



# CCSC SAFETY BOAT DRIVERS

## RESCUE GUIDANCE

### 1. Introduction

Based on RYA advice, these notes suggest how to assist a dinghy that is in difficulty. The technique you decide to use will be influenced by the circumstances, conditions and the type of boat. Topics addressed are:

- Where to position your RIB in relation to the participating dinghies
- How to support a capsize including coming alongside and assisting to right a dinghy
- The danger of entrapment
- How to get a sailor out of the water and into the RIB
- How to tow
- Leaving a dinghy unattended

**Remember: The safety of people always comes before saving boats and equipment**

### 2. Where to position the SB

The OD or Idler may advise you on where to hold station. Unless told otherwise, recommended positions are:

- a. Initially, as 2nd RIB, loiter near the club as sailors launch and follow them to the course area
- b. During the activity make sure you can see all of the race/sailing area so you can **count regularly the number of dinghies** (a capsized dinghy may be difficult to see especially when choppy). This is likely to be on the perimeter of the race area (for dinghies)
- c. Capsizes are most likely at a **gybe or leeward mark** - good places for the SB to loiter. (Note that Asymmetrics tend to gybe frequently)

**Remember:** When you need to enter or pass through the race area, your priority is to reach the dinghy in need of support but try to anticipate the actions of other racers

- d. At the end of the activity, the 2nd RIB will follow boats in and only sign off the duty when it has been agreed with the OD / Beachmaster that all dinghies are ashore.

### 3. Supporting a capsize or dinghy in difficulty

Generally the sailor(s) will right the dinghy, the RIB provides reassurance and advice if needed. If the sailor(s) cannot right their boat (eg if they become fatigued), you may need to give direct assistance. Lifting the tip of the mast to break it clear of the water while the sailor(s) stand on the centreboard may be all that is required (further details below).

Remember - other boats need to be monitored, a lengthy rescue may leave others without needed help.

### a. Approaching a capsized

**Count heads: On sighting a capsized, check that you can see the relevant number of heads as sailors may be trapped under the hull** (see section on entrapment below)

As you near the dinghy, look out for objects and people in the water

Use the approach time to think about options for dealing with the problem.

### b. Where to stand off

Never be in a position that allows the SB to drift or be swept by waves into contact with a casualty. Hold station with the engine furthest from the sailor and dinghy, close enough to communicate but with space to manoeuvre.

### c. Communicate:

- Ask the dinghy crew if / what assistance they require
- Inform both dinghy and SB crew of the engine position (on/off, in neutral, forward etc)
- Inform the OD/primary rescue boat of the situation.

### d. Coming alongside

**Kill the engine if anyone in the water comes close to the propeller.**

**Take account of the sea state, wind and prevailing circumstances (such as obstructions) when manoeuvring.**

Take care not to get the prop caught in any rigging etc. by checking there are no lines or other floating objects near the prop.

Use forward gear and approach slowly. Reversing a RIB in choppy seas risks swamping it.

Normally approaches are made on the windward side but assess the situation, this may not be appropriate.

In windy conditions, when the RIB is alongside the dinghy, you may need to motor slowly to windward to keep both boats head to wind or the RIB slightly to windward of the dinghy. (This keeps the dinghy's boom away from heads and is more comfortable for the sailors.) In extremely windy conditions, it may be necessary to shift the dinghy further forward to enable RIB steerage as windage in the dinghy's sail limits manoeuvrability. (In the same way that the tug, on a side tow, must have its drive well aft of the aft of the towed vessel). Consider dropping the dinghy's sail(s) (if possible).

Try to assess the fitness of the sailors, are they becoming exhausted? Getting them out of the water and into the RIB stabilises the situation and allows combined knowledge to agree the best plan of action.

Before attempting to right, check that the sheets are uncleated and the kicking strap (vang) is loose.

### e. Righting a dinghy

**Centreboard/Daggerboard Method:** Secure the RIB to the forestay or close to the bow. A sailor stands on the centreboard, the RIB crew pushes the RIB away from the dinghy to keep clear as the weight on the centreboard rights the dinghy. With the dinghy close to head to wind, it is stable and windage in sails is minimised. If it is not possible to place a sailor on the centreboard, the RIB crew can put pressure on one foot on the end of the centreboard, keeping their other foot in the RIB. If the dinghy is inverted, apply pressure on the gunwale.

### **Mast Lift Method:**

Approach the top end of mast or forestay, ensure the bow of the dinghy is facing towards the wind, lift the mast or forestay by hand from the bow of the RIB then work your way towards the hull of the dinghy righting it as you go. Once righted, continue support until the crew are fully in control.

## **4. Entrapment / Entanglement**

If a member of the crew is not visible they may be trapped under the hull so **immediate assistance is essential**. Complex rigging, trapeze harnesses etc can snag a sailor and some dinghies have minimal or no air pockets when upturned.

The quickest response is to lift the dinghy bow onto the side of the RIB to create an air pocket under the hull.

Remember - Rescue Crews should only enter the water themselves in extremis, it is rarely helpful to have extra people in the water!

An RYA video demonstrates the various methods and includes other useful rescue information. Please click on this link: [RYA Entrapment video link](#)

## **5. Retrieving sailors from the water into a RIB**

### **a. Approach:**

Strong wind technique: Approach from downwind, use minimal forward power, manoeuvre the RIB to place the MOB on the front quarter, on the opposite side to the throttle (to prevent the MOB and/or crew inadvertently knocking the lever).

Light to moderate wind technique: Slowly edge alongside the MOB, upwind, beam on to the wind and allow the RIB to drift towards the casualty.

- Communicate with casualty.
- Engine in neutral as soon as possible.
- Crew at bow calls contact when the MOB has been securely grabbed.
- Cut the engine unless it is unsafe to do so.

### **b. Assisting sailors into a RIB**

Often a difficult task that needs care to avoid injury to either the sailor or the SB crew.

'Roll' technique: Instruct the MOB to raise their knee, reach down and lift it up to the tube. Having hooked their leg over the tube and with the assistance of the crew they can be slid / rolled over the top.

Using an inboard- facing approach: A strong risk of injury when heaving on the upper body but if attempted, it is best done on a count of three with a dunk first.

**Method 3 A last resort:** In order to lower the freeboard, a sponson tube can be deflated. Note that a RIB can be operated with both sponsons deflated.

## 6. Towing techniques

### a. Attaching to the RIB:

Check with the sailor which is the strongest point for the tow. A single turn of the tow rope around the mast, held by dinghy crew is common (the bow cleat it is often a weak point and susceptible to damage) however for deck-stepped masts with rig tension released the mast may be the weak point. Judgment and a conversation with the sailor(s) will be required.

### b. Alongside:

RIB head rope secured to dinghy shroud-plate. Slow ahead, keeping dinghy alongside.

### c. Longer distance line tows

Line tows are the quickest and easiest method of towing a dinghy but they provide no extra stability to a swamped dinghy.

**Lift and/or remove the centreboard, crew sits aft steering slightly to side of RIB**

Dinghies towed down wind and wave can surf past the RIB. Speed can be controlled by the dinghy helm trailing a leg in the water or hanging a high drag item from the transom. Do not use this method if towing down wind with the sails up.

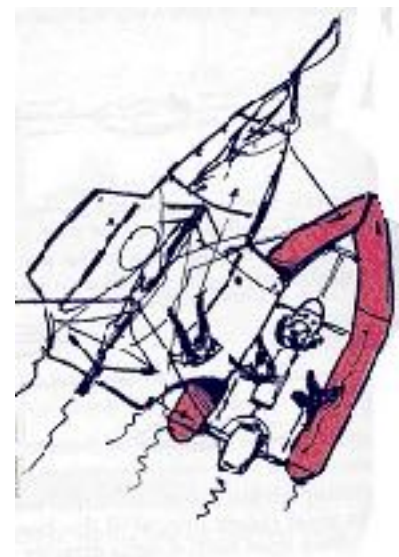
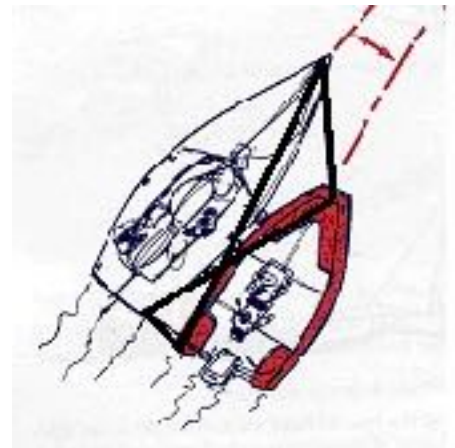
If travelling any distance, the sails should be furled or, in light winds, the clew released.

### d. Longer distance side tows

These provide more stability to a swamped dinghy but lines and springs take a while to arrange and it can be a wet ride, potentially swamping the RIB.

Manoeuvring using a side tow is precise but the dinghy needs to be well forward of the stern of the RIB with the bow angled toward the RIB. Note that diagrams (right) are only indicators, the dinghy bow needs more angle. The wider the dinghy the further aft the RIB needs to be.

Side tows of racked boats can be achieved with a bow line and sitting on the racks. (Take care of the tubes - ensure no sharp screws etc protrude beneath the racks.)



## 7. Leaving an unmanned dinghy afloat

If you need to leave a dinghy afloat while you evacuate a casualty, tie it to the Committee Boat (normally Imogen), a convenient buoy (but not a navigation or fairway buoy) or use the anchor supplied in your RIB. Ensure the dinghy is collected in due course.

It is important to mark the dinghy so that others know that no one is in danger. Tie a long length of red and white tape (available in the tub) so that it is clearly visible and secure.

Inform OD/Beachmaster/Primary SB of the location and type of dinghy