

FPSC Operation of Safety Boats & Race Hut during COVID-19 Restrictions

Version 7 (2nd September 2020)

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1) Introduction :

This document sets out how FPSC will operate its powerboats (safety boats) and Race Hut (see Appendix 4) under the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be updated in line with the restrictions as these are adjusted by relevant authorities.

COVID-19 is a long term problem that the Club will have to live with so existing (familiar) operating procedures are followed as far as possible with suitable adaptations.

It is important that FPSC does not feel constrained in operating its powerboats and so increase the risk of a serious incident during organised sailing activities.

The procedures assume that a Duty Officer with access to the Clubhouse will be on site (the DO might double up as the Authorised Powerboat Helm or the Race Officer).

It is a prerequisite for all activities at FPSC that anyone who is unwell or suspects that they may be infected with COVID-19 **DOES NOT** attend the Club until they have been free from any symptoms for a period of two weeks.

A critical defence against COVID-19 is for members to wash / sanitise their hands on arrival at the Club and before touching anything and at regular intervals thereafter.

Under Government guidelines there is no need for the Club to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the normal operation of powerboats. These operating procedures also include steps to mitigate risks through. If, however, a powerboat needs to be deep cleaned then some PPE will be necessary.

2) Scope :

Operation of powerboats for any organised Club activities NOT including RYA Training or Sailability. Initially the use of powerboats will be restricted to acting as safety boats for racing.

3) Aim :

The aim is to reduce the chance of spreading viral infection through the use of powerboats including between :

- Helm and crew manning a powerboat;
- Successive crews;
- Powerboat crews and any sailors needing assistance;
- Crew and anyone maintaining the powerboats (including fuelling).

4) Risk factors :

Proximity	Key mitigation is social distancing unless people are from a household group. This is the most significant factor to contend with when operating powerboats.
Contamination of equipment	Key mitigations prevention; leaving 72 hours between use; cleaning by operator after use to wipe down major areas of contact.
Contact time between people	Key mitigation is keeping contact time as brief as possible.
Enclosed spaces	Key mitigations are avoiding use if possible; limiting the number of people in them at the same time; regular cleaning of the foyer, toilet facilities and Race Hut. FPSC is largely operating out of doors which greatly reduces risk.

5) Current Guidance :

Cleaning hard surfaces : Wipe down using a combined detergent and disinfectant diluted in water. Splashing to be avoided as far as possible. Person cleaning to wear gloves and overalls as a minimum, which are bagged with any cleaning clothes used, stored for 72 hours, and then disposed of as normal rubbish.

(Ref: CODIV-19: Cleaning in a non-healthcare setting by Public Health England 15 May 2020)

Personal hygiene : wash hands for 20 seconds or use sanitiser regularly; avoid touching your face; use gloves and then dispose of them safely to avoid spreading or picking up contamination.

Social distancing : maintain a minimum distance of 2 metres from anyone not from the same household.

Exposure time : the Government's contact tracing system (as at 28th May) is based on tracing anyone who has been within 2m of someone with a positive test result for COVID-19 for longer than 15 minutes. It can be inferred from this that transmission is unlikely from brief proximity.

Viability of COVID-19 : there is no definitive answer but the Government has stated that it is "unlikely" to be viable after 72 hours outside of a human even in an enclosed / protected environment. An exposed environment (outside) subject to UV and weathering is less favourable.

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6) Operating Protocols :

6.1 Fuelling

FPSC's normal procedures for storing, filling tanks and fitting them to the powerboats are to be followed but hands are to be washed or sanitised prior to touching any keys, door handles or equipment.

Currently Alastair McEwan is responsible for ensuring the Jerry cans in the fuel store are replenished regularly.

6.2 VHF Sets - Handheld

VHF sets are required for safety related communication and race organisation. Arguably they present the highest risk at FPSC when it comes to contamination and transmission because the microphone has to be held close to the mouth. The use of personal mobile 'phones would avoid this but are not an adequate substitute because of the poor mobile 'phone signal at Frensham.

The Club has twelve handheld VHF sets for general use (more available from Sailability and RYA Training if required) – adequate for two per day to be used by rotation. The handheld VHF sets will be labelled with tags stating which day they are available for use on.

The Club has provided (in the Flag Room) :

- Plastic bags with seal (big enough for handheld VHF);
- Tags for the VHF sets showing which day they are allocated to;
- Alcohol wipes;
- Hand sanitiser;
- Rubbish bin and liner.

The procedure for the management and operation of handheld VHF sets is included within Appendix 1. Whilst cleaning alone should be adequate to stop COVID-19 transmission, bagging and rotating use adds a further layers of protection.

6.3 VHF sets - Safety 1, Lionheart II and the Race Hut

Safety 1, Lionheart II and the Race Hut use fixed VHF sets which have to be managed differently from the handheld sets, although again the main risk is through contamination of the microphone during operation leading to transmission to another user.

The Club has provided (in Humber's shed and the Race Hut) :

- Plastic bags with seal (big enough for VHF microphone);
- Alcohol wipes;
- Hand sanitiser;
- Rubbish bin and liner.

The procedure for the management and operation of fixed VHF sets is included within Appendix 1.

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6.4 Rotation and Cleaning of Powerboats

If powerboats can be left for more than 72 hours between use then it eliminates the need for cleaning. However, given the level of activity on the Pond rotating the use of powerboats to achieve this is no longer feasible on a routine basis. Therefore (as of September 2020) powerboats **MUST** be cleaned after use as detailed in Appendix 3.

If a powerboat is being used by successive crews then it must be cleaned by the retiring crew before being handed over. Similarly handheld VHF radios, keys and killcords should be handed back to the Duty Officer and sanitised before being re-issued to the new crew.

6.5 Manning Powerboats for Safety Cover

The Safety Committee recommends maintaining the standard FPSC operating practice of crewing safety boats with two people. One must be an adult but the other may be a young person aged 14 or over as long as they are able to assist someone in the water.

Under guidelines issued on 30th July powerboats can be crewed by people from different households as long as mitigations are in place - social distancing between 1m and 2m with face coverings, and the avoidance of shouting. If crews come within 1 metre of each other it should ideally be for less than 15 minutes over the time together in the safety boat.

In order to increase the pool of Authorised Powerboat Helms available whilst this restriction is in force authorised helms aged 16 and 17 years are to be permitted to helm powerboats during racing (varying normal Club practice).

6.6 Access to and use of keys / powerboats

The key and kill cord for the powerboat allocated to safety duty will be issued by the Duty Officer. Powerboat crew should not enter the Clubhouse to collect these.

After use, the key and kill cord powerboat must be returned to the Duty Officer, who will sanitise them with detergent disinfectant and rinse in warm water and before returning them to the key press.

6.7 Launching & Recovery

Powerboats will be launched and recovered in the normal manner by their crew.

Ideally the powerboat crew will launch the powerboat but additional assistance to launch and recover powerboats can be sought from anyone sailing provided that they maintain 2m distance from the powerboat crew and that they sanitise their hands immediately before and after assisting. The ropes used to pull powerboats up the slipways are sufficiently long to allow social distancing when recovering the boats.

The MultiMover will not normally be available for recovering powerboats as this complicates access and cleaning arrangements. However, there is nothing to stop the MultiMover being used if the 2.4s are operating it (provided the 2.4 sailors continue to operate it, not the safety boat crew).

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6.9 Assisting Dinghies and their Crew

It is important to note that :

- i) The need for powerboat crew to be within 2m of anyone requiring assistance is minimal.
- ii) In the rare instances where close proximity or contact becomes essential then it is usually brief (and significantly less than the 15 minute standard applied by the Government for contact tracing). The Club requires safety crews to wear face coverings if any contact is likely to occur. Masks are provided in the first aid kit. Crews should check these before launching (or can bring their own face coverings).
- iii) Life threatening incidents requiring prolonged contact are extremely rare at Frensham (and as far as anyone can remember have only occurred ashore).
- iv) If assistance is needed in a life threatening situation then infection is a lower risk.

The main interventions required at Frensham Pond are :

- **Lifting mast which is stuck in the bottom.**
*No need for safety boat crew to be near the dinghy crew.
The safety boat crew lift using the top of the mast and then the forestay; so as long as the dinghy crew are in the vicinity of the dinghy cockpit they are going to be more than 2m away.
The risk of viral contamination from contact with the dinghy/equipment/sails should be minimal as the crew only have brief contact with parts of these as they rig; and the mast, rigging and sails will also have been immersed in pond water for some minutes before help is provided.*
- **Towing back to shore.**
*Safety boat crew to throw across towing line from more than 2m and tow behind, not alongside.
Risk from contamination of towing line is minimal.*
- **Repatriating crew separated from their boat.**
Safety boat crew can bring a sailor on board the powerboat. 1 metre + separation should be maintained where possible. The time spent by the sailor on the powerboat should be kept to an absolute minimum. If the sailor is on the powerboat for a prolonged time a mask should be worn. There are masks in every safety boat first aid kit.
- **Assisting helm/crew to board their dinghy after a capsize.**
Whilst there are ways to do this without physical contact there are circumstances where it may not be possible to maintain the 2m distance requirement. However, there is a low risk of transmission from a brief encounter (see 5 – Current Guidance).

The latter situation needs to be avoided as far as possible and the following mitigations are to be applied :

- The Race Officer / Duty Officer will abandon racing / organised activities if the number of boats sailing and weather conditions are such that they would normally think of mobilising a second safety boat.

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- All sailors must understand that the safety boat is not available to help them re-board their dinghy except in extreme circumstances.
- All sailors must be fit enough and strong enough to be able to re-board their boat without assistance.
- Anyone who capsizes repeatedly should return to shore before they are likely to run low on energy and find it hard to re-board their boat. The Race Officer and safety boat helm have the authority to instruct them to do this if necessary.
- Junior (U14) followed by elderly sailors most commonly require help to re-board their dinghies. These groups should therefore exercise particular caution about sailing and are advised to use mast floats. If they have had to be helped in the past then they should not sail if there is any risk that they may capsize.
- Where the dinghy is capsized then the crew should be towed to it and told to position themselves so that they can be scooped back in as the mast is raised by the safety boat crew.
- If that does not work then, if practicable, the safety boat can be used to tow the sailor(s) and their boat to a jetty or into shallow water so that they do not need further assistance (but noting that this may occupy the safety boat for some time which could increase the risk to other sailors).
- If assisting someone back into their dinghy is unavoidable then it is preferable to lift the straps on their buoyancy aid from behind with them facing their dinghy.

6.10 Swimmers

In the current circumstances there is a much higher incidence of swimmers venturing out of the buoyed swimming areas into the main body of the Pond. Powerboat crew should :

- i) Keep a sharp look out for swimmers and to ask them to return to the bathing area or keep within the shallow areas close to the banks (easy standing depth) where dinghies are unlikely to venture.
- ii) Be very alert to the dangers of running over swimmers whilst operating a powerboat, especially if it becomes necessary to drive at any speed.

6.11 Waste Disposal

Rubbish bins and liners are to be provided in the Flag Room, Race Hut and Humber's shed.

The bin liners will be removed and sealed weekly. They will be stored for a further three days before being disposed of in the normal rubbish collection bins outside the gate.

APPENDIX 1 : Procedures Ashore – Duty Officer, Powerboat Crew and Race Officer

PREPARING THE POWERBOAT :

- 1) Hands are to be washed / sanitised prior to touching any keys, door handles, equipment or anything else. This applies to the Duty Officer, Race Officer and both powerboat crew.
- 2) Follow normal FPSC procedures except where varied here.
- 3) VHF sets pose the most significant risk of transmission of COVID-19 because they have to be held close to the mouth in use. Please take particular care to follow the procedures below.
- 4) To keep the number of people accessing the Clubhouse to a minimum VHF sets and powerboat keys / kill cord will be issued by the Duty Officer. Powerboat crew should not enter the Clubhouse.
- 5) The Duty Officer will unlock Humber's shed and disarm the alarm as usual.
- 6) Handheld VHF sets are tagged according to the day they should be used on. The Duty Officer will issue a "fresh" set for each duty.
- 7) The Duty Officer will seal the VHF set allocated to the duty in a new plastic bag provided for the purpose and hand it to the Authorised Powerboat Helm ("PB Helm") along with the keys to the allocated powerboat.
- 8) The VHF set will be kept in its bag and operated through it at all times. Only the PB Helm should operate the VHF set.

LAUNCHING & RECOVERY :

- 1) Powerboats will be launched and recovered in the normal manner by their crew.
- 2) Anyone sailing can help to launch and recover a powerboat provided that they maintain 2m distance from the safety boat crew and that they sanitise their hands before and after. The tow ropes are sufficiently long to allow social distancing.
- 3) The MultiMover will not normally be available for recovering powerboats. However, if it is being used to launch or recover 2.4ms then it may be used provided the 2.4 sailors operate it (not the powerboat crew).

AT THE END OF A DUTY :

- 1) Because of the likelihood of powerboats being used without a 72 hour gap crews are now requested to follow the cleaning procedure detailed in Appendix 3 after every use.
- 2) Return the VHF set and powerboat keys/kill cord to the Duty Officer.
- 3) The PB Helm will open the bag the VHF set is in so that the DO can remove it without touching the outside of the bag (this is best be achieved by the set being allowed to gently slip out of the bag onto the ground/ a boat cover / a bench).
- 4) The bag must be disposed of by the PB Helm in the rubbish bin in Humber's shed.
- 5) The Duty Officer will wipe the VHF set thoroughly with an alcohol wipe before putting it on charge in the radio cupboard, ready for subsequent use.
- 6) The Duty Officer will clean the powerboat keys / kill cord by washing thoroughly with disinfectant detergent and rinsing in warm water.

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VARIATION FOR FIXED VHF SETS – SAFETY 1 & LIONHEART II

When Safety 1 and Lionheart II are being used the above procedure will be modified to include :

- 1) The PB Helm must wash/sanitised their hands immediately before first touching the VHF set.
- 2) Before use the VHF microphone is to be sealed in a plastic bag provided for the purpose (new bags stowed in console). It will be kept in this bag and operated through it at all times.
- 3) At the end of a duty the PB Helm shall wash/sanitise their hands again and remove the microphone from the bag in such a way as to minimise the risk of contaminating it.
- 4) The bag must be placed directly into the rubbish bin in Humber's shed.
- 5) The VHF microphone and controls on the fixed set will then be wiped thoroughly with an alcohol wipe, which will also be binned.

APPENDIX 2 : Guidance for Powerboat Helm and Crew Afloat

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO A DINGHY AND ITS CREW

- 1) Powerboat crew must maintain 2m distance from dinghy sailors at all times except in extreme situations when there is a risk of serious injury or worse.
- 2) If operating close to a dinghy then make sure its crew are on/at the opposite side /end of the dinghy from the powerboat (they should be well away from the prop. anyway !). Face coverings should be worn by the powerboat crew if there is any likelihood of them coming within 2m of the dinghy's crew.
- 3) When helping to right a dinghy then approach from the top of the mast and pick up the mast / forestay as normal.
- 4) If crew are separated from their dinghy then use the heaving line to tow them back to it.
- 5) Whilst the Club is taking a cautious approach and people should not be sailing if they cannot get back into their dinghy unassisted, it may become necessary to help them to avoid a more dangerous situation developing. In this case EITHER :
 - Ask them to position themselves so that they will be scooped back in as the dinghy is righted by the powerboat crew OR
 - Tow them and the dinghy to a jetty or into shallow water so they can re-board themselves (but beware how long this may take) OR
 - If all else fails assist them physically, preferably by lifting the straps on their buoyancy aid from behind with them facing their dinghy.
- 6) If anyone capsizes repeatedly then the Race Officer and Authorised Powerboat Helm both have the authority to instruct them to return ashore in the interests of their safety and the safety of other sailors.
- 7) If a dinghy needs to be towed then use the heaving line and tow astern, NOT alongside.
- 8) Wash or sanitise your hands thoroughly after touching a dinghy or its equipment, and/or after using the safety boat heaving line.

IF YOU CANNOT AVOID COMING WITHIN 2M OF SOMEONE THEN :

- 1) Contact time needs to be minimised as far as possible.
- 2) Powerboat crews to wear face coverings.
- 3) All involved should thoroughly wash / sanitise hands, face, any exposed skin and clothing as soon as practicable.
- 4) A Flag Officer MUST be informed, stating who was involved, the circumstances, the length of contact, date and time.
- 5) A Flag Officer MUST be informed if anyone involved becomes ill in the following two weeks.

SWIMMERS :

- 1) Keep a sharp look out for swimmers and ask them to return to the bathing area or keep close to the banks where dinghies are unlikely to venture.
- 2) Be very alert to the dangers of running over swimmers whilst operating a powerboat, especially if it becomes necessary to drive at any speed.

APPENDIX 3 : Cleaning a Powerboat

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CLEANING EQUIPMENT WILL BE FOUND IN HUMBER'S SHED ON THE SOUTH FACING WALL (TO RIGHT OF DOOR AS YOU ENTER) AND IN MAIN WORKSHOP ON THE BACK OF THE DOOR NEAREST THE ALARM PANEL.

Materials / equipment provided:

- Spray bottle of disinfectant detergent.
- Car washing brush to fit to hose pipe;
- PPE – face shield, disposable gloves and disposable overalls.

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Although ideally we would leave powerboats for 72 hours after use the amount of activity on the Pond now makes this difficult. The retiring crew should therefore always follow this procedure after recovering their powerboat.

- 1) Ideally the retiring crew should do the cleaning as the powerboat should only have been contaminated by them. This removes the need for any PPE to be used.
- 2) The retiring crew must use alcohol based wipes to clean the controls (steering, throttle, switches, VHF set if fitted) and any other parts of the boat they have had close contact with. The wipes are to be put into the bin in Humber's shed immediately after use
- 3) If a powerboat has to be cleaned by someone else, then PPE must be used. The risk is from direct contact and splashing so a face shield, disposable gloves and disposable overalls are to be used. The gloves and overalls are to be disposed of in the bin in Humber's shed; the face shield will need to be disinfected and rinsed.
- 4) No one other than the person doing the cleaning must be near enough to the powerboat so that they could be splashed during cleaning.
- 5) With the powerboat on its trailer, spray all potential contact areas carefully with disinfectant detergent.
If the powerboat is to be used by a subsequent crew then it is acceptable to clean it without recovering it ashore.
- 6) Leave for 5 to 10 minutes.
- 7) Use the car wash brush scrub over and rinse the entire powerboat, paying particular attention to the console, seat and controls.

APPENDIX 4 : Use of Race Hut

- 1) The Duty Officer will issue the Race Hut key to the Race Officer (to avoid the RO having to enter the Clubhouse).
- 2) The Race Officer must wash/sanitised their hands immediately before entering the Race Hut.
- 3) Only one person should be in the Race Hut at any one time unless face coverings are worn and appropriate social distancing is maintained.
- 4) Before using the VHF set or the Tannoy both microphones are to be sealed in plastic bags provided for the purpose. They will be kept in these bags and operated through it at all times.
- 5) At the end of a duty the Race Officer shall remove the microphones from the bag in such a way as to minimise the risk of contaminating them (e.g. by carefully tipping/sliding them out onto the table).
- 6) The bags must be placed directly into the rubbish bin.
- 7) The Race Officer should then sanitise their hands again before using alcohol wipes to clean any and all equipment that has been used, paying particular attention to the microphones and any switches / computer keys / mouse used. The wipes must be placed directly into the rubbish bin.
- 8) The surface of the table should be cleaned with the sanitiser foam provided.
- 9) The Race Officer should return the Race Hut key to the Duty Officer, who will wash/sanitise it before returning it to the key press.