

# Standard Operating Procedures

## 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts

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## Introduction:

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts is a fully affiliated member club of Scouting Ireland, a registered charity in its own right and a registered Training Centre affiliated to Sail Ireland.

Following the ethos of Scouting Ireland, we provide youth-led programs to deliver a range of opportunities to young people to allow them to develop their skills, talents and leadership potential through outdoor adventure and activities.

Sea Scouting follow all the same principles are land-based scouts but use water sports and activities as the core of our program. So as well as the standard Scouting activities of Hiking, Camping and Pioneering etc we include Sailing, Rowing and Paddling programs.

To that end we maintain a fleet of sailing dinghies, cruisers, kayaks, open (Canadian) canoes and powerboats to run our programs with. Appendix A contains a list of all craft owned/operated by 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts.

Our boats are used to provide members with day trips and excursions, to train youth and adults to various proficiency levels, and they are used to provide logistics and for maintenance purposes. Proficiency levels include Scouting Ireland Awards, Sail Ireland Awards, and other external qualifications.

Any and all Leaders/Adults intending to run a water-based activity must have the relevant qualifications to do so, a valid Leadership Afloat certification AND have signed a log for each activity year to confirm they have read this document, the Standard Operating Procedures.

As the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) in this document cannot cover all possible scenarios it must be clear to everyone concerned that the Leaders in Charge should not be constrained by anything contained in these SOP's whenever they are acting in the best interest of the crew, the boat, the passengers, and any persons in need. The Leader in charge should, at all times, use these SOP'S combined with their experience, judgement and training to decide on the best course of action.

## SOP AA Function

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scout boats are used primarily to undertake the following functions:

### **Training:**

The boats will be used to train both group members and non-members in Sailing, Rowing and Powerboat courses as defined by Scouting Ireland, Sail Ireland and other awarding bodies. Our boats will also be available for experience-building and hour-building events.

### **Water Fun Activity:**

We arrange water adventure and fun activities for our younger Beavers and Cubs with the aim of increasing their water confidence and introducing basic skills

### **Support:**

The boats can and will be used as support boats for other clubs and events occurring in and around Galway Port and Bay, notably GHSC, GCSC etc.

Arrangements for these events will be on an Ad-hoc basis but must not occur when the boats are needed for Scouting activities.

## **SOP AB Safe waters:**

Scouting Ireland define four different bodies of water suitable for different sailing abilities and craft. 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts decided on the following classifications with the help of the Sea Scouting National Team in November 2013 and there has been no need to revise them since.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts Enclosed Safe Waters**

The river between the lough and the Eglinton Canal (i.e. north of the weir)

Lough Atalia

Note the Group have stopped using Lough Atalia for all activity due to sludge buildup.

The river mouth from the Wolfe Tone Bridge as far south as Hare Island and Mutton Island, including Deadman's beach.

Rusheen Bay

### **1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts Restricted Waters:**

Southern section of Lough Corrib and the river

Galway Bay from the docks to Barna Pier to Cockle Rock to GBSC.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts Day Cruising Waters:**

Lough Corrib

Galway Bay to the Aran Islands

Golam Head to Slyne Head

### **1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts Open Waters or the DBS:**

Everything outside the waters listed above is referred to as the Deep Blue Sea DBS

**SOP AC Sailing Safety Boat Ratios per classified waters**



The rescue boat ratios in the guidance table below should be applied cautiously, for example, in a Westerly be more conservative as the sea-state is higher and can worsen quickly. If conditions are gusty, use the next higher Mean Wind Speed guidance.

Mean Wind speed	Beginners	Development Group	Experienced
0-8 knots	1:6 [Areas A – C]	1:10 [Areas A – D]	1:10 [Areas B - DBS]
9-13 knots	1:3 max 6 boats [Areas A – B]	1:5 [Areas A – C]	1:10 [Areas B - DBS]
13-18 knots	1:1 max 2 boats [Area A]	1:3 max 6 boats [Areas A – B]	1:5 [Areas B - DBS]
18-25 knots	No launch	1:1 [Areas A – B]	1:3 (min 2 rescue) [Areas B - DBS]
25-30 knots	No launch	No launch	1:2 [Areas B - D]
> 30 knots	Nobody to launch...		

**Beginners** Start Sailing qualified (former ISA level 1).

**Development** Basic skills qualified, plus 20 additional hours on the water

**Experienced** Advanced Boat Handling (or two other certs post improving skills), plus 100hrs or more on the water. Many of these sailors have logged in excess of 500hrs on the water.

The Channel is to be crossed quickly. Commercial traffic uses this channel when the dock gates are open, usually between HW-2 and HW. Sailors must not cross the channel while there is traffic in it, under any circumstances. Rescue boats and the Leader-In-Charge must be vigilant about policing this.

Beginners may have trouble returning to the beach when there is a northerly wind. Per map, Area D has moorings and lobster pots in it, and these must be given a wide berth: lines will trail underwater on their windward/up-current side.

**Boating activity ratios are based on the ISA and ICU guidelines.**

**1 competent water-skilled leader to every 6 scouts.**

A competent water-skilled leader is one with water-activity experience holding a relevant personal level certificate. (Leadership Afloat, Yachtmaster, ISA PB, ISA Sail levels). Ideally a leader without water-based training should not count towards ratios afloat as their effectiveness is limited.

If on activity with scouts with existing competent water-skilled scouts ratio can be extended to 1:8.

1 rescue boat for every 6 dinghies - this loosely translates to 1 leader: 6 scouts on the water. Depending experience and conditions this may be pushed to 1 rescue boat to 4 sailing boats. However it is always wise to have a second boat on duty if you have drivers available as a backup.

A cruising dinghy such as a Hawk20 with outboard or the keelboats do not require a support boat in Safe Enclosed Waters

It is always recommended a competent adult leader be available onshore to take Responsibility and assist in an emergency.

## SOP AD General Water Safety

### **If in doubt, don't.**

For as long as we are incident-free there will always be another day for sailing.

Have a foul-weather fallback option so you don't feel pressured to launch.  
Dry hiking practice, rigging competitions, knot work, theory, can all work well.

Ensure all sailors get a clear briefing on where they should sail and what to do in the event of one of their group capsizing (stay near and stand off).

Rather than add rescue craft, reduce the number of scout boats in the water and rotate the sailors through the boats after 15-20 mins.

Be more conservative in winter sailing when the scouts will quickly get cold after a capsizing.

Take care not to overload rescue craft with sailors, especially in challenging conditions.

Whilst underway, all sailors will at all times comply with International Regulations for the prevention of collisions at sea (ColRegs).

The boat is to be handled in a proper seaman like manner.

At the start and on completion of the activity shore is to be notified that the boat is returned and any incidents be reported.

The Leader-In-Charge is to ensure the boat is left ready for use again, cleaned, fueled and secured properly.

The Leader-In-Charge needs to report any mechanical/ electronic faults or damage to the Bo'sun or Group Council.

Do not operate boats if alcohol or drugs have been consumed.

The Helm should be aware of their responsibilities under the Maritime Safety Act 2005 and according to 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts guidelines and SOP's.

## SOP AE General Requirements for Water Activities

All activities undertaken by members of the Group must adhere to the Group's Standard Operating Procedures and Risk Assessments, the Boating Guidelines of Scouting Ireland, and the Group's insurance commitments.

The following 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scout guidelines must be considered at all times by all Leaders either organising or taking part in an activity.

The Leader-in-Charge of an activity must ensure that the details of the activity are recorded in full in the Log Book.

The Leader-in-Charge of an activity must ensure that the Leaders and participants at an activity follow all of the Group's Standard Operating Procedures for the duration of that activity.

### **Beaufort Scale Force 5 is the MAX limit of safe normal activity on the water.**

The Leader-in-Charge must ensure that boating does not commence or continue in wind conditions of Force 6 or greater.

Each helm who takes control of a powerboat must ensure that a VHF is attached to the boat at all times and that this VHF device is set to monitor Channel 16 and Channel 77.

It is compulsory that a PFD is worn by all participants while afloat.

It is compulsory that all clips and straps on a PFD are worn correctly at all times.

All powerboats must be launched before the sailing fleet and be manned responsibly with at least one L2 licence holder onboard.

The operator of a powerboat is responsible for ensuring that the boat proceeds at a safe speed at all times. This is the speed at which this operator can take proper and effective action to avoid collision and to ensure that the boat stops within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.

All craft and crew must be ashore no later than 30 minutes before sunset.

Any activity intended to take place after sunset must be approved in advance by the Group Water Team.

All accidents, incidents and near-miss events must be recorded in the log book or accident report form as appropriate, and notified to the Safety Office as appropriate.



## SOP AF The Log Book

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts maintain a running Log Book for every and all Water Activities. This Log is now kept in Electronic Form as a [Google Form](#) accessible to all Leaders registered with the Group.

The purpose of the Log Book is to record the nature of the activity, the craft, area of operations, weather and tide information, and the identities of the participants, Shore Contact person and the Leader-In-Charge.

It is imperative the Log Book is filled out in full to ensure an accurate record of every activity. The Leader-in-Charge is responsible for completing in full the Log Book for their activity. This must be completed before launching commences.

Any maintenance issues created or identified during an activity must be recorded by the Leader-in-Charge in that activity's Log Book.

If the Leader-in-Charge identifies that an item of equipment no longer functions as it is Expected to do, then upon completion of the activity, the Leader-in-Charge must remove the item from use and inform the Bo'sun.

## SOP AG Pre Departure

Before anybody launches for an event a DECK LOG must be completed for the event, logs can be filled out online

Leaders need to be in possession of the latest weather forecast and outlook

We suggest multiple sources

They are fully aware of tide times for the duration of the proposed trip

Leaders are briefed and have their tasks

Youth are briefed.

Everyone is wearing Personal Flotation Device (PFD's)

Leader ratios are correct

Appropriate Leaders have VHF's, they are charge and tested and set to the correct channel

At least one Leader has a valid FirstAid certificate

As appropriate there is a dedicated shore leader or contact who has details of activity and time due home.

Equipment carried is dependent on the type of craft being used:

### **Dinghies:**

Need to be checked for damage or cracks.

Sails have no rips

Rigging is set correctly

### **Powerboats/Ribs:**

- Anchor & line
- Towing bridle
- In-date Fire Extinguisher and Waterproof First-aid Kit
- Foot pump & Paddle & Bailer
- Sheathed knife & Boot Hook
- Kill Cord
- Fenders & Boat Hook
- Sufficient fuel for task plus 1 /3 reserve
- Engine tool kit (plug, spanner, screwdriver, propeller replacement nuts and washers)
- VHF radio & Torch
- Any other items deemed useful for use on the boats

**Cruisers:**

- Anchor & line
- Towing bridle
- In-date Fire Extinguisher and Waterproof First-aid Kit
- Foot pump & Paddle & Bailer
- Sheathed knife & Boot Hook
- Kill Cord
- Fenders & Boat Hook
- Sufficient fuel for task plus 1 /3 reserve
- Engine tool kit (plug, spanner, screwdriver, propeller replacement nuts and washers)
- VHF radio & Torch
- Sail repair kit
- Any other items deemed useful for use on the boats

**These lists are not exhaustive and do not preclude bringing any other items considered important.**

**SOP AH Post Water Event**

It is the responsibility of the Leader in Charge to ensure that:

- Power boats are recovered from the water to the GOSC yard.
- Dinghies are recovered from the to the Boat Yard or Shed in the Deadman's Bay site
- Cruisers are returned to the Claddagh Wall
- Filled with fuel, it is normal practice to leave all engines full and ready for the next use
- Rigging stowed neatly in the correct place
- Lines tied correctly and secured (shore, springs and to other boats)
- If left in Claddagh is there enough slack on lines for tide
- Isolator off
- Keys and kill chord put away
- Boat left clean and tidy and ready for next use
- Any incidents or damage reported to Bo'sun or the Group Council

**No water activity is completed until the DECKLOG is closed, citing end time and noting any damage or other unusual activity.**

## **SOP AI Communications**

VHF communications should only be made by qualified personnel or under supervision of a qualified person.

Each time before leaving on the boat contact is established with the designated shore person\* giving the following info:

- List of boats going out**
- Purpose of taking the boat out**
- Number of People On Board (POB) or taking part in the activity**
- Estimated time of completion**

When the boat and crew have arrived back to base the designated shore person must be again contacted to report their safe arrival and end of the activity  
(\*Designated Shore Person = the person who is aware the boat is being used and can be contacted if needed during the session)

## **SOP AJ Changing Rooms**

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts operate strict separate changing facilities for youth male, youth female, adult male, adult female members.

This needs to be managed by the leaders in charge of the activity.

If a leader must enter a youth changing room they must never do-so alone.

They should only enter their gender specific changing room, remove the youth member from the changing room and address the situation.

Parents are not allowed in the changing rooms to assist their child getting dressed.

If necessary a parent may use a separate space to assist their child.

It is recommended parents stay out of the changing facilities entirely, for Child protection and child empowerment reasons.

Beaver/ Cubs must not be in the changing rooms at the same time as Scouts/ Ventures.

This must be managed and monitored by the activity leaders to coordinate their sessions around each other.

At the end of every session changing rooms must be mopped up, PFDs hung, lost property dumped or put away safely. No rubbish or food to be left.

## SOP AK Footware:

Appropriate footwear is a requirement for everyone taking part in a boating activity with 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts.

The Deadman site, the beach, GOSC yard and slip, the Unit, The Claddagh Wall and the deck of a boat are all hazardous areas particularly when wet. Appropriate footwear is required to protect feet on rough surfaces and to provide grip on slippery surfaces. Inappropriate footwear is a hazard that can cause someone to injure themselves or fall overboard.

The Leader-in-Charge of an activity is responsible for doing a visual check on the footwear of all participants before departing the Den, to ensure that only appropriate footwear is worn by all participants.

Leaders are expected to reinforce the importance of appropriate footwear when communicating with participants and their parents, both before and during an activity.

Appropriate footwear is wetsuit booties or old runners.

Inappropriate footwear, which must not be used, is:

Footwear that cannot be secured to the foot (such as crocs, flip-flops etc), or

Footwear that is heavier than wetsuit booties or runners (such as hiking boots etc)

## SOP AL Incident reporting

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts define safety occurrences into three categories:

### **Near Miss**

Means an incident in which there was no Incident or Accident but where the potential for serious consequences existed.

### **Incident**

Means an unplanned event resulting in property damage, a collision between boats, the loss of a boat, or significant damage to the environment.

### **Accident**

An unplanned event resulting in personal injury, no matter how small, up to and including the loss of life.

All Near Miss events are to be considered a positive and all members of 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts should be encouraged to report any and all events as they happen, they are an opportunity for the Group to identify and remedy potential safety issues before anyone gets hurt.

If a Near-Miss Event occurs on an activity, the Leader-in-Charge of the activity must record the details of this in the activity's Log Book AND inform the Groups Safety Officer.

If an Incident occurs on an activity, the Leader-in-Charge of the activity must record the details of this in the activity's Log Book AND must notify the Safety Officer.

If an Accident occurs on an activity, the Leader-in-Charge of the activity must record the details of this in the activity's Log Book AND must complete an Accident Report AND must notify the Safety Officer.

After receiving notification of a Near-Miss Event, Incident or Accident, for each relevant activity the Safety Officer must ensure that a review is completed of the appropriate Risk Assessment(s) and Standard Operating Procedure(s), to identify any changes to either that may be required. All events should be discussed at GC to formulate improvements to existing procedures.

The Safety Officer must conduct a review of the Risk Assessments and Standard Operating Procedures for all activities, to identify any areas of concern, new procedures or additional training that may be required.

Any maintenance issues created or identified during an activity must be recorded by the Leader-in-Charge in that activity's Log Book.

If the Leader-in-Charge identifies that an item of 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts equipment no longer functions as it is expected to do, then upon completion of the activity, the Leader-in-Charge must remove that equipment from use and notify the Bo'sun.

## **SOP AM            Launching and Recovering Dinghies**

### **Before Launch the Leader-in-Charge of an activity must ensure that:**

All activities are planned and that suitably competent Leaders have been assigned relevant roles and responsibilities.

A safety briefing is delivered to all leaders and crews before launching.

All participants must be fully informed of the intended sailing area and weather conditions.

All signals to be used are defined in advance.

All boats have been inspected and the correct rigging has been checked before launching.

All participants are wearing a PFD and the appropriate footwear and clothing.

All straps and buckles on PFDs are secured attached.

The Log Book has been completed in full.

Powerboats must be launched and are on-station / operational on the water before the signal is given to start launching dinghies.

### **During Recovering the Leader-in-Charge of an activity must ensure that:**

Everyone see's and acknowledges the signal to conclude the session.

The Leader on shore is ready to help guider the dinghies ashore.

The recovering of boats is done in an orderly sequence.

Sails must be allowed to fly free immediately after the boat reaches shore.

Only after the last dinghy is ashore can the attending Powerboats head for the slip and recovery.

Boats and Sailors all remain on the beach until all are recovered ashore, then the entire group moves up to the Yard

All boats, sails, rigging and PFDs and trolleys are stowed correctly, ready for the next use.

The Log Book is signed to confirm that all participants have returned.

Any near-miss events, incidents or accidents are recorded correctly, in the Log Book or Accident Book as required, and communicated to the Safety Officer as required.

Broken / ineffective equipment is reported to the Bo'sun and set aside.

Powerboats are recovered to the GOSC Yard.

Fuel use is logged.

## SOP AN Leaving Classified Waters

The Group's normal activity waters are defined in SOP AC above.  
Any water beyond is defined as the DBS – the Deep Blue Sea.

Any water activity into the Deep Blue Sea will require the pre-approval of the 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Water Team and a passage plan in addition to your normal shore contact details and logbook entry. This is to ensure that all craft and crew operating in this area have sufficient safety backup, support and emergency planning in place before going afloat.

It is to be expected that any venture into the DBS would be a major Group Expedition which would be planned and run with the full involvement of the Group Water Team.

The passage plan must be submitted to the Water Team a minimum of 48hrs before departure. The passage plan must identify the Leader-In-Charge of the activity and their qualifications. The passage plan must describe the risks that have been identified, the proposed safety measures, the emergency planning undertaken, and the emergency equipment that is to be brought on the activity.  
Approval must be given before the event happens.

## SOP AO      **Operation of Powerboats**

Anyone using Group powerboats must be on the list of authorised users held by the 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scout Water Team.

Authority to use powerboats will only be issued to those with the following qualifications:

Scouting Ireland Leadership Afloat or the older Charge Certificate (Power)  
ISA National Powerboat Certificate or above

**Level 1 powerboaters** are trainee powerboat drivers who must log x9 hours helming before being allowed complete their Level 2 certificate.

**The Level 2 certificate** is the required qualification to operate 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts powerboats.

Level 1 trainees may take the helm and be part of boating sessions however a qualified Level 2 holder must be on the boat at all times and offer coaching and guidance as required. L1 drivers should log their on-water training hours with the Group Water Team.

### **Everyone using one of our Powerboats must**

Be wearing appropriate Personal Flotation Device (worn at all times and fastened correctly)  
Be dressed appropriately for the expected conditions.  
Crews should be prepared to enter the water at any time.  
Appropriate footwear should be worn at all times (booties, runners).  
Whistles are an essential piece of personal equipment.  
Ensure boat safety box is accessible and in good order.

### **Before going afloat**

Sessions must be agreed in advance with the Skippers and the Water Team.  
Helm must get permission to launch from Leader-In-Charge before going afloat.  
Boats and crews must complete the Log Book before going afloat.  
Helm is responsible for ensuring the boat is ready and safe for use before launch.  
All Crew must be aware of forecast weather and tidal conditions prior to embarking on session.  
Helm is responsible for ensuring all passengers are wearing an appropriate Personal Flotation Device.

Helm must at all time drive the boat with due care and attention.

In particular:

Always proceed at a safe speed.  
Avoid driving the boat at speed unless in open water and away from other boat users.  
Be aware of the depth of water in order to avoid damaging the propeller.  
Kill cord must be securely attached to the coxswain at all times.  
Engine must be switched off when in close proximity to people in the water.



### **When finished with boat the Skipper must ensure**

Powerboat is recovered into the GOSC yard or is safe in the Layby or Claddagh Wall by prior agreement  
Bail boat, switch off battery, secure fuel tanks.  
Return keys & VHF equipment to the Unit.  
Report any defects / concerns to Leader in Charge and report in Log Book.  
Ensure that all boat equipment is in place and stowed correctly.  
Remove and return to appropriate place any equipment not belonging to that boat such as rubbish.

### **Equipment list for Powerboats**

The following list of equipment is the minimum that must be carried on Powerboats and must be checked by the Powerboat skipper before going on the water.

Anchor of suitable size and type, fitted with sufficient chain and line for the operating area.  
The anchor, chain and line must be stowed in the container provided.

Designated Safety Box containing  
    First aid kit  
    Plastic bivvy bag

Towing Warps  
At least one warp long enough to tow several boats astern.  
Fuel tank & line  
All fuel must be carried in ready to use cans  
Paddles x 2, secured.  
Sponson Pump (if applicable), stowed under seat.  
VHF Radio is to be carried at all times.

### **Refueling Powerboats**

Refuel tanks on stable ground in a well-ventilated area or outside.  
Use funnels provided.  
Keep heat sources and electrical devices away.  
Clean up and spill promptly.  
Ensure the correct oil mix is used with the correct tank and boat.  
Consult with the Leader-In-Charge if in doubt.

## SOP AP Keelboats

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts Keelboat Fleet consists of RASA, Rashone and Emily.

The Scout Group also owns the Hooker Loveen but this boat is licenced to, and under the day to day control of the Galway Hooker Sailing Club and so is not covered in these SOPs.

A L2 keelboat sailor is the minimum requirement to helm a keelboat in the Groups Restricted Waters. This is conditional that there is a L3 keelboat sailor with their NTA lead certificate to supervise the activity.

Day Skipper certificates are required for each boat heading into cruising waters.

Each Keelboat requires a valid water ready certificate, approved every year by the Group Water Team.

All keelboat helms must undergo an annual safety briefing + MOB drill before being permitted to take crews afloat.

In addition to this commitment of safety a 'Master of the Boat' will be appointed to monitor and upkeep the day to day running and inventory of the vessel.

They will be responsible to ensure each crew keeps the boat ship-shape and an annual Coastguard inspection is completed.

## SOP AQ Swimming Ability

Being able to swim is not a requirement to participate in the Group's water-based activities. Nor is it a requirement by Scouting Ireland or Sail Ireland to partake in our water activities.

While all scouts are encouraged to be able to swim, the Group is not required to certify swimming ability and may not exclude those who cannot swim.

Parents / guardians will identify in advance their child's swimming ability via the annual Scouting Ireland Activity Consent Form.

The Leader-in-Charge should carefully plan all activities to consider and manage risks for non-swimmers.

All activity leaders within a section should be aware of the swimming ability of their scouts afloat. The Leader-in-Charge of an activity must ensure that a PFD is worn at all times by all scouts on the water, and that all scouts operate within their level of ability on and around the water.

Members who intend to participate in regular water activities must carry out a water confidence test off Deadman's beach. The first sailing activity of each year generally is a water introduction event, gauging ability to enter and egress cold water, to right a capsized dinghy and general water comfortability. Scouts should demonstrate they can float wearing a PFD and remain calm in cold water.

## SOP AR Dinghy Capsize

Capsizing is a normal part of dinghy sailing.

But every capsize must be treated as an occurrence that requires the prompt attendance of a rescue boat to assess the situation.

The helm of a rescue boat attending to a capsize must ensure that the rescue boat stays in the safe zone, upwind of dinghy.

The helm of a rescue boat attending to a capsize must implement the 5 stages of a rescue:

- Swift response
- Count heads and smiling faces
- Assist with righting the boat
- Free any crew if necessary
- Recover the crew

The Leader-in-Charge of a dinghy sailing activity must provide a safety briefing on the shore to the crews before the activity commences.

Inexperienced crew can get tangled in lines, trapped under sail or hit by a boom, but the likelihood and severity of this can be reduced by ensuring crew have been trained in what to do in the event of a capsize.

The Leader-in-charge of a dinghy sailing activity must consider in advance whether a capsize is particularly likely to occur, such as because of weather conditions or the limited experience of a crew, and then consider implementing control measures such as reefing mainsail, changing crew allocations, or putting more crew in the boat to help with stability.

## SOP AS Personal Floatation Devices

PFDs will be worn by all adult and youth members for water based activities.

The correct PFD should be fitted appropriately for each individual and checked by the leader-in-charge.

All clips, zips and straps should be fastened.

Buoyancy Aids should be appropriately fitted that just only two fingers can fit between shoulders and buoyancy aid and are only for use in sheltered waters when help is close at hand.

Strip Inflatable life jackets may be worn for powerboat, and keel boats.

Leg straps or crotch straps must be worn and should be appropriately fitted that just one-fist can fit between waist and life-jacket.

All Strip-lifejacket require manual activation to deploy.

PFDs will not be used as floor mats.

PFDs that are found to be faulty, or if a strip inflatable jacket is deployed, should be removed immediately from service.

PFDs will be inspected and tested annually and faulty PFDs removed from service.

## SOP AT Session Return Overdue

Steps to be followed by the person identified in the Session Plan as the activity's Shore Contact:

IF: a boat is more than 30 minutes late returning to shore

AND: nobody has contacted the Shore Contact with a status update

THEN: the Shore Contact must contact the activity's Leader-in-Charge for a status update.  
This is to be done by VHF and/or mobile phone.

IF: the Shore Contact cannot get an update on the imminent return of the boat

THEN: the Shore Contact must do a visual check of the activity's operating area and continue attempts to contact the boat by VHF and/or mobile phone.

IF: it is 30 minutes or less before sunset

AND: the Shore Contact cannot communicate with the boat

OR: the Shore Contact cannot visually see the boat returning to shore within 30 minutes

THEN: the Shore Contact must contact the Coastguard immediately.  
This can be done by VHF Channel 16 or Phone 112.

IF: the boat is more than 60 minutes overdue

AND: the Shore Contact cannot communicate with the boat

OR: the Shore Contact cannot visually see the boat returning to shore within 30 minutes.

THEN: the Shore Contact must contact the Coastguard immediately.  
This can be done by VHF Channel 16 or Phone 112.

**If in doubt at any stage, the Shore Contact may contact the Coastguard by VHF Channel 16 or Phone 112. Never be afraid to contact the Coastguard.**

## SOP AU VHF Radio

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts use VHF Radio as the main form of communication between craft and to shore.

1 <sup>st</sup> Port of Galway	Ch.77
GHSC	Ch.77
GCSC	Ch.77
Galway PORT	Ch.10
Coastguard / Hailing	Ch.16

Every craft (other than kayaks & dinghies) must carry a VHF Radio.

Crafts with a fixed VHF Radio should bring a handheld VHF Radio as backup in the event the craft is without power.

Radios must be secured to each craft using the lanyard provided.

Radios are used for operational use only and never for 'banter'.

Never handle a VHF by its antenna.

Members operating VHF should carry the relevant licenses

## SOP AV Excluded Activities

With the correct support, supervision, training and SOPs all our 'normal' activities may continue in whatever fun, safe and challenge environment we can create.

However there are limits to our insurance commitments and the following activities are not permitted;

**Cliff-Jumping**

**Diving**

**Jet-Skiing**

**Caving**

**Towing inflatables**

**Scout U12 operating an engine more than 5hp**

**Scout U16 operating boat capable of 17 knots**

## SOP AW After-dark activity

All normal boating sessions will be concluded and crew ashore 30 minutes before sunset. Sunset is when the sun is no longer on the horizon.

This is a specific time that changes each day.

You will find this time on the Boating Calendar or via an internet search.

It is the responsibility of the session leader to make themselves aware of this changing time and log in the Session Logbook.

No members should be out after-dark.

Occasionally to facilitate training and operations, after-dark activities may be permitted.

The proposal for such an activity must be presented to the Group Water Team by the proposed leader-in-charge with the activity plan including all risk assessments and SOLAS considerations met and the purpose and value of the activity.

An advanced powerboat certificate (L5) or an alternative certificate with a coastal navigation certificate endorsement is the requirement for after-dark activity.

These are the only certificates which facilitate after-dark training and preparation.

By law, all craft afloat after-dark must carry a white-light.

## **SOP AX Engine Maintenance**

Outboard engine maintenance will be carried out regularly under appropriate supervision. Members should never try tackle outboard maintenance themselves to avoid injury to themselves or further damage to the equipment.

Basic fault-finding is encouraged but all reports must be logged in the logbook and reported so a proper service may be carried out and logged with the maintenance team.

If a fault is found the engine should be removed from use immediately.

All maintenance, replacement and service will be done as per manufacturer's recommendations. All servicing will be recorded in the maintenance logbook.

## **SOP AY Fuel use and storage**

Fuel must only be carried and stored in appropriate fuel containers.

Boat fuel may not be stored within any building operated by 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts, including the Unit, The Shanty or the Maintenance Shed.

The only exception to this is if one of our safety boats are inside the Maintenance Shed – fuel may remain in the onboard tank provided tanks are secure and breathing vents closed.

Tanks should be inspected at each use for deterioration and contamination. Contaminated oil/ fuel must be reported to the Bo'sun for appropriate safe disposal.

Excess oil/ fuel must be stored in the locked fuel store cages, outside the Unit

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts Powerboats require clean unleaded fuel. This can be acquired at the local petrol station. Powerboat fuel will be reimbursed by the Group so keep your receipt. Each event should be self financing.

Spillage should be cleared up immediately. A clean funnel should be used to limit spills. Mix oil as required for 2-stroke engines.

All persons handling fuel should familiarise themselves with the nearest suitable fire extinguisher and emergency spill kits.

## **SOP AZ Maintenance Log**

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts will keep a database of its fleet and equipment to include the service history and maintenance notes of each item including any repairs conducted or required.

Inspection of items will be conducted before use by all leaders-in-charge and a full inventory audit will be carried out by the Group annually.

Any issues to be recorded in the Maintenance Logbook and repairs or replacements to be arranged by the Bo'sun with inputs from the Water Team.

Repairs to be carried out by competent, experienced, qualified persons and recorded in the maintenance log.

## **SOP BA Child Protection Afloat**

All members of 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts will at all times show prudent and appropriate care for the safety and welfare of fellow members.

When on boating activity the required measures for managing child protection and safeguarding must always be adhered to.

At all times to ensure activities are conducted safely. When Vetting and the correct Sailing and Safeguarding qualifications are in-place then an adult may be onboard an open boat with a youth member.

This should be considered in the same instance as a child in an open field with an adult. This is OK but the following guidance should be considered;

If you can avoid this situation, avoid it.  
Have an additional adult/ youth member onboard.

Maintain social distancing.  
One on the bow, one on the stern.

Stay on the same sailing course as everyone else.  
If you leave the main group to tend with an incidental this is NOT OK.

Always 'ere on the side of caution.  
If you are not comfortable, find another way

## SOP BB Inclusion and Diversity

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway will look to draw membership from as wide a social net as possible, from the full socioeconomic spread and including as many mixed ability youth as we can.

Group Leadership undertake to include mixed abilities in our activities whenever possible once the safety of the entire activity group can be maintained.

Activity Leaders should arrange a meeting with all stakeholders, including parents, before an event to plan out each individuals requirements and the support needed.

## SOP BC Man Overboard (MOB)

This is a very common situation and a normal regular occurrence when dinghy sailing. However it represents the greatest risks to any of our members when on the water and so requires the greatest care and attention.

Remember, if someone has been in the water for 15 minutes or more, they will be very tired and cold

### **Steps to avoid causing injury when retrieving a person from the water**

Approach person in water facing into wind.

Approach at slow speed.

Gear into Neutral when about 2 boat lengths away from person in water and drift in.

Use forward gear if necessary to nudge forward.

Safety Boat crew to come forward of helm position on the wider side of the console to avoid getting in the way of the throttle.

Crew to grab person and call loudly to Helm "CONTACT".

Helm to switch off engine as soon as crew confirms that he/she has a hold of the person in the water (unless it is dangerous to do so, e.g. close to rocks where Safety Boat crew might be in danger, in which case, ensure engine is in neutral).

Bring person in the water back to mid-way down the boat.

This is only safe when engine is OFF.

Bring person on board with back to sponson as this is easier.

Apply first aid as necessary.

Return person ashore as soon as possible.



## SOP BD Towing

### Method for securing a tow

The most common circumstance where a Safety Boat will be required to give assistance will involve towing a dinghy back to harbour.

The usual reasons are a complete drop in wind often accompanied with an adverse tidal direction or after a capsize where the crew feel unable to continue racing either due to cold, exhaustion or gear failure.

Remember, if crew have been in the water they may be very cold and exhausted. This will affect their ability so it is the responsibility of the Safety crew to ensure tow is secure.

### Securing a Tow from Stern of Safety Boat to Bow of Dingy:

Come alongside dinghy.

Always ask helm if he/she requires a tow, unless it is an emergency situation in which the Safety Boat Cox takes control.

Pass or cast tow line to dinghy.

Dinghy crew to secure towrope to mast or other secure point, never to the forestay.

Agree basic signals for use between Safety Boat and dinghy.

Ensure dinghy helm and crew ready to cast off.

Cast off and engage forward slowly to pick up slack on towline.

When slack picked up, proceed with care.

Safety Boat Crew to sit on pillion seat with back to Cox to keep watch on towed dinghy. Advise Cox of anything wrong or of any signals from dinghy helm or crew.

Proceed direct to harbour unless necessary to tow other dinghies.

Maximum 3 dinghies should be towed at one time.

To let go of the tow, throttle back slowly, the crew taking up the slack towline.

Bring towed dinghy alongside and untie towline.

Secure tow line inboard.

Cast off and bear away from dinghy.

### **Securing a Tow from Alongside Safety Boat:**

Come alongside dinghy.

Always ask helm if he/she requires a tow, unless it is an emergency situation in which case the Safety Boat Cox takes control.

Pass or cast tow line to dinghy.

Manoeuvre dinghy forward so that Safety Boat Engine is farther aft than transom of towed dinghy to allow steerage.

Secure a line from bow of Safety Boat to bow of dinghy.

Secure a line from stern of Safety Boat to stern of dinghy.

Secure a line from bow of Safety Boat to stern of dinghy.

Secure a line from stern of Safety Boat to bow of dinghy.

Ensure all towing lines are tight.

Agree basic signals for use between Safety Boat and dinghy.

Ensure dinghy helm and crew ready to proceed with tow.

Engage forward slowly, picking up speed gradually.

Crew to sit facing towed boat to keep watch on towed boat.

Advise Cox of anything wrong or of any signals from dinghy helm or crew.

Proceed direct to harbour unless necessary to tow other dinghies.

Only 2 dinghies should be towed at one time when secured to side, one on each side.

To let go of the tow, throttle back slowly and stop. Untie all lines, leaving the line from bow of Safety Boat to bow of dinghy until last.

Secure tow lines inboard.

Cast off and bear away from dinghy.

## **SOP BE Entanglement**

Entanglement and entrapment may be caused when a crew member's inappropriately fitted clothing or hair becomes trapped in a boat's rigging and fittings.

As a preventative measure all activity leaders should be very aware of this and ensure long hair is tied back, loose garments, jackets, shoes, laces and straps are appropriately tied up and secure to prevent entanglement.

All safety boat crews and leaders must be equipped with a suitable knife to combat an entrapment incident should it occur.

In the event of capsized sailing boats; as per SOP AR Dinghy Capsize, Safety crews should follow the correct steps

Swift response

Count heads - In the event there is a head missing the sailor may have become entrapped in the rigging.

Right the boat - This is the best measure to tackle the incident and reduce further harm.

Free sailor - Untangle/ cut away rigging as required to free sailor.

Debrief - Identify why this incident occurred and review how it may be prevented.

## **SOP BF External Training Certificates**

Members will from time to time carry qualifications and certificates obtained from other training centres. These can be very beneficial to bring different ideas and methods to our Group.

Regardless of external certificates all members must signoff on these SOPs to ensure they are aware of the safety protocols of 1<sup>st</sup> Post of Galway Sea Scouts.

## **SOP BG Wind and Surf Boards**

1<sup>st</sup> Post of Galway Sea Scouts has a number of surfboards.

These boards can be used for general play and activity on the water without any windsurf rig.

The below steps should be considered before taking part in activity afloat with the boards.

Events must be supervised, conducting dynamic risk assessments as event continues.

Activity area should be away from strong tidal currents + strongest tide times (3rd/ 4th hour of tide).

Offshore winds should be avoided.

All participants should have completed their 'swim test' and be fitted with an appropriate PFD.

Self-rescue exercises should be practised at the start of session.

A Safety Boat must be available and suitable for the conditions and numbers afloat.

Leaders in wetgear standing in the water is a good option to support group control.

Appropriate booties/ runners must be worn.

## **SOP BH Source Material and Acknowledgements**

1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts have created these SOPs using a number of sources including;

Malahide Sea Scouts

Galway Hooker Sailing Club

Scouting Ireland Boating Guidelines

Scouting Ireland Sea Scouting Leadership Afloat program

Irish Sailing Centre Recognition Requirements

Irish Sailing Dinghy Sailing Syllabus

Irish Sailing Powerboat Syllabus

RNLI safety afloat guidelines

Irish Coastguard safety afloat guidelines

Department of Marine

Code of Practice: The Safe Operation of Recreational Craft

With thanks and support also from industry experts, activity instructors in relevant disciplines, Scouting Ireland Sea Scouting Team, local seafarers and fellow Sea Scouting Groups.

**SOP BI**

**Revision / Change Log**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>GC Approval Date</b>
04 Dec 2023	Rev 01	Initial Draft	Denis Murphy	Not Approved
03 Jan 2024	Rev 02	Approval	Denis Murphy	03 Jan 2024

## SOP BJ

Appendix A – List of Craft operated by 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Galway Sea Scouts

## Safety Boats

Mary Ann	5m Whaley Safety Boat	50hp Yamaha
TBD	4.5m Rib	40hp Yamaha
Red Rigid	3.5m plastic boat	

## Keel Boats

Rasa	27foot twin keel Jaguar	9.9 hp Tohatsu
Rashone	23foot twin keel Pirate Express	
Emily	23foot twin keel Pirate Express	

## Dinghies

A	Topper Topaz Sailing Dinghy
B	Topper Topaz Sailing Dinghy
C	Topper Topaz Sailing Dinghy
D	Topper Topaz Sailing Dinghy
E	Topper Topaz Sailing Dinghy
F	Topper Topaz Sailing Dinghy

## Canadian (open Canoes)

A	14.5foot 3 seat Canadian Canoe	
B	14.5foot 3 seat Canadian Canoe	
C	14.5foot 3 seat Canadian Canoe	
D	14.5foot 3 seat Canadian Canoe	on the way from iCanoe
E	14.5foot 3 seat Canadian Canoe	on the way from iCanoe

**Kayaks**

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

**Sit-on Kayaks**

A

B

**Surfboard**

A

B

**END**