

## **SAFETY INFORMATION NOTICE**

**No. 1 of 2014**

### **Response by Clubs to Significant Incidents**

Issued 25 May 2014

#### **Issue**

To provide Clubs with a checklist for dealing with significant incidents

#### **Background**

The sport of sailing does involve some risk. Through good management and risk mitigation the danger can be reduced to an acceptable level. Nevertheless in the event of a serious incident clubs need to be fully prepared to deal with the accident in an effective manner.

A significant incident is one that involves injury ranging from admission to hospital to loss of life, or such major damage to a vessel that may result in its incapacitation or loss.

There is a great deal of scope in what could constitute a significant incident and its consequences. Clubs need to be prepared with a flexible level of response and plans that are tailored for the individual circumstances and resources available at the Club.

If a Club is starting from scratch in preparing an incident management plan it should draw upon plans from neighbouring or more well established clubs that could be used as a guide and modified as necessary. Leading practice should require that plans are reviewed at least annually or following an incident. Similarly plans should be exercised about once per year, practicing against possible scenarios.

#### **Notice**

The basic steps a Club needs to take are:

##### Take Charge and Manage the Incident

- ✓ A person needs to be designated at the club to take charge of the situation this should be the most suitably qualified person and a club official if appropriate and available; the Incident Director
- ✓ There may be a requirement to designate another person to take charge at the scene of the incident; the Incident Manager / Team Leader
- ✓ The immediate priority is to secure the safety of the people involved in the incident - apply the club's Incident Management Plan
- ✓ Advise relevant authorities such as water police, police and ambulance. If lives are at risk call Triple Zero (000)

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- ✓ Do not hesitate to call for additional assistance and if necessary call 'Mayday' or 'Pan' on any radio circuits in use
- ✓ Appoint a media spokesperson to act as a single point of contact should there be any media enquiries

#### Subsequent Actions

- ✓ Consider a counselling service to the crew, families, friends and witnesses who may be traumatized or effected by the incident
- ✓ Advise the State Association's Executive Officer and Yachting Australia Sport Services Manager
- ✓ Seek support from the State Association as required
- ✓ Report the incident online at <http://www.yachting.org.au/sport-services/safety/reporting-major-incidents/>
- ✓ Conduct an investigation into the incident
  - The Inquiry should not apportion blame
  - The Inquiry should be convened as soon as practicable
  - The conduct of a police or coroner inquiry should not delay an inquiry as they are able to be conducted concurrently without interference.
  - A soundly run investigation will depend on clear Terms of Reference, and its findings may provide recommendations to the sport. Assistance can be provided to Clubs by each State MYA.
- ✓ Review the Club's Risk Management Policy/Safety Plan in accordance with the findings

#### Advice for the Media Spokesperson

- ✓ Before speaking to media establish communications and an understanding with relevant authorities such as police.
- ✓ If there has been a loss of life or significant injury, be closely attuned to the needs and wishes of the family, friends and witnesses who are dealing with an extremely traumatic experience. Emphasise the Club's sympathy and willingness to support in whatever way it can.
- ✓ Do not go into too much detail, especially if the facts are unclear. Willingly state that the incident will be investigated by the Club and authorities.
- ✓ Be prepared to say you are unable to answer any questions that you cannot, but avoid refusing to comment or repeating hearsay.
- ✓ Only convey known facts at the time and if in any doubt about anything include that uncertainty in any statement.
- ✓ Explain that these situations can take time to resolve and investigate and thank the media for their patience and understanding.

This Safety Information Notice is not mutually exclusive to Yachting Australia's Risk Management Template or Guide to Preparing an Incident Management Plan.

More information on these resources can be found online at <http://www.yachting.org.au/sport-services/safety/club-risk-and-safety-management/>