

SAFETY INFORMATION NOTICE

No. 1 of 2015

Trapeze Harnesses and Entrapment

Issued 13 March 2015

This replaces Safety Information Notice 1 of 2013 – Trapeze Harnesses.

Issue:

Risk of entrapment by a trapeze harness hook on, or under a capsized boat

Notice:

Evidence suggests that trapeze harness users can become entrapped by the hook on the harness being caught, possibly by:

- piercing a trampoline or mesh wing or the deck or hull and then becoming stuck;
- becoming snagged on other parts of the boat rigging including shrouds, hiking (toe) straps and vang; or
- becoming tangled and caught in sheets.

To help reduce the risk of entrapment, and to help race officials and other volunteers on the course, clubs and class associations should consider the following information, and convey to race officials, volunteers and sailors. In particular crews should consider and plan the actions they would take in the event of an entrapment. Where appropriate:

- To reduce the risk of trapeze harness entrapment, sailors should:
 - Keep lines and sheets organised in the boat;
 - Wear close fitting clothing and personal flotation devices (lifejackets) and when practicable avoid these over the top of your harness;
 - Carry a sharp, well maintained and easily accessible knife, preferably serrated, and ensure crew know where the knife is located and are prepared to use it to cut a harness, trampoline mesh or other entanglement. Noting the importance of quick action it may be appropriate to have more than one knife on a boat and of contrasting colour to its place of stowage;
 - Wear clothing and equipment which is unlikely to snag and can be easily freed;
 - Crew members should also consider the option of releasing themselves from the harness rather than trying to free the trapeze hook;
 - A quick release harness may be more practical than a quick release trapeze hook;
 - Be aware of the harnesses used by other crew. Learn how they can be released so you can assist them if they become trapped – using common harnesses on a boat would be an advantage;

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- Crew should consider removing their own harness quickly before attempting to rescue an entrapped crewmember
 - Whenever possible crew should attempt to fall immediately onto their side rather than face down on boats with trampolines or netting to avoid being entrapped.
- All race officials, safety boat crew and sailors should be briefed on the risk and dangers of entrapment and methods of recovery. All volunteers should be briefed on the situations they may experience on the water, particularly those common to the classes of boat being sailed.
- Safety boats should be equipped with a readily available and effective sharp knife to cut sheets, trampoline, harnesses etc. to free a sailor and bolt cutters to cut rigging.
- Immediately after it becomes apparent that a sailor has not surfaced, may be trapped and unable to be released quickly, all efforts should be directed towards righting the boat to bring the sailor to the surface.
- In the case of catamarans, safety boat crew should also be prepared to cut the trampoline.

Clubs and Organising Authorities are reminded of the value and advantage of using race officials accredited through the Yachting Australia [National Officiating Program](#). Also attention is drawn to [SIN 2/2013](#) – Propeller Guards regarding recommended practices for safety boats.