

Safety Boat Driver Guide



INTRODUCTION

- The aim is to provide a brief guide to operating as a safety boat driver for the Lyme Regis Gig Club (LRGC).
- The first part of the document deals with the responsibilities of the driver and boat usage.
- The second part deals with operational procedures to be carried out by safety boat drivers.

PART 1: SAFETY BOAT DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES AND BOAT USAGE

- Safety boat drivers work under the direction of the person in charge of the specific event.
- They should be qualified to RYA Powerboat Level 2, or under direct instruction, registered as an approved driver by the Club and a Club member for insurance purposes.
- A crew should always accompany the driver whenever a RIB goes to sea.
- Drivers should be familiar with the contents of the LRGC Safety Boat Guide, which should be read annually at least.
- All drivers must check that the boat is fully prepared and ready for service before leaving the mooring (refer to "LRGC RIB going to sea and mooring guide")
- They should then return it in this condition on completion of the duty and report any issues regarding the safety of the boat and equipment to the Boson.
- They should be aware that the order of priority during a rescue are:
 - Their own and RIB crew's personal safety
 - The safety of other boat crews
 - The rescue or prevention of damage to other vessels or equipment.
- The control of a specific rescue is in the hands of the RIB Driver. If casualties fail to comply with instructions, the RIB Driver may leave the rescue after a clear warning.
- If RIB Drivers consider that conditions are beyond what they feel able to deal with safely, they must inform the person in charge.
- During an event, the RIB Driver should stay on station until stood down by the person in charge.
- When conditions are at all challenging, a handheld radio should be carried by at least one of the crew in case the safety boat rolls over resulting in the RIB radio being out of reach.
- Radio communication must be established with any Gigs going afloat/or Regatta Race Control before leaving the harbour using channel 37/72 (or as directed; Channel 16 should only be used in case of an emergency.
- Be aware of local hazards such as the rocks to seaward of the Cobb, the harbour bar, other boat users entering and leaving the harbour, fishermen using the quay by the Harbourmasters office at high water, or children on the beach.
- The boat should never be left unattended by the steps on the North Wall. This is a particularly dangerous area during a falling tide and damage has been caused to boats left in this area.
- Since large marks have the potential to be blown out of RIBs at high speed, they should be tied down before leaving the harbour.
- Before engaging reverse gear, ensure that there is plenty of time for the revs to drop.
- Ensure that the engine is lifted when entering shallow water.
- Please note that any health and safety incidents should be reported to the Club.

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- Registered drivers should consider allowing their crew to do some driving, if appropriate. This is one of the few feasible methods of providing practice for relatively inexperienced drivers.
- The driver should keep the person in charge of the event informed of what he/she is doing.
- Avoid fishing lines across the harbour entrance.

PART 2: RESCUE TECHNIQUES

- Safety boat drivers will encounter a range of problems which will require diverse solutions depending upon the specific situation and the prevailing conditions.
- Safety boat drivers must at all times maintain clear communication with their crew, who should act as an observer and respond to the drivers' instructions.
- Safety boat drivers should also continually assess the potential risks of all situations taking account of weather, sea state, lea shore and other hazards. Larger waves occur infrequently, but the margin of safety must take account of these.
- Particular care must be taken when waves are breaking in shallow water and avoiding action should be taken if at all possible. Boats are most vulnerable to swamping when aft or beam on to breaking waves.
- Using a RIB on a lea shores should be undertaken with great care.
- The safety boat should be equipped with throwing lines which may assist the recovery of individuals in the water and possibly in boats.
- In any situation, the driver's safety priorities are listed in the following order of importance:
 - 1 The safety of the driver and crew
 - 2 The safety of anyone else (e.g. person being rescued)
 - 3 The prevention of damage to boats and equipment
- In a rescue situation, people involved must follow the safety boat driver's instructions if they are to retain the support of the safety boat.
- In the event that a safety boat driver assesses a rescue situation as potentially hazardous to themselves and crew, they must instruct the people to leave their craft and enter the safety boat.
- Should they fail to comply, the safety boat should stand-off at a safe distance.

Key points of approaching, standing off, and coming alongside another boat

- Be aware of objects and people in the water.
- Position strategically up wind, aft and close enough for clear communication. There should be no chance of drifting or being swept by waves into contact with a boat or casualty. The position should be such that it is reasonably easy to manoeuvre, without delay in forward gear alone, alongside the boat should this be required.
- Watch personnel and be prepared to kill the engine should anyone drop into the water close to the propeller and aft of the consul.
- Communicate with all regarding engine state (e.g. engine in neutral, going forward, reversing).
- Manoeuvre precisely and efficiently taking account of the sea state, wind and other conditions prevailing.
- Approach windward side.
- Ensure that there are no ropes or other objects which can get wrapped around the prop.

Reference : LRGCS safety document – Safety Boat Driver Guide - issue 2 (January 2018)

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Retrieving people from the water

- Approach from downwind.
- Communicate with casualty.
- Crew at bow calls contact.
- Stop at casualty without having to use reverse.
- Engine into neutral as soon as possible
- Cut engine if safe to do so.
- To assist a casualty into the RIB, the helm and crew should work together.
- **Method 1:** With the person facing you, take hold of a hand and top of the arm each, and pull him/her up into the boat.
- This may be done on a count of three with a dunk first, then pull. The casualty could face away from the boat, but care needs to be taken to avoid spinal problems.



Forward Facing Method.

- **Method 2:** with the casualty facing the RIB with an arm over the tube, instruct them to raise their knee.



Backward Facing Method.

- Reach down and lift the knee onto the tube.
- Then crew and helm help person to slide/roll into the boat.
- A sponson tube can be deflated in extreme conditions.

- **Method 3:** The person can enter from the transom by using the anti-cavitation plate as a step.

- The hydraulic lift can also be used to raise them higher.
- Be careful in big seas as there is a risk of injury and possibly bending the hydraulic steering gear.

- **Method 4:** Use a rope secured at both ends and

dangling in the water as a foot hold for the person to step up and helped by the crew and helm to get into the boat.

- Ideally a hand hold is also needed and, if nothing else is suitable, a short length of line secured to the inside of the boat may be required.
- It is best to attempt this towards the back end of the boat where the tubes are lower.

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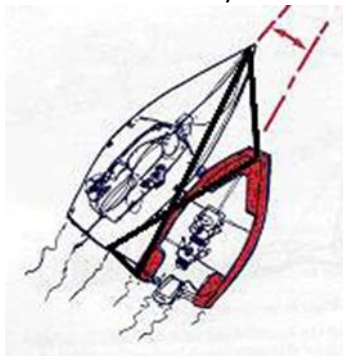


- **Method 5:** a webbing/strop type ladder, clipped onto the seat frame with a carabine hook. There is a thick piece of webbing attached which forms a foot hold and the upper section forms a hand hold.



Retrieving damaged boats

- If a vessel cannot be driven/sailed, it should either be anchored temporarily until it can be later retrieved or alternatively towed back into the harbour.
- If anchored, a spare anchor and warp would need to be carried in the safety boat.
- The boat should also be marked to signify that the boat has been attended to and nobody is trapped or missing.
- If a boat is to be towed, line tows are the quickest and easiest method.
- The line should be attached securely near to the front of the towed vessel (other than a Gig).
- If it is a gig, then the tow-line should be attached to a bridle looped (not tied) around each outer-edge of the No 1 thwart and laced behind the soft thole pin extending outwards along each gunnel to the bow. The bridle attachment to the tow line should not be more than 1 m ahead of the bow. A small float could be attached at the tow line connection point to prevent the bridle sinking (refer to "Towing a Gig" procedure).
- The line should be at least 2 wavelengths long enough to ensure space for the two vessels not to collide.
- The line can be attached at a single point towards the back of the RIB (e.g. on an eye-bolt or at the bottom of the rear metal hoop).
- Ideally it should be attached at the centre of a bridle connected to two points across the back of the RIB.
- A side tow may be used for smaller vessels.



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- This requires the rear of the towed vessel to be forward of the RIBs engine.
- It also requires both vessels to be tied securely together with front and rear ropes and crossing springs, which takes some time to prepare.

Acknowledgements

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