over rib tube and sailors leg either side. Dagger board half up. Rib crew pull down on trapeze handle. Ideally also take bow line of the 29er and wrap round mast or hog). Just wrap around mast 2 times and 29er crew holds tail. Helm of 29er steers slightly towards the rib. Best not to drop sails unless very windy as the boat stability is not changed and dropping takes time. It is generally possible to tow two boats in this way. The safety boat crew will need to be constantly attentive to the boats remaining on the RIB tubes as it is easy for them to separate risking for the 29er sailor to fall down between the two. If the towing distance is long or if there is only one sailor left on board it is advisable to tie the 29er alongside with one line through the bow fitting and another through the scupper opening in the transom. In big seas even this may not always work but one boat should be ok,

always on the leeward side. Towing on a line is possible with 29ers in gentle conditions, but it is important that the sailors remain alert and that the line is led correctly to avoid damage to the boat. 29ers do not sail with tow lines so multiple tows are not advisable.. Tow lines should be led through the bow fitting and once round the mast support under the thwart and the end held by the 29er crew to enable quick release if necessary (e.g. if they are about to capsize). Do not tow around the mast itself as this will weaken/pull out the mast step fixings. The crew and helm should generally sit on opposite sides to balance the boat. The tow-line should be long enough or the speed low enough that your stern wake does not cause problems.

3. Rib crews should stay on rib. It is never advisable for a safety boat driver or crew to enter the water except in extreme circumstances and always only where they are fit enough to do so and dressed appropriately. Most often the result of safety crews entering the water is that there are simply more people to be rescued and the remaining safety driver will generally not be able to do this alone.
4. Sailor separated from boat. If a sailor becomes separated from the boat and you deem it to be safety risk for the sailors (e.g. risk of hypothermia due to cold water) you can reunite the sailor with the boat, without meaning they are retired from that race. However, the sailors should not gain an advantage from this. This should be reported back to the CSL with sail number and timing.
5. Multiple capsizers. You will occasionally see very determined sailors who can't cope with the conditions, they repeatedly capsize, right, flip over and keep on trying. Stand by them, offer assistance but if they refuse that is their right initially. But at a certain point it makes sense to help them so that they can try again for the next race. Sometimes the same team will present themselves repeatedly, at the gybe area usually. Eventually you may have to suggest that they should go ashore, if they are showing signs of extreme fatigue and/or the beginnings of hypothermia, you should insist that they give in and accept your assistance to right the boat and if you think necessary to be towed ashore. If a boat is either retiring from that race or from the day radio this information to the CSL or to beachmaster/bridge.
6. Broken masts. With a broken mast it is usually necessary to remove the sails before towing ashore in order to avoid further damage to them. Jibs are relatively easy to drop and the best method with the mainsail is to withdraw the sail through the top of the track rolling it into the safety boat as you go. It is difficult for sailors to do this themselves and then they realise that a buoyancy aid will not support both themselves and a sail. The best place for the sails is in the RIB, try not to stand on them!
7. Broken tiller or rudder gudgeon plate. This is always a tow ashore unless someone has a spare rudder stock and tiller on the water with

them. Occasionally you will come across a boat with missing R-clip and the rudder half attached. In flattish water it is possible to sort this but in waves best to tow them into sheltered water or to shore to get a new clip/ring, take the rudder and pintle off first or the top plate will get bent.

8. Broken halyards. A broken main halyard can be fixed easily by tying the main up with a short length of rope through the mast-top fitting. The easiest way is for one of the sailors to stand on the daggerboard while the tip of the mast is in your boat preferably with the 29er downwind of you. They need to let off Cunningham and vang to allow the sail to be tied off at the top. Jibs and spinnakers are more difficult and best dealt with ashore,
9. Broken bow sprit. This is usually a retirement and sail ashore. Get the sailors to recover their kite into the bag, after removing as many of the broken bowsprit bits as possible, these broken bits can be sharp and cause injury.
10. No bung, boat full of water. A 29er full of water is difficult to tow. You can hoist the 29er square on the bow of their rib and drained the boat. Alternatively, you could buddy up with another RIB, tie your bows together, pull the 29er up between you onto both RIBs and wait for it to all drain out.

If anyone has any other clever on-water fixes or comments on rescue techniques for 29ers please let us know on [safety@29ersailing.org.uk](mailto:safety@29ersailing.org.uk) and we will add them to this document for future generations to learn from.