

8. Incident Management

8.1 Meanings and Definitions

Term	Definition	Typical Examples
Minor incident	Dealt with by existing safety cover; session continues unaffected.	Single-boat capsize, minor cuts/bruises, feeling cold, small equipment failure.
Minor incident with escalation risk	One or more minor incidents that could stretch safety resources.	Several simultaneous capsizes; safety boat overwhelmed
Major incident	Life-threatening or resource-critical event; may require Emergency Services; jeopardises overall control of session.	Serious injury, entrapment, medical emergency, person missing.
High-risk activity	Manoeuvres likely to generate multiple capsizes if unmanaged.	Capsize drills, race starts, gybe practice, whistle game.

8.2 Communication Principles

- **Clear VHF use is critical.** Limited sightlines, moorings, and traffic may hide what is happening.
- Use designated call signs; keep Channel P4 clear once an incident is declared.

8.3 Procedure for Minor Incidents

1. Safety boat is alerted.
2. Safety boat deals with the incident and updates the SI only if additional resources are required.
3. All other instructors maintain normal supervision unless instructed otherwise.

8.4 Major Incidents

Major Incidents should follow the emergency action plan. As below

Emergency Action Plan

1. Notify SI of incident via radio
 - In event of **MAJOR INCIDENT**, State "CODE ONE" "CODE ONE" then a brief description to the nature of the incident, the status of the casualty and what assistance is required.
2. If casualty is injured on the water, return to the club as quickly and safely as is possible.

SI/Race Officer

3. If ambulance is needed, call emergency services, 999
 - Ambulances to be directed to the quay, met and lead through boat park (What 3 words *copies.factored.refuse*)
 - Helicopters to land on the Quay or foreshore East of the club (Pavillion Foreshore)
4. If additional on water assistance is required contact Harbour Master – Matt Smy
5. If possible, organise a party to meet safety boat.
6. Ensure provision of sufficient safety cover for those still afloat and consider abandoning all activities.
7. Inform Flag Officers

Instructor dealing with incident:

- Administer first aid until you and casualties are satisfied and / or ambulance arrives.
- If the incident has deemed the rest of the session to be unsafe, end the session and return group to shore

If a major incident occurs, instructors are to be briefed by the senior on site:

- Not to openly discuss the incident, post on social media or speak with the press
- The club will prepare a press release.

Chief Instructor, Matt Riley – 07713938973

Principle, Suzy Cooper – 07788765862

Commodore, James Tomlinson – 07770930484

Vice Commodore, Migs Howard - 07786575571

President, James Robinson – 07710717632

Harbour Master, Matt Smy – 0752892635

8.5. Instructors not directly involved an incident

- Instructors not directly involved in an incident must immediately cease any high-risk activities.
- Prepare to bring your group ashore if their assigned safety boat is redeployed.
- Do not leave your group without safety cover to assist another, this may create a secondary incident.
- If necessary, dinghies may be temporarily beached on the mud or secured to a mooring to allow safety boats to redeploy.
- Keep your group calm and reassured. Avoid drawing unnecessary attention to the incident. Do not speculate or share unconfirmed information.
- Maintain normal supervision and clear communication to prevent panic.
- Monitor VHF but avoid transmitting unless providing essential updates or responding to a direct request.
- Be prepared to assist with recovery or first aid onshore if requested by the SI.

8.6. Incident Reporting & Post-Incident Procedures

- All incidents, including minor ones, near-misses, collisions with moored vessels and equipment failures must be recorded as soon as practical after the session.
- Reports should be made using the club's designated incident report form, Appendix F. available on the bridge or in the training folder.
- The Senior Instructor must review and sign off all incident reports before the end of the day.
- Serious incidents or those involving injury must be reported immediately to the CI or if not available, the Principal.
- If first aid was administered or medical attention required, an accident report form must be also completed, and the First Aid Officer must be informed (via the CI or SI) so that supplies can be replenished.
- After serious or unusual incidents, a short team debrief should be held to reflect on what happened, what worked, and lessons to be learnt.

Major incident guidance for SI

Incident Coordinator

Appoint an Incident Co-ordinator to take overall control and responsibility and to co-opt other members as necessary to deal with the incident such as securing the incident area and equipment, rendering first aid, preventing further injury or damage and taking appropriate photographs, preparing plans of the incident, gathering the names of those involved and taking witness statements.

The Incident Co-ordinator will ensure that a Flag Officer, RYA Principal or Chief Instructor is informed of the incident as soon as possible. The RYA Communications team should be contacted for advice and assistance, particularly where there is media interest. If in any doubt call the RYA Communications Team.

Appoint a small incident management committee, with outside advisors if required to deal with the incident in the days to come. The committee may well have to deal with the media, rumour and speculation, parents, relatives, emergency authorities and club members.

Incident Control Room

Where possible ensure that an incident control room is set up on a suitable part of the site where there are functioning mobile and landline telephones, radio communications if necessary, and access to the internet and email. Keep a logbook and a record of whom you have spoken to, who has contacted you and what was said.

In the Immediate Aftermath

- Get a statement from competent witnesses as well as recording their names and contact details
- Remove the key witnesses to a place you can talk to them away from onlookers
- Explain that statements are being taken to obtain an accurate account of the incident, as these may be required for insurance, or other purposes
- Notes need to be taken and agreed by the witness

Securing Evidence

- Photograph the incident location, boats, equipment etc.
- Keep and secure any relevant equipment e.g. clothing, buoyancy aids, lifejackets, logbooks etc.
- Secure any boats and equipment

Emergency Services

In the event of Emergency Services becoming involved, they will take control of the incident response and be responsible for situations relevant to them e.g. Police (fatalities, abduction of and search for lost children). Coastguard (marine rescue), Fire and Rescue Service (fire/rescue incidents), and Ambulance (casualty treatment). In the event of a major multi-agency incident, a Lead Agency will be appointed, usually the Police, to ensure a coordinated response.

Site organisation

- If necessary, control access to and from the site to those with a legitimate reason for being there
- Identify a separate gathering area for relatives of any injured persons
- Arrange for a supply of hot/cold drinks and or food
- Keep media away from gathering area for relatives
- If possible, have a separate briefing area for the media where they can be addressed by the club or training centre representative; be courteous and ensure they also have a supply of hot/cold drinks and or food

Safeguarding

The RYA's policies and guidelines for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults should be adopted to suit the requirements of your training centre, club or class association. If the club or centre is contacted by the Police or Children's Services concerning information received or a complaint made by or about a member, volunteer or employee, you are advised to contact the RYA Safeguarding Manager as soon as possible for further guidance and support. See the OSC safeguarding Policy.

Dealing with Relatives or Aggrieved Parties

It is important to be sympathetic with relatives and aggrieved parties, without admitting liability. Remain calm and say that every effort is being made to get to the bottom of the incident and that the appropriate authorities, with whom you are co-operating, are investigating the incident.

Fatalities

If there has been a fatality the police will inform the next of kin, similarly with injured people when a criminal offence or traffic collision occurs. Do not publicise the name/s of the casualty/casualties until you know this has been formally carried out by the Police, even if the press appear to know who it is.

Dealing with the Press

If contacted by the press or other media representative, the initial response is to acknowledge that an incident has occurred and that the club or centre will issue a press statement as soon as possible once it knows the facts.

Direct statements and interviews are to be avoided unless authorised. Remember any interview you give may well be seen or heard by those involved and next of kin. If it becomes necessary to give an interview, unless confident in being able to cope with unexpected questions, it is better to prepare and read a statement:

e.g. "The XYZ Sailing Club/Training Centre regret to announce the death of a member (What, When, Where). We extend our deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of (named individual). We will publish a full statement as soon as the facts are known (give yourself time to collate the information). In the meantime we would like to thank the emergency services during this difficult time."

If the incident is attracting attention from the national media, call the RYA Communications Team for advice.

Information

You should consider always having the following facts available. Their value will become evident in the event of a serious incident or accident:

- Up-to-date training registers, members register and event entry lists
- Details of the event, training course, sailing/operating area and timings including a restrictions

- Details of the key contacts, senior staff, race officers, and volunteers, including the validity of their qualifications
- Medical consent forms (where appropriate)
- Details of staff, equipment, safety boats, committee boats involved in an event
- Safety equipment worn and equipment being used
- Conditions at the time of the incident
- A record of important contact information, including emergency services and hospitals

Notifications

Consider who must be notified in accordance with the requirements of your location.

In the UK:

- If it is water-based incident, you must inform the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) within 24 hours
- If it involves work-related fatal or major injury you must inform the Health and Safety Executive
- Keep the RYA informed for their advice

Closure

- The primary phase of the incident is closed when any injured parties have been moved from the location and all property damage has been secured so that it no longer presents a danger to club members or the public
- A meeting should be held with all those involved in the handling of the incident and any experts who may be required (legal, insurance, structural etc.)
- This meeting should finalise all records of the event and determine any follow up action that may be required
- A record should be made of lessons learnt and a plan developed for implementing ways to improve procedures and the major incident response system

8.7. Incident Follow-Up & Review

- All major or unusual incidents should be reviewed by the SI team, CI and Principal to identify any procedural improvements or training needs.
- Trends in minor incidents or near misses may indicate areas where refresher training, equipment changes, or communication improvements are needed.
- At the end of each season, a summary of logged incidents should be reviewed to support future safety planning.
- Any changes to procedures resulting from incidents should be communicated clearly to all staff.⁹

: Incident Report Form

1. General Information

- Date of Incident: ___ / ___ / ___
- Time of Incident: _____
- Location (on water, pontoon, moorings, ashore, etc.):

- Type of Incident:
 Near Miss Minor Major Collision

2. People Involved

- Instructor(s): _____
- Student(s) / Others: _____
- Witnesses (if any): _____

3. Activity at Time of Incident

- Course / Group: _____
- Nature of activity (e.g. gybe drill, coming alongside, capsize drill):

4. Description of Incident

Provide a clear, factual account of what happened. Include weather/tide conditions, equipment involved, and any contributing factors.

5. Immediate Action Taken

Who responded and what was done on scene:

6. Was a Safety Boat Involved?

Yes No Call sign (if applicable): _____

Details of any VHF communication made:

7. Was the Incident Escalated to the SI / CI?

Yes No Time: _____ By whom: _____
 SI Informed CI Informed Emergency Services Called

8. Equipment Damage (if any)

List boats/equipment affected and whether they've been taken out of service:

9. Lessons Learned / Further Action Recommended

(Optional, but encouraged):

10. Report Completed By

Name: _____ Role: _____
Signature: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ___

11. SI Review

Reviewed and logged
SI Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: ___ /
___ / ___