

BROOM OWNERS CLUB HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Club, through its Regional Co-ordinators and Representatives, runs a variety of events for members, most of which involve low levels of risk. Never-the-less, it is *always* necessary to take account of Health and Safety matters when planning an activity. To do this the organiser must undertake a risk assessment, which involves carrying out a number of processes. These are:

- **Assessing the hazards** – what could cause an injury or health problem? Are the consequences likely to be serious or trivial?
- **Considering the likelihood of the hazardous event occurring.** This can range from ‘most unlikely’ to ‘almost certain’.
- **Devising *appropriate* remedial measures** to reduce or eliminate the impact of a hazard, based on a consideration of both its seriousness and the likelihood of its occurrence (the **risk level**). Trivial, unlikely events require little response; but more certain, significant risks must be addressed by taking appropriate precautions.

CARRYING OUT RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Club endorses the risk assessment procedures set out in the **RYA Safety Guidance document**: The text of this document, shown below, has been adjusted to take account of the fact that BOC events are very different from those of Yacht racing and Dinghy Clubs, for which the guidance was probably written. But the messages are unaltered.

Those organising a BOC event should take the following steps to ensure that it runs safely:

STEP 1 IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

Walk around the venue and have a look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Risks are a part of everyday life and you are not expected to eliminate **all** of them. What you must do is make sure you know the **main** risks and what needs to be done to minimise them.

STEP 2 DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE HARMED, AND HOW

Those most obviously at risk are BOC members and their guests. Members of the public and people who share the event area should also be included if there is any chance they could be hurt by your activities. Identify *how* anyone might be harmed e.g. what type of injury could result?

STEP 3 EVALUATE THE LEVEL OF RISK ARISING FROM THE HAZARDS AND DECIDE WHETHER EXISTING PRECAUTIONS ARE ADEQUATE OR MORE SHOULD BE DONE

First, ask yourself whether you have done all the things that the law says you have got to do. For example, there are legal requirements on prevention of access to dangerous parts of machinery. Then ensure that generally accepted boating safety standards are in place. But don't stop there - think for yourself, because the law also requires that you do whatever is *reasonably practicable* to keep your activities safe. Your risk assessment should only include what you could sensibly be expected to know – you are not required to anticipate unforeseeable risks! Even after all precautions have been taken, some risk usually remains. Risks are part of everyday life and you are not expected to eliminate them **all**. What you have to ensure, for each significant hazard, is that any residual risk is as low as can sensibly be expected.

In summary, look at what you are planning to do and ask yourself:

- a) Can I get **rid of the hazard** altogether?
- b) If not, how can I **control the risks** so that harm is unlikely?

STEP 4 RECORD YOUR SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND IMPLEMENT THEM

The BOC is a small Club, so the **law** does **not require** the leader of an event **to write anything down**. However, it is useful to keep a record of any significant hazards you encountered and what steps you took to deal with them. Keep any such document so that the assessment can be reviewed at a later date. It will serve to remind you of the need to address similar matters in future and also demonstrate that you have done what the law requires!

There is no need to record how you did your risk assessment, provided you can show that:

- a proper check was made;
- you asked **who** might be affected;
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be harmed;
- the precautions were reasonable, and the remaining risk was low.
- you took advice from any members having local knowledge.

To keep things simple, you can refer to other documents, such as manuals, RYA publications, Company rules, marina guides, manufacturers' instructions etc. These may already list hazards and precautions. You don't need to repeat all that, and it is up to you whether you combine all the documents, or keep them separately.

Assessments need to be suitable and sufficient, not perfect. The real questions to ask are:

- **Are the precautions reasonable?** and
- **Will there be a record to show that a proper check was made?**

STEP 5 REVIEW YOUR RISK ASSESSMENT IF THERE ARE CHANGES

If there has been any significant change at a venue or in a programme since a risk assessment was made, you should immediately adjust it to take account of the new circumstances.

TWO EXAMPLES OF BOC EVENTS

Cruising – in – Company

This is the highest risk situation undertaken by the Club.

Of course, the captain of each boat is ultimately responsible for its safety and that of its occupants, while underway.

The **person organising the event** will need to:

1. Remind attendees that it is a condition of taking part that each vessel is insured by a policy that includes the usual £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 cover currently demanded by marina operators;
2. Remind attendees that it is the **captain's** responsibility to ensure the seaworthiness of his/her vessel;
3. Be aware of the experience level of all those taking part;
4. Hold briefing meetings for each stage of the event;
5. Have a clear plan, shared with participants, for each section of the trip;
6. Have contingency plans should weather conditions change or any vessel experience mechanical problems and
7. Agree a means of keeping in contact under way.

It is recommended that those taking part in cruise-in-company events be asked to confirm items 1, 2 and 3 in writing. A log of the trip, making reference to the observance of items 4 – 7, would provide the organiser with evidence of suitable planning.

Where a cruise-in-company is organised with the object of encouraging less experienced boat owners to expand their cruising horizons, the potential for legal liability increases. In particular, when organising 'follow my leader' events for less experienced members, the organiser should be aware that mechanical failure, navigational error, changing wind conditions, deteriorating sea state, reduced visibility or medical emergency may put the novice skipper or crew in a position of danger. For such events, the organiser should consider imposing a 'crew experience' requirement or offer the services of an experienced skipper.

The above guidance has been adapted from the 'RYA Legal Aspects' document.

Waterside and social gatherings

Usually members make their own way to this type of event. If arriving by water, each skipper is responsible for the safety of his/her own vessel.

An events disclaimer

Organisers cannot absolve themselves from the responsibility to take reasonable care in setting up and running events. But neither can they be held responsible for something that is another person's duty. It is a long-established principle in law that the captain of a boat is responsible for the safety of his/her vessel and its occupants. Although it is not strictly essential, it may be wise to include a reminder of the legal situation in any planning documents issued in connection with an on-the-water event. An example of such disclaimer might be:

N.B. Those attending this event in their own craft must be aware that they are legally responsible for the safe operation of their vessel and the safety of all persons on board while underway. In addition, the BOC requires that a valid insurance policy must be in effect for the boat, indemnifying the person at the time against public liability to the sum of at least £2M.

On assembling at an event, the organiser should make members aware of any particular hazards associated with the venue. The *Carrying out Risk assessments* section above should be used as the basis for checking the facilities at the venue and the organisation of any planned activities. Hazards should be identified and remedial measures put in place. Some examples of hazardous situations likely to be met at BOC events, together with possible remedial measures, are shown below.

Examples of a possible hazards and suggested remedial measures

Potentially hazardous item	Who might be harmed & how?	How addressed?
Power leads lying on pontoons.	Trip hazard and consequential injury. Could affect any passer-by.	Ensure power leads are routed along grooves etc. and use Duct tape to secure if necessary.
Mooring ropes dangerously deployed.	Trip/fall hazard if ropes restrict boat access. Loose rope on pontoons could be a trip hazard. Usually affects members and any of their visitors - not the public.	This is the responsibility of the captain of the vessel - discuss with him/her if the problem looks significant.
BBQ set up in a public place.	Hot charcoal or hotplate - burn hazard. Affects members. Could also affect members of the public if they enter the location. The Club pennant should indicate the BBQ is intended for exclusive use by Club members.	Check the unit is correctly assembled and placed on a level surface. Responsible adult use only. Ensure the equipment is not left unattended. Extinguish after use. A supply of cold water & basic first aid kit to be available.

Example of a possible hazards and suggested remedial measures (cont)

Potentially hazardous item	Who might be harmed & how?	How addressed?
Guy ropes used to peg down Gazebo in a public area	Trip hazard, especially if the tent has to be sited near an access way. Same issue as above concerning who might be affected	If possible, adjust peg to improve safety. Use high visibility material to mark pins and ropes or cover pins with buckets or pots.
Unstable or slippery pontoons and walkways	Falling onto pontoon (trip hazard) or into the water (risk of drowning) Members and guests could be affected.	Report the hazard to the site owners - in writing if the situation requires. Warn attendees. Know where rescue equipment is located and how to muster emergency services
Drinking	Affects a number of members.	Carefully supervise?