



# Everyone Discover Sailing

## Myths and Facts

Some people are apprehensive about involving people with disabilities in their club's activities. These feelings often centre on their fear of doing or saying the wrong thing in the presence of a person with a disability.

Sometimes the apprehension stems from a fear that having people with disabilities around might change the club in a negative way or put a huge impost on financial and volunteer resources.

The fact is that your club undoubtedly already has people with disabilities engaged in a variety of activities. There are many disabilities that are not visible disabilities. People may have diabetes, epilepsy, asthma and heart disease and you may not know it. Your club may already have modified things to accommodate people with such disabilities, like installing syringe disposal bins for people who require insulin.

People often think of a disability as one which is visible. The picture of a person in a wheelchair or who is completely blind is a common picture that comes to mind when people think about disabilities. A person with spasms caused by cerebral palsy, someone with an obvious facial droop from having had a stroke or someone with a white cane or guide dog are other examples of visible disabilities.

So although some people who have a disability that includes paralysis or severe muscle weakening do need mobility aids such as wheelchairs, and a small percentage of around five per cent of people with a vision impairment are totally blind, disability is not always obvious. It is good practice to ask a new member, even if they appear not to have

a disability, whether they have any special access or health issues that need to be taken into consideration when sailing.

The fact is that just as people without disabilities differ in ability and aptitude, people with disabilities, even the same type of disability, will differ in ability and aptitude.

Here are some common myths that have grown up around sailing for people with disabilities. The reality of the situation is usually quite different!

### Myth:

**We'll need a lot more rescue boats to go out when we've got people with disabilities out on the water.**

### Fact:

The effective rescue is generally no different for comparable groups of able-bodied sailors in consideration of skill level and ability.

An increased rescue provision is appropriate for sailors of any ability, sailors with an intellectual disability, unaccompanied blind or vision impaired sailors and unaccompanied sailors who suffer from epilepsy, asthma etc. Sailors using medical equipment that requires monitoring, such as a ventilated quadriplegic, should have a dedicated safety boat with medically trained personnel aboard. For racing circumstances, the IFDS Race Management Manual 2005-2008 states that each sailor on a ventilator/respirator should supply a suitable dedicated rescue boat and trained staff.





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### **Myth:**

**There'll be an increase in our insurance premiums if we start programs for people with disabilities.**

### **Fact:**

Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the club's operations and its accident experience, not on whether members have disabilities.

### **Myth:**

**No-one will know what to do if someone with a disability is unconscious and needs to be recovered into a rescue boat.**

### **Fact:**

The rescue of an unconscious, immobile person is no different whether that person has a disability or not. If you don't rescue the person they will drown.

### **Myth:**

**There would be no benefit to our club in providing sailing opportunities for people with disabilities.**

### **Fact:**

In 2003 the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that one in five people in Australia (3,958,300 or 20.0%) had a reported disability. If your club offers opportunities for people with a disability you'll open up new markets and attract new customers to the organisation. Clubs can access sources of funding to make clubs more

accessible. By eliminating any discrimination and improving physical access the club will improve existing services for all members.

### **Myth:**

**Hansa dinghies on sandbars – remove the centreboard to get it off the sandbar.**

### **Fact:**

If you remove the centreboard from an Hansa dinghy it will be unstable. The boats should always have the centreboard locked down. If a boat runs aground on a sand bar you do not remove the centreboard. The boat should be heeled over by someone sitting on the gunwale, that will lessen the draft, and the boat is then hauled off the sandbar.

### **Myth:**

**People with disabilities need to be protected from failing.**

### **Fact:**

People with disabilities have a right to participate in the full range of human experiences including success and failure.

### **Myth:**

**People with disabilities who manage to sail must be inspirational, courageous, and brave for being able to overcome their disability.**

### **Fact:**

Sailors with disabilities are simply living full and enjoying sailing.

