

13 Operating the Powerboats

(see also Sections 15 for "Patrol Boat Procedures", and "Performing Rescues")

13.1 Before the powerboats leave the boatshed

Check that the craft has a waterproof canister / bag, containing a knife, wire cutter, spare killcord, and 1st Aid kit. The **powerboat 1st aid kit** comprises at least some large triangular bandages, 2 large and 2 medium sized wound dressings, some clingfilm, a pair of scissors, and some surgical tape.

13.2 Radios

Before moving the craft from the boatshed, if a fixed radio is not fitted, take the radios from the radio cupboard, switch on, (every patrol boat must carry a radio, all radios are pre-programmed to one channel) and test them; plus one for the officer in charge ashore.

13.3 Launching

Before launching ensure you have loaded the fuel tank onto the boat connected the fuel line and secured the tank to the boat. You are now ready to launch.

There are two ropes on the front of the craft; one holds the boat to the trolley, the other is for trolley recovery once in the water. Before moving down the slipway, ensure both ropes can be easily freed, ready to float the craft off the trolley.

Launching the patrol boats can be carried out in two ways:

- 1) If there are sufficient helpers, you can manually lower the boats in using the ropes attached to the trolley and boats described above.
- 2) Use the power winch/capstan to lower the boats into the water in a controlled manner, the power winch will run backwards without the use of the operating treadle just use the winch as a pulley, this will be a necessary means of launching any boat on the road trailer.

Once the patrol boats are launched, secure the craft to the pontoon; On The Dory and two ribs you can power the engines down to their operating position, On the Rigiflex this is a manual task, once the engine is lowered, engage the locking mechanism. The locking mechanism is a lever situated in the centre front of the engine.

13.4 Start the Engines

Prime the fuel by squeezing the bulb on the fuel line; once the fuel in the line is pressurised, you should feel firm resistance. The combined gear / throttle lever next to the steering wheel should be adjusted to neutral. On the Honda outboard, pull

out a small amount of choke before pulling the pullcord; once the engine has started push in the choke. The Honda outboards have automatic chokes, and a small lever over the control box to control the revs when in neutral; turn the ignition key to start, and return the small lever to its off position when the engine has warmed up. Check the cooling water is circulating by looking for a jet of water emanating from the rear of the engine; if there is no jet of water STOP the engine and seek advice. Unless there is an emergency, do not use the craft until they have been given a few minutes to warm up. Once the boat is ready to use ensure the killcord operates by disconnecting it, this must stop the engine before using the boat, if it does not seek advice, if it does then reconnect the kill cord the boat is ready for use.

13.5 Using the gear / throttle lever

When in neutral, the gear / throttle lever is vertical. gear selection must be a firm movement forward, or backward, but not too far at this stage otherwise you will accelerate too quickly.

13.6 Motoring away from the pontoon

There should be a helm and a crew on board; the helm must attach the killcord red line, preferably to his leg; the crew should be ready to cast off from the pontoon when instructed, and bring the mooring line back on board and secured; the crew should now be seated and holding on. The boat should be manoeuvred away from the pontoon in a controlled manner. If the boat stops suddenly, check you have not inadvertently pulled out the kill cord.

If you have not driven the patrol boats before, practice detaching the kill cord and re-starting the engine before leaving the pontoon; this can be tricky if you are unfamiliar with the procedure.

13.7 Please note

These boats are not toys, but expensive essential pieces of equipment. If they suffer a breakdown, you and members could be at risk. Please report any faults to the Bosun or any Committee member straight away.

13.8 At the close of play

Lift the engine to the up position prior to placing it on the trolley.

If the winch/capstan is to be used please follow the Capstan Procedures, otherwise ensure there are sufficient personnel to retrieve the craft up the slipway.

Once at the top of the slipway, take out any course marker buoys, remove the bungs, hose out any mud, and drain the craft of water.

Move the craft into the boatshed, tidy any securing and towing lines, put the radio back in the radio cupboard, disconnect the petrol line from the engine, and place the fuel tank in the petrol store.

13.9 Fault reporting

Rescue crews should record and date any problems on the whiteboard in the boatshed and advise the Bosun/Committee member at the earliest opportunity.

13.10 Number of Powerboats required

Sailing may not begin until the required number of Powerboats are on the water, as follows:

At least one patrol boat must be moored alongside the pontoon with its engine warmed up, and crewed by two suitably dressed persons. Another patrol boat must be located at the top of the slipway ready to be launched; the second boat is required for rescue / breakdown cover.

A greater number of fully manned Powerboats may be required, to be determined by the Rescue craft advised by a committee member present; dictating this will be the wind strength, size of the course, water temperature, and the numbers and experience of those sailing; particular care is required for novice and junior sailors.

The club has produced a notice (see next page). This is displayed on the notice board and in the Race Hut

13.11 Personnel

Normally each patrol boat should have a crew of two, a helm and an assistant.

Minors may drive, but not be in charge; they must be accompanied by a competent adult and have the approval of a committee member.

All patrol boat personnel must wear a buoyancy aid and be dressed suitably for the conditions, such that they can enter the water safely to perform

13.12 Powerboats used for Training Sessions

During training sessions, cover must not be less than that required for normal club activities but is at a level decided by the most Senior Instructor in charge at the time, who is then responsible for ensuring its provision.

Rescue: in winter months, this means full wetsuits or drysuits.

13.13 Communication

Patrol boats, and shore instructor, **must carry a radio** which **must** be tested for operation prior to launching.

Users should make regular checks that the channel selector has not been accidentally moved. The radios are kept in the radio cupboard adjacent to the roller shutter door in the Boatshed; powerboat crews, the race officer, and SI's should put them back on charge in the radio cupboard when not in use; they will not charge unless they are switched off first

13.14 Procedures

Procedures are designed to be consistent with RYA guidance as given in the Powerboat level 2 and Safety-boat courses. The following points are important:



To the Officer of the Day, Safety Boat Crews, and Sailors

Safety cover for formal & casual sailing / windsurfing

1. Radios to be used at all times.
2. Safety boat(s) must be on station* at all times.
3. Club flag to be flown only when safety cover is on station*.
4. Two safety boats to be on station at all times before sailing can start, regardless of number of dinghies/windsurfers sailing, or wind strength.
5. Sailing with less than 15 boats and wind less than force 4 requires one of the safety boats to be crewed with 2 suitably dressed persons.
6. If conditions are marginal, or there are more than 15 boats on the water the OOD, who may be assisted by committee members, should seriously consider having two manned safety boats on station with 4 suitably dressed** persons.
7. Sailing in force 4 or above requires **at least** two safety boats crewed by 4 suitably dressed persons.

*On station = at least one safety boat on the water and one at the top of the slipway ready to launch. Depending on conditions more safety boats will need to be on the water.

**Suitably dressed persons = dressed for the conditions and wearing clothing that will allow them to enter the water to assist with a rescue.