East Dorset Sailing Club

Managing Safety on the Water

Contents

1. About
2. Insurance
3. Hazards and Risks
4. Safety on the Water policy
5. Operating procedures
6. Racing
7. Pirates
8. Club dinghies
9. Alcohol and Drug use
10. Safeguarding
11. Equality

1. About

Established in 1875, East Dorset Sailing Club is located on Evening Hill, Sandbanks on the northern shore of Poole Harbour. EDSC is a small sailing club registered as a Community Amateur Sports Club, (CASC) that provides its members with access to dinghy and cruiser sailing in Poole Harbour and the inland coast of Poole Bay.
We are the oldest Sailing club in Poole and in 2025 celebrate our 150th anniversary. During the sailing season we have moorings available for small cruisers and yachts up to 35 ft as well as space for 40 dinghies on hardstanding or racks. Its clubhouse provides members with facilities for changing, showering, storage and social activities.

1.1 Membership
Members enjoy club sailing with regular dinghy racing and cruiser events run between April 1 and October 31. EDSC is run by the members for the members. There are no paid staff. As such each member is expected to complete several duties during the sailing season as a condition of their membership.

A membership fee is payable by all users of the club whether boat owners or those who use club boats or crew for boat owners. Membership is all ages, and we have many families with children under the age of 18.

Members can invite guests to sail or use the facilities of the club when accompanied by the member and signed into the Club guest book.

Member Responsibilities:

- All members must comply with the safety guidelines established by the club.
- Members should immediately report any unsafe conditions, damaged equipment, or accidents to the club safety officer.
- Members are expected to display good judgment, respect the safety of others, and act responsibly while participating in club activities.
- All members are encouraged to attend safety training sessions, including basic sailing techniques, emergency procedures, and first aid/CPR courses.

1.2 Club boats

Most members will own their own boats. However, the Club owns and provides several dinghies for members use including Lasers, Fusions, Toppers and Argos.

It owns 2 rigid support boats with outboard engines which are used by members to support regular racing activity.

1.3 Access to the water

The Club yard is protected by a metal fencing which is kept always locked. Members are issued with a key to access the premises. There is a long wooden pier that is locked to the public and members must use their key to access it.

Yachts are accessed on their moorings via tender which are kept on outhauls from the main club pier or in inflatable dinghy racks.

Dinghy, rigid support boats and inflatable tenders are launched via a slipway. An electric (battery) winch is available to use for heavier boats. Training on its use is provided at the start of each season.

Fixed buoys are in place for dinghies to tie up to prior to and post sail.

1.4 Other organisations

Poole Harbour is very busy, especially during the sailing season with many maritime users including commercial vessels, other sailing clubs, water-sport organisations, training companies and personal users enjoying its waters. We are licensed by the Harbour Commissioners who are now known as Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and adhere to their strict policies and speed limits at all times. Contact with them while on the water is via radio Channel 14.

2. Insurance

EDSC has marine public liability insurance for £5m.
Our insurance company is Gallagher: RYA scheme.
Members are required to insure their boats to the appropriate level. If participating in club racing, additional racing cover must be taken out.

3. Hazards and risks

Sailing can be a hazardous sport, and all care must be taken at all times to ensure both your own safety and that of your crew, other boat users and people working on or enjoying recreational activities on the water.

Sailing is by its very nature subject to risk, whether that be equipment failure, inclement weather or other water user actions. EDSC has a duty of care to ensure that all its activities are delivered safely and in such a way that all those involved are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. To ensure these risks are mitigated or reduced the **Safety on the Water policy** sets out the processes the club has in place which members must follow.

4. Safety on the Water Policy

The purpose of this Water Safety Policy is to ensure the safety of all members, guests, and other harbour users while participating in sailing activities. The policy is designed to minimize risks associated with water-based activities, promote safe practices, and ensure compliance with relevant safety regulations.

4.1 General Safety Requirements

All participants in club activities must adhere to the rules and regulations set by the club, including safety protocols and equipment use.
By participating in sailing activities at the club, members and guests acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the Water Safety Policy. Non-compliance with the policy may result in suspension or revocation of membership or participation privileges.

4.2 Roles and responsibilities

EDSC management committee is responsible for the management of the club. It has overall responsibility for safety at the club and during club activities. The club will regularly review and update the Safety on the Water policy to ensure it remains in line with current safety standards and regulations. The club will provide safety equipment for all organised sailing events.

In relation to Health and Safety, the management committee discharge the following responsibilities. They may delegate specific tasks to other competent members or external contractors but retain responsibility and must monitor that all tasks are completed.

- Conduct an annual safety audit of the centre premises, facilities, and activity provision.
- Ensure all safety equipment is inspected regularly and maintained / replaced in accordance with the company policy.
- Authorise all activities at the club and ensure all activities are supervised in accordance with the clubs operating procedures.

EDSC has dedicated roles that members undertake. Each are responsible for aspects of the club, but all take a responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of the members.

These include (2025):

- Commodore: Ian Clayton
- Vice Commodore: Chris Frost
- Rear Commodore: Elspeth Watson
- Sailing Captain: Vacant
- Dinghy Captain: Keith Barkway
- Health and Safety Officer: Vacant
- Safeguarding Officer: Becky Walters
- House Officer: Paul Burns
- Bosun: Dan Sollom
- First Aid: Jo Pope

5. Operating Procedures

5.1 Reporting incidents and accidents

An accident book is provided in the club house, and all members are required to list any accidents, near misses or incidents when they occur. The accident book is reviewed regularly by the Health and Safety Officer, or members of the committee and action identified to prevent similar accidents from happening again.

5.2 Major Incident

A major incident is an event where there is loss of life, a serious injury, or there is substantial damage to property and/or the environment.

The following would be examples of serious incidents or accidents:

- An incident leading to a fatality, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious injury and hospitalisation
- Major damage to vessels afloat or property ashore
- Loss of contact with group or individual, overdue groups or individuals
- Other circumstances in which a group or individual might be at serious risk of harm
- Serious illness of an individual or group
- Any situation that presents a serious risk to EDSC or RYA reputation/brand
- Any adverse situation in which the media are or may be involved
- Incidents involving Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB), Search and Rescue services, Emergency Services and Children's Services

In the event of any major incident, your first priority is the safety of the participants, volunteers and instructors. You should immediately contact the emergency services as appropriate.

5.3 Risk assessments

Risk assessments (RA) have been produced for all activities where there are potential safety risks. This includes racing, any work being undertaken in the yard, slipway or any maintenance to the pier, repairs and maintenance to the clubhouse.
Risk Assessments are available for members to view on the club website.

5.4 Emergency access and evacuation points

Emergency access must be always maintained. Where dinghies are being prepared or within the yard members must be available to move them to enable emergency access if required.
Evacuation points are advised through notices at the relevant place and include the main gate to the yard, via the car park, or if by sea, from the slipway or pier.

5.5 First Aid

A First Aid kit is available in the clubhouse (behind the bar). First Aid Kits can be found in the plastic barrels of each support boat. The House officer is responsible for checking and re stocking First Aid kits and if all items are utilised, they should be advised via the What's App group.
A defibrillator is provided on the outside railings to the club yard. Instructions for using the defibrillator are provided on notice boards within the club as well as alongside the defibrillator.
A first aid course is offered on an annual basis to all members.

5.6 Repairs and maintenance

EDSC takes its responsibilities for maintaining the facilities well very seriously. A club member is elected as House Officer with responsibility for ensuring the facilities are kept well maintained and all equipment is maintained safely. Annual inspections are undertaken on all equipment as well as fire inspections.

5.7 Safety equipment

All sailors, regardless of their skill level, must wear buoyancy aids or life jackets when on the water. Members are responsible for ensuring their life jackets are in good working condition.
Each support boat has a dedicated plastic barrel which includes safety equipment

5.8 Communications

Sailors must have access to reliable means of communication while on the water (e.g. a waterproof VHF radio or mobile phone in a waterproof case).

5.9 Weather

Sailing activities will only be permitted in weather conditions that are deemed safe by the designated safety officer or experienced crew.

The club will monitor weather forecasts regularly, and if adverse weather conditions are anticipated (e.g. thunderstorms, strong winds, or rough seas), sailing activities may be postponed or cancelled.

Members should be aware of weather changes while on the water and return to shore if conditions deteriorate.

6. Racing/Club Events

Cruiser and dinghy racing is an important part of club activities and for safety protocols are in place to ensure safe racing. For each race the following is in place:

6.1 Race Officer

The Race Officer (RO) is responsible for the race and for ensuring that the race is safe to go ahead. They will make decisions on weather and sea state conditions, the course and will inform the Harbour Commissioners that the race is taking place. Their decision about any aspect of the race is final.

6.2 Assistant Race Officer

The Assistant Race Officer (ARO) supports the race officer in recording times as well as keeping close watch over the race and competitors.

6.3 Support Boats

For each race, a support boat with a Power Boat 2 qualified and competent helm and support crew is provided with radio communications to the Race Officer. Support boat training is delivered each season by a qualified instructor (club member) for all members to attend.

Two support boats will be provided on most occasions and always when more than **eight** dinghies are racing.
Support boats must be inspected by crew before each outing to ensure that all safety equipment is on board and in good condition.
Checks include:

- they have adequate fuel for the activity session
- they have adequate and secure buoyancy
- essential fittings are present, in good condition and adjusted properly
- they are appropriately equipped for the activity. The minimum equipment that should be on board includes:
    - Fire Extinguisher
    - Spare Kill Cord
    - Adequate fuel (including sufficient to cover emergencies)
    - Alternative means of propulsion (Oars)

- Knife
- First Aid Kit
- VHF Radio
- Basic toolkit
- A functional whistle or horn
- A throw rope (for emergency rescues)

Support boat drivers must always wear a kill cord around their leg while driving.

Support boat crews must wear buoyancy aids or life jackets that are the appropriate size, in good condition, correctly adjusted and properly fastened.

Support boat crews must be appropriately clothed for the intended activity and weather conditions. They must be prepared to get into the water to assist with rescues where needed. Crew need to be physically able to undertake rescue of a capsized dinghy, and its helm/crew.

Support boat drivers must ensure all passengers are seated in the safest manner to minimise the risk of back injuries.

Any open cuts must be covered with a waterproof plaster.

6.4 Communications
Radios are provided to support boat crew to communicate directly with race control. The RO will advise communication methods to be used, and channels allocated.Radios should be recharged following use.

A clear briefing lead by the RO, is undertaken for all participants before the start of each race session.

The support boat crew will maintain close contact with sailors on the water.

The RO and ARO will ensure that any tallying requirements or other systems account for who is on the water.

6.5 Safety Plan
Every race or social sailing session has a safety plan and those responsible for safety on the water know the steps to be followed.

The RO will provide a briefing prior to anyone entering the water to advise the plan, any known hazards, support boat positioning.

All dinghy racing crews are required to sign in before going on to the water they must also sign back out on their return. For Friday and Sunday racing this is on the signing in sheet with the RO. For Novices this is on the white board by the main door. Boats returning to shore while the session is continuing must advise the support boat or RO.

Maps of Poole harbour and all racing marks are made available to all members. They should also be attached to club boats used for racing.

For Novices sailing events, additional shore crew are in place to support the RO and assist sailors.

The gate to the pier must be always unlocked during racing to assist any sailors who need to access the pier rather than the slipway

An electrical winch is provided to assist with launching and retrieval of the safety boats which are heavy. A minimum of two adults are required to undertake this.

6.6 Weather Limits
EDSC has set a limit of 22 knots for safe racing and where the wind level is greater or gusting than this no racing will be allowed to start. The RO has sole responsibility for determining whether the race session will go ahead, and their decision is final. Should wind speeds be lower than 22 knots at the start of racing but increase during the course of the race, then the RO will determine whether the race will continue of be abandoned. All participants must freshest the RO decision.

The weather gauge that is used to determine the wind levels is Parkstone Yacht Clubs wind app. The RO will provide guidelines for deteriorating conditions, including loss of visibility.

7. Pirates
EDSC has a thriving junior programme called Pirates that offers supported sailing for children and young people aged 6-13.

All junior participants must be accompanied by and always be under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian when on or near the water. The supervising adult must be a member of the club. They must follow all club safety protocols.

Parents or guardians of junior participants must sign a participation form on joining that includes water safety information and acknowledges their responsibility for the safety of their children. It is the supervising adult's responsibility to decide on the suitability of the activities for the participating child and they have the right to withdraw their child from any activity.

8. Club Dinghies
EDSC provides several dinghies for use by club members. Club boats must be booked on the EDSC booking page of the web site and the relevant fees paid for their use. Members can pay an annual fee with unlimited access to boats where available, or on a pay as you go rate.

8.1 Maintenance
These are maintained by the club, but the onus is on members who use the boats to report any concerns, damage, breakage or wear and tear to the Club using the EDSC What's App group.

8.2 Limits
Members must only use club boats within the confines of Poole Harbour and must NOT go past the Chain Ferry or out into Poole Bay.

8.3 Responsibilities
Members are responsible for ensuring boats do not exceed the maximum capacity, are not mishandled and are cleaned after use.
Rigging and de rigging of club boats must be done correctly, and it is the responsibility for the member who has the booked the boat to ensure that this is completed.

9. Alcohol and Drug Use

The use of recreational drugs is prohibited while on the water during any club sailing events.
Any member undertaking club duties as RO/ARO/support boat crew must be fit to undertake their duties and not be under the influence of, or consume alcohol while undertaking their duty.

10. Safeguarding

EDSC has a Safeguarding policy which members are asked to observe. EDSC is committed to safeguarding its members and in particular:

- The protection of people's physical and mental health, their well-being, and their human rights.
- Giving assurance to children and adults, parents and carers they are safe when they take part in our activities.
- Raising awareness amongst everyone involved so they know what to do if they're concerned about anyone.
- Protecting volunteers and staff with practical common-sense advice.
- Protecting the organisation by taking all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment.

10. Equality

Equality is at the heart of ensuring activity on the water is safe fun and open EDSC embraces diversity and challenges any discrimination.
EDSC has an equality policy which is available to all members. Members are encouraged to raise any concerns about how they or others are treated with the people responsible for safeguarding, health and safety or for the overall running of the club.

Date of Policy	7th April 2025
Amended	
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