



LEIGH-ON-SEA SAILING CLUB

SAILING DINGHY RACING RISK ASSESSMENT

LSC/RA/Final
Issue:
Approved 6th
Aug 2025

1. GUIDANCE

This document has been developed with reasonable endeavours by amateur, experienced sailors and with references to relevant guidance and information sources.

The reader should undertake their own due diligence on whether the contents are accurate, relevant and reliable.

2. INTRODUCTION

This safety protocol addresses the assessment of risks associated with dinghy racing events at Leigh on Sea Sailing Club (LSC). This risk assessment is intended to cover all Open and Club dinghy racing events (Separate Risk Assessments may be developed for Cruiser Racing and Cadet sailing). The Race Officer may make an event specific risk assessment if any additional hazards are present.

The risks associated with a sailing event should be assessed well ahead of the event so that the risk factors that are seen to be serious may be addressed during the planning stages for the event. The risk assessment needs to be quantitative to facilitate giving the most serious risks the most attention.

Some risks are inherent to sailing and racing, some are due to local factors and some are dynamic, for example, the weather, sea state and tidal currents. Consequently the risk assessment should be considered also dynamic and reviewed when conditions change.

In preparing this Risk Assessment (RA) a series of Assumptions (See Section 5.0) have been made. It is important that this RA is read in conjunction with these Assumptions.

In the assessing of Risks it may be that a specific Risk or group of Risks are considered to be so severe that they must be addressed as a priority and actioned as soon as practically possible. These will be documented in the Issues log (tbe) and discussed and recorded in the next monthly General Committee meeting with actions agreed and reviewed at each meeting until resolved.

3. REFERENCES

The following documents were used in the preparation of this protocol.

- *The current issue of the Racing Rules of Sailing*
- *Port of London Authority - Recreational Users Guide- Broadness to Sea Reach*
- *Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Handbook and Sailing Instructions*



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4. RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

4.1 Definitions.

Hazard:	The potential for something to cause harm.
Risk:	The probability that harm will occur from the hazard and the severity of its consequence.
Risk Factor/ Rating:	The product of the likelihood and the severity/impact of the Risk being realised.
Control Measure:	The method used to minimise the Risk Factor. The guiding principle should be to implement strategies that reduce risk factors to as low as reasonably practical.

4.2 Process and Document approval.

The risk assessment will be prepared by appropriate members and approved by the Leigh on Sea Sailing Club committee.

The first step shall list all perceived hazards associated with the sailing, the event itself and the sailing area. Then define the risks associated with each hazard. Using simple judgement, for each hazard assign the likelihood that the risks will occur and the severity/ impact they would have if they did occur using a scale of one to three. The Risk Factor/ Rating then is the product of the values assigned for likelihood and severity/ impact as shown in Section 3.4.

4.3 Circulation

The Club runs a rota system for Race Officers and support boat crew which typically comprises experienced dinghy sailors. This document will be circulated to all those on the rota system and wider LSC sailing community via specific WhatsApp groups, a printed copy will be available in the LSC Race Hut, a copy will be pinned to the main Notice Board and published on the LSC web site.

The Race Officer will consider any additional hazards and control measures relevant to the day's racing and take additional steps as they consider appropriate. Typically these will not be documented.



LEIGH-ON-SEA SAILING CLUB
SAILING DINGHY RACING RISK ASSESSMENT

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4.4 Hazard, risk likelihood, severity assessment and control measures

Each Hazard will have one or more associated risks that may occur. Each risk will be assigned a Likelihood and Severity rating based on the following table:

		Severity / Consequence				
Likelihood		Negligible 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Severe 5
	5 Almost certain	Moderate 5	High 10	Extreme 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
	4 Likely	Moderate 4	High 8	High 12	Extreme 16	Extreme 20
	3 Possible	Low 3	Moderate 6	High 9	High 12	Extreme 15
	2 Unlikely	Low 2	Moderate 4	Moderate 6	High 8	High 10
	1 Rare	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Moderate 4	Moderate 5

Risk Factors for each hazard will have values 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 20 or 25. Then use the following table to assess the importance of implementing the control measures.

RISK FACTOR	FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
1,2,3	Low risk factor, no additional control measures required
4,5,6	Moderate risk factor, control measures should be considered
8,9,10,12	High risk factor, control measures should be implemented when practically possible
15,16,20,25	Extreme risk factor, control measures must be implemented as soon as possible



LEIGH-ON-SEA SAILING CLUB

SAILING DINGHY RACING RISK ASSESSMENT

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5.0 Assumptions and Dependencies including generic Control Measures made in the development of this Risk Assessment

A series of assumptions and dependencies have been made in the preparation of this RA and are set out below.

It must be noted that these assumptions and dependencies may also form a standard list of Control Measures which will be applied to each risk as relevant to score the "Risk Factor post Control Measures". As such it is imperative that this section is read in conjunction with the RA table. (Further risk-specific Control Measures are recorded in the RA table).

Racing Area

The racing area includes an area bounded by Southend Pier to the East, Benfleet Yacht Club and Chapman Sands to the west, the shore to the north and a line approximately drawn between Southend Pier head, West Leigh Middle buoy and Canvey Point to the south.

Support Craft

Typically two support craft, a RIB from the Essex Yacht club and a rigid "dory style" open craft from LSC, will be present for each race. Additional support craft may be available for certain events.

Responsibilities of the sailor

It is the responsibility of the sailor, or parent or guardian of the sailor, to decide that they are able to participate safely in the race and to not launch if that is in doubt.

The sailor must have a knowledge level that is compatible with their reasonable participation in the race, including knowledge of the Sailing Instructions, the Racing Rules of Sailing and the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea especially the rules to avoid collisions with craft typically found in the Racing Area.

The sailor must hold appropriate third party insurance.

Before leaving the beach or racks, the sailor (18 and over) or parent or guardian of the sailor (if the sailor is under 18), shall assess and judge that the sailor's ability is compatible with the sailing conditions for the race and their equipment is adequate for the race. The following should be considered:

- The responsibility for a sailor's decision to participate in a race, or to continue racing is theirs alone. They are entirely responsible for their own safety, ref RRS Rules 1,4.
- The wind, tidal and sea conditions on the course and in the route to the course.
- The weather forecast for the period of the race.



LEIGH-ON-SEA SAILING CLUB

SAILING DINGHY RACING RISK ASSESSMENT

LSC/RA/Final
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- The length of the race course and the expected time on the water.
- Personal protective clothing and buoyancy, adequate for the conditions. Special care is needed in cold or strong wind conditions, especially for juniors.
- The class of dinghy and any class specific items and equipment, for example, harness, painter, buoyancy bags, hatches, righting lines, any class specific rules for how the sailing dinghy is rigged and set up.
- The dinghy should be in a safe and seaworthy condition.
- The sailor should know how to derig the dinghy.

Swimmers have become an increasing hazard in the Racing Area and do not necessarily behave in a predictable manner. As such they should be treated as an obstruction and the RRS for avoiding an obstruction apply.

Responsibilities of the Race Officer

The Race Officer (RO) has overall responsibility for safety management (note: but not for the safety of the event or participants – see Responsibilities of the Sailor) during the event. This includes but not limited to:

- The RO will make reasonable endeavours that they are satisfied that the Support boat cover and Support boat crew are suitable for the number of participants, race course and expected conditions. If not, they should consider abandoning racing for the day.
- The RO will consider the forecasted weather and expected sea conditions when making the decision to race and setting the race course.

The RO normally has reasonable visibility of the race course and participating crews. As such, they can be in a good position to judge if the conditions and / or number of boats capsized or in distress are likely to overwhelm the Support boats. If, in their judgement, an emergency situation is developing they must inform the Emergency Services either by mobile phone or Race Hut VHF radio. If possible they should discuss the situation with the Support Boat crews in advance although this may not be possible.

In any situation that, in the opinion of the Race Officer, risks the safety of sailors, safety boat crew or other water users the RO should use their judgement to shorten or abandon the race and consider contacting the Emergency Services.

Responsibilities of the Support Boat crew

The Support Boat crew have responsibility for providing support afloat to all participants racing (and sailing to and from the race area) with mindfulness to their own safety. This includes but not limited to:

- Ensuring that the Support boat is suitably crewed, fuelled and equipped for the day's support boat role.



LEIGH-ON-SEA SAILING CLUB
SAILING DINGHY RACING RISK ASSESSMENT

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- Communicating with the RO when they are afloat and ready to perform Safety Boat duties.
- Communicating with other Support boat crews to agree which sectors of the race course each will cover.
- Ensuring the RO and other Support Boat crews are aware of any support required and being provided to participants.
- Contacting the Emergency Services directly either via Mobile phone or VHF if, in their judgement, a rapid response is required – such as a medical emergency.
- Coordinating with the RO if a situation is developing which, in their judgement, may be overwhelming.

Final

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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No	Hazard	Person at risk / Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Risk rating	Controls in place	Likelihood	Severity	Risk rating	Further action required	Date
1	Major incident NOT involving competitors racing	Sailors Support boat crew Other water users Emergency services and potentially support boat crew fully occupied and unable to support dinghy racing.	1	3	3	Racing will be abandoned and all craft to return to shore.	1	3	3	"Abandoned Racing" flag on each support boat to enable faster comms with sailors.	
2	Current weather conditions unsuitable for less experienced sailors (before going afloat.)	Sailors. Sailors (or their Parent / guardian if under 18) over-estimates their ability to deal with current conditions.	3	3	9	Sailors (or their Parent / guardian if under 18) will obtain local forecast and consider their ability to race in such conditions before making the decision to race. See other Hazards including Capsize, Chill factor.	2	3	6	Consider warnings on WhatsApp groups /website re offshore wind directions and don't be embarrassed to ask. Remind sailors that decision to race is solely theirs (or their parents in the case of under 18's).	

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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No	Hazard	Person at risk / Risk	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Controls in place	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Further action required	Date
3	Capsize	<p>Sailors</p> <p>Person in water at risk of drowning (including missing from boat)</p> <p>Exhaustion in attempting to right boat.</p> <p>Person trapped within boat.</p> <p>Person too exhausted to right boat or climb back on board</p>	<p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>	<p>10</p> <p>12</p> <p>8</p> <p>12</p>	<p>Buoyancy aids / life jackets to be worn at all times by cadets.</p> <p>Adults will obey RRS Fundamental Rule 1.2</p> <p>Sailors to stay with boat if possible.</p> <p>Sailors should be competent to race in expected conditions.</p> <p>Sailors should be competent in righting a capsized boat.</p> <p>Support boat to remain until sailors on board & in control.</p> <p>Support boat will carry a sharp knife to assist in cutting away ropes that might have caused entanglement.</p> <p>Where reasonably practical - tactical positioning of support boat on race course.</p> <p>The support boat crew will try to help the person onto the Support boat. If this is not possible, they will call other support boats for help and if necessary call the Emergency Services.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p>	<p>5</p> <p>8</p> <p>4</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Do all Safety Boat crew understand need for tactical positioning?</p> <p>Improved communication between Race Officer and support boat crews established - procedure updated and reissued ✓</p> <p>Formal "support boats being overwhelmed" process agreed</p> <p>Confirm grab bag contents – sharp knives, etc. ✓</p> <p>Need to amend rules to require cadets to wear buoyancy aids at all times</p>	<p>May 25</p> <p>May 25</p>

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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No	Hazard	Person at risk / Risk	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Controls in place	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Further action required	Date
										Do support boat crews need instruction in recovering mob?	
4	Competitor, boat or race team personnel missing	Sailors Support boat crew Prolonged missing situation could lead to risk of hypothermia or drowning.	2	4	8	Race Officer to make reasonable efforts to record details of dinghies racing. Support boats to inform Race Officer of dinghies retiring. Where reasonably practicable competitors to inform support boat/s if retiring. Identify boat missing from trolley left on slipway. Support Boat/s to search for missing persons and other race team boats. Emergency services to be informed if any doubt as to whereabouts of missing craft.	1	4	4	Consider developing an "Emergency procedure" Trolleys to have owner's name / sail nos? Whistles to attract attention made available to all sailors. ✓	May 25

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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No	Hazard	Person at risk / Risk	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Controls in place	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Further action required	Date
						Race Officer to inform support boat/s when all dinghies have finished the race.					
5	Chill factor due to water or air temperature, strength of wind.	Sailors Hypothermia	3	3	9	Sailors to wear suitable clothing for the expected conditions (including impact of a sea breeze in summer conditions). Support boat to carry thermal blankets.	2	3	6	Safety boat gear check to be completed – thermal blankets ✓ Remind sailors about importance of wearing correct clothing for conditions for both sunny and cold.	May 25
6	Injury as a result of collision or other accident between dinghy racers	Sailors Cuts, blows to head, breaks, bruising etc	2	3	6	Support boat to carry first aid kit.	2	2	4	First aid course offered to support boat crew. First Aid kit on board ✓	May 25
7	Injury as a result of collision or other accident with other water users on craft (eg dinghies, jet ski's, fishing boats, yachts, paddleboarders, wind / kite surfers, rowers).	Sailors Other craft users Support boat crew Cuts, blows to head, breaks, bruising etc	2	3	6	International regulations for prevention of collisions at sea. Where reasonably practical - tactical positioning of support boat to warn of possible collision risk. In emergency call Emergency Services	2	2	4	Do all Safety Boat crew understand need for tactical positioning?	

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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8	Injury as a result of collision or other accident with other water users in water (eg swimmers)	<p>Swimmers.</p> <p>Drowning due to severe head injury.</p> <p>Cuts, blows to head, breaks, bruising etc</p>	3	5	15	<p>Where reasonably practical - tactical positioning of support boat to warn of possible collision risk.</p> <p>Informally – sailors hail presence of swimmers to each other.</p> <p>First aid kit onboard support boats</p>	2	5	10	<p>RYA contacted re legal position contact with swimmers and application of racing rules between sailors to avoid swimmers.</p> <p>Sailors asked to informally communicate with each other to warn of swimmers</p> <p>Do all Safety Boat crew understand need for tactical positioning?</p> <p>First aid training for support boat crews refreshed</p> <p>Swimmers appear to have little knowledge of movements of other</p>	April 25 review

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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No	Hazard	Person at risk / Risk	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Controls in place	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Further action required	Date
										water users (or disregard of rights of way). How to educate?	
9	Gear failure including damage to boat	Sailors Support boat crew Boat unable to sail or steer to safety on their own.	3	2	6	Tow lines on Support boats. Sailors to transfer to Support boat. Support boat crew to inform Race Officer who can liaise with Emergency services / other vessels nearby. Race Officer will consider shortening or abandoning the race.	3	2	6	Tape on board with instructions to tie to abandoned craft to avoid concern of missing crew. Precise guidelines for Safety boat crews to contact Race Officer.	
10	Medical conditions (non injury)	Sailors. Support boat crew.				Support boat crew to call Emergency Services if condition appears critical. Support boat crew to inform Race Officer.				Support boat crew advised to also look out for other Support boats.	

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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No	Hazard	Person at risk / Risk	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Controls in place	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Further action required	Date
		Heart episodes, dehydration, asthma attack.	2	4	8	Race Officer will consider shortening or abandoning race.	2	3	6	First aid course offered to support boat crew.	
11	Deterioration of weather conditions eg increase / decrease wind, fog, sea state.	Sailors. Safety boat crew. Support Boat/s may not be able to support all dinghies in difficulty. Many capsizes. Possibility of lost competitors. Dinghies unable to find way back.	3 2	3 4	9 8	Race Officer will obtain local forecast before making the decision to race and select course appropriate to forecast Race Officer will consider shortening or abandoning the race. Support Boat/s with local knowledge and compass to escort fleet home. In emergency situation the Race Officer will contact the Emergency Services. No wind - Support boat to tow Sailors home. Fog - Support boat to escort fleet home.	2 2	3 4	6 8	Do all Safety Boat crew understand need for tactical positioning? Improved communication between Race Officer and support boat crews established - procedure updated and reissued ✓ Formal "support boats being overwhelmed" process agreed Trolleys to have owner's name / sail nos?	May 25

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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No	Hazard	Person at risk / Risk	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Controls in place	Likeli hood	Seve rity	Risk rating	Further action required	Date
						Helm / crew to obtain detailed weather forecast prior to sailing. (e.g., TV, Radio, Internet etc)					
12	Person in water cannot climb aboard Safety Boat (either on their own or with Safety boat crew assistance)	Sailors. Safety boat crew. Hypothermia	3	3	9	Safety boat crew to contact other safety boats supporting race. Safety boat crew to inform Race Officer. Safety Boat crew / Race Officer to contact Emergency Services.	2	3	6	This is an issue if only one safety boat person present on safety boat.	
13	Moving/ Rigging Boats	Sailors Members of the public Impact with boats and rig	2	2	4	Helm and crew to rig and move boats away from members of the public. Helm and crew to be aware of changeable wind direction	1	2	3		
14	Slipway	Sailors Safety boat crew Slips, Trips, Falls Falls from height.	2	2	4	Persons to wear suitable footwear. Care shall be taken on slipway due to wet slippery surface.	2	2	4		

	Leigh on Sea Sailing Club Dinghy Sailing Risk Assessment	LSC/RA/Draft Issue: Issued Revision draft 17/06/25
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		(Helm and crews)				Where reasonably practicable, persons to stay away from the edge. (when not boarding or alighting)					
15	Communications lost due to distance, interference, or equipment failure	Sailors Loss of control of event and safety on the water.	2	2	4	Race Officer shall have a mobile phone available. Second handheld VHF radios to be carried by Support boat (available within the race office).	1	2	2	Use of VHF's procedure updated and reissued. Ro and support boat both have primary and backup VHF's ✓	May 25
16	Support Boat breakdown	Sailors Support boat crew Support Boat needs assistance and draws resources. Unable to return or function.	2	1	2	Race Officer informed and race shortened or abandoned as necessary. Other support boat crews to provide assistance In extremis emergency services to be contacted.	2	1	2		