



CLUB SAFETY MANAGEMENT

A Practical Resource for Clubs and Centres

**Australian Sailing
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AUSTRALIAN SAILING

SAFETY MANAGEMENT FOR AFFILIATED CLUBS AND CENTRES

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Introduction to Club Safety Management

Safety underpins all of Australian Sailing's activities; that includes the safety of participants, staff, officials, volunteers, spectators and other sailors. Proper management processes can contribute to maintaining a safe environment for sailing activities. Safety is about making sure that nobody is harmed by participation in a sailing event, be it a regatta or learn to sail course. Clubs owe a duty of care to the people involved in their sporting events.

Club safety management involves:

1. Identifying risks to safety
2. Implementing processes to manage, mitigate or avoid the risks
3. Incident reporting and information sharing when risks eventuate.

Australian Sailing has developed this manual to assist clubs in reaching and sustaining excellent safety standards. The manual forms part of the Club Risk and Safety Management Resource. The resource includes the following documents:

Safety Management	Risk Management	Incident Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Sample Safety Management Policy• Club Safety Management Manual• Safety Management in 10 Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Sample Risk Management Policy• Club Risk Management Manual• Risk Management in 10 Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to Prepare an Incident Management Plan

Club safety management policies and procedures help clubs to meet their duty of care. Safety management involves putting processes in place to make sure that:

- The hazards (dangers or unwanted events) associated with proposed sailing activities are comprehensively and systematically identified, assessed and recorded
- Controls are identified and put in place to keep safety risks at an acceptable level
- Communication and consultation with all relevant people, including officials, volunteers and participants is conducted and recorded
- Checks are made, and evidence maintained to confirm that the controls are in place and effective.

Most clubs will already have a number of controls in place to reduce risk levels in their competitions and classes. These may include:

- Posting the weather forecast on the noticeboard for race days
- Requiring competitors and officials to wear lifejackets
- Making competitors sign on and off when racing
- Requiring people to be trained or licensed before driving- safety craft
- Requiring people to be trained before acting as instructors or coaches
- Having first aid available on race days

The problem for some clubs and classes, however, is that they have not approached the process of identifying hazards and assessing the appropriateness of controls as a rigorous or comprehensive process. This manual provides guidance and tools that can be used to develop safety management processes for competitions, classes and activities.

The guide is based on available Safety and Risk Management Standards, recommendations from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and recognised best practices. It should not be considered a definitive resource, however it may help clubs to meet their legal duty of care.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Philosophy

Australian Sailing recognises the safety hazards associated with sailing races and activities (including training) at clubs and centres. To assist volunteer club and centre officials (including volunteers and instructors) to minimise these risks, Australian Sailing with the assistance of its State Associations has developed a basic safety management tool which can be implemented to provide a safer sporting environment and experience for sailors.

This tool is suitable for clubs who may also conduct training activities as part of their operations. This template may also be used by commercial Discover Sailing Centres where training is the sole activity. The template is suitable for use by clubs where all activities are undertaken by volunteers as well as for use by clubs employing professional staff.

1.2 Background – Duty of Care

Club, Discover Sailing Centre (DSC) and race officials owe a duty of care to participants in sailing races and activities where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of harm or injury to participants. In exercising this duty of care, the law requires officials to take reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood of injury to participants as a result of those risks which are foreseeable. Each club and DSC should refer to their state legislation for more information.

1.3 Objectives

- To reduce the incidence of injury to participants, officials and other persons associated with club/DSC sailing competitions and activities.
- To provide a fun, healthy and safe sporting environment for individuals to participate and enjoy the sport of sailing.
- To minimise potential club/DSC liability as a result of unsafe sailing competitions and activities.

1.4 What is Safety Management?

Safety Management is an integral part of the overall Management of Sport Sailing. It combines with Risk Management and Incident Reporting to create an interdependent set of policies and procedures. Risks covered by safety management include:

- Physical Risks – Injuries to participants and the public
- Legal Risks – Losses and costs arising from legal actions for breach of a common law or statutory duty of care and compliance requirements
- Financial Risks – Increased insurance premiums, costs associated with injuries for business reasons, loss of financial stability and asset value, replacement costs and earning capacity and increased external administrative costs
- Moral and Ethical Risks – Loss of quality of participant experience and confidence, adverse publicity and damage to image or reputation.

1.5 Which Risks Need to be Managed?

Importantly, the law does not require clubs/DSCs to provide a completely risk free environment. Indeed, by agreeing to participate in sailing activities, participants will be taken to have consented to those risks which form an inevitable aspect of the activity. Clubs/DSCs will not be required to take steps to counter risks where it would be unreasonable to expect a club/DSC to do so in the circumstances. Clubs/DSCs will however be expected to adopt reasonable precautions against risks which might result in injuries or damages which are reasonably foreseeable.

Clubs must comply with regulations including (but not limited to):

- Jurisdictional Work Health and Safety legislation
- Civil Liability Law
- Consumer Law
- Anti-discrimination Law
- Criminal Law – this may include a national criminal history record check or working with children check
- Other relevant setting-specific policies or regulations

There are two separate safety regimes that may apply to clubs. If a Club employs any staff (in any category, even if there is only one employee) then the applicable safety regime is the Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) legislation within each State or Territory. If the club does not pay any workers and relies completely upon a volunteer workforce then the applicable safety regime is contained in the Civil Liability Legislation.

As a general rule it is advisable for clubs to act as if they are operating under the WHS regime which imposes an inalienable duty to provide a safe environment as far as is reasonably possible.

1.6 The Australian Standard

The approach adopted in this resource is based on the Australian Standard's AS NZS 4801:2001 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems. Recommendations from the ASC, and recognised best practices have been incorporated to make the standard more readily applicable to sailing clubs and DSCs.

This resource has sought to simplify the steps set out in the Australian Standard, and includes the following stages:

- Safety Policy
- Safety Review (for clubs with no safety management system in operation at commencement of the process)
- Planning and Implementation of a Hazard Identification and Assessment
- Planning and Implementation of a Safety Management System
- Setting Objectives and Targets
- Structure, Responsibility, Resources and Accountability
- Reporting Performance and Incidents
- Training and Competency Development
- Consultation and Communication
- Documentation and Data Control
- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Review and Continuous Improvement

1.7 Club Safety Management – Scope and Limitations

This resource has been developed specifically for the sailing component of club/DSC activities. As such it does not address risk management considerations for other elements of club/DSC operations such as governance, administration, finance, insurance or planning.

The resource is not a definitive resource that will make a club or DSC litigation proof or completely fail-safe. However, if followed and regularly reviewed, it is likely to increase safety and may serve as a useful defence to claims for breach of duty of care.

Safety risks will vary depending upon the circumstances and the ways in which each club/DSC operates. It is up to the Board or Committee and key people in each club or DSC using this resource to think about their club/DSC's safety hazards, and plan for their management.

1.8 Who Should be Involved in the Safety Management Process?

Successful management of safety performance will reflect the expectations and mandate of those at the top (e.g. Board, Committee, Flag Officers, Principals, Chief Executive Officers and Management). It is critical that these people express the mandate and commitment for safety management, starting with adopting a policy. Leadership from the top will shape the culture, and the culture will either encourage or discourage effective safety management.

It is important that all “key” people from the Committee to race officials, instructors, volunteers and other stakeholders, are involved in each step of the safety management process. Key people such as head coaches, instructors or senior race officials have the training and knowledge that is required to identify and manage safety risks. It is imperative that they are consulted and their contributions included in the club safety management system. Failure to do this may result in a less than adequate safety system and higher safety risks.

Finally, all involved in sailing have a responsibility to take a proactive approach to the identification and management of safety risks in all of their training and participation activities.

1.9 Accountability

The club/DSC should ensure that there is authority, accountability and appropriate competence for managing safety. This can be facilitated by:

- Identifying the person who has the authority to manage the identified safety hazards or environment containing the hazard and engaging them in the process
- Identifying the person who is responsible for managing the risk management framework including the safety management framework and engaging them in the process
- Identifying other responsibilities of people at all levels in the club/DSC
- Establishing internal reporting and escalation processes

As officers of the organisation, the Board, Principal, Flag Officers and key management and officials all have a responsibility to be diligent in how the organisation exercises its objectives. Due diligence requires that, among other things, the people in positions of power ensure that the organisation has, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to manage safety.

All clubs/DSCs should have a nominated officer to be responsible for the reviewing and updating of the safety management system. However, this does not absolve club officers, directors or principals of their responsibilities.

2.0 THE SAFETY MANAGEMENT PROCESS



Figure 1

2.1 Safety Policy

The first step in safety management is to adopt a policy that sets out the safety expectations and philosophy of the club or DSC. A sample policy is available on the Australian Sailing website. The safety policy is the pivotal focus of the safety management activities within each club or DSC.

The policy should clearly define the context within which the safety related hazards occur and the philosophy that motivates the management of these hazards to provide an acceptable level of risk for participants, officials and volunteers. The policy should clearly describe where your club or facility operates and the types of hazards that may be found; list the actions and activities that are undertaken at the DSC or facility, and describe the sorts of safety risk that these may entail. Be sure to set out the scope of the activities that are covered by the policy; is this all activities in the club, sporting activities, training activities, or some other combination? Be clear about when the policy is to apply and who is bound to act in accordance with it.

The overriding purpose of implementing a safety management strategy in sailing is to reduce the risk of harm to participants, officials, staff and volunteers. This should be stated explicitly. Within that overarching purpose

will be additional purpose elements such as providing a framework for understanding and reporting safety hazards, providing a framework for management, identifying training needs or essential equipment. The purpose of your policy is intrinsically linked to the characteristics and operations of your club or DSC. Under WHS laws, a club or DSC must eliminate health and safety risks so far as is reasonably practicable. If eliminating risks is not possible, then risks must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

Next the policy should set out the principles that guide safety management within your club or DSC. One non-negotiable principle is that sailing should be as safe as possible so that no person is harmed by their participation in the sport. Other principles may include consideration of factors such as alcohol consumption, use of personal safety or protection equipment, access to facilities, or provision of expert first aid services.

The policy should outline, in summary form, the key elements of the processes to be used for implementing safe sport practices. This should include, as far as is reasonably practicable, processes for:

- safe ways of working, training or competing
- maintaining equipment and facilities in a safe condition
- keeping safe and hygienic facilities, including toilets and eating areas
- providing first aid
- ensuring safety information, training and supervision is available for anyone who needs it (including volunteers and visiting competitors), and
- consulting with volunteers, officials and competitors to keep them informed and involved in decisions that may affect their health and safety.

The policy should identify the person, or persons, responsible for assessing safety hazards and ensuring safe sporting practices.

Finally the policy should establish a suitable process and frequency for reviews to keep the policy up to date, in compliance with changing regulations, legislation and guidelines, and relevant to changes in the mix of activities undertaken at the club or facility.

2.2 Hazard Identification and Assessment

To manage safety effectively it is imperative that hazards are identified and their severity assessed so that appropriate mitigation, control, management or avoidance processes can be developed. Clubs where there is no current safety management system may wish to bring in specialist help for this process.

Identification of hazards must be undertaken in a systematic manner. This requires careful planning of the identification process. The plan should consider the facilities, activities and people to determine who to involve. Allow sufficient time to consult everyone in a meaningful way about the hazards that they perceive and the circumstances in which they occur. For example – a volunteer helping in the car park might have insights into the hazards associated with reversing trailers, whilst a race official would be familiar with the likely course hazards.

Making sure that all potential sources of information are canvassed for their ideas will ensure that no hazard is overlooked. For example:

- Notices of Race and Sailing Instructions specify the safety requirements that are to apply for the event and ensure that they are in place, comprehensive and effective.
- State maritime authorities also specify minimum safety requirements that must be complied with by all vessels and must be read in conjunction with the Special Regulations.
- There are very clear safety responsibilities for the individual boats and crews.

Reviewing these sources will help to prompt the identification of hazards which your people might otherwise overlook.

Once a hazard has been identified it should be assessed and categorised. Does it occur intermittently, perhaps affected by weather or time of day? Is it severe and life-threatening? Can it be exacerbated by the existence of other hazards? Each club, facility or DSC will have a unique set of hazards that must all be assessed.

The outcomes of the hazard identification process are to:

- identify all major incidents which could occur at the club or DSC (irrespective of existing control measures)
- provide a basis for identifying, evaluating, defining and justifying the selection (or rejection) of control measures for eliminating or reducing risk
- show clear links between hazards, their causes and potential major incidents

- provide a systematic record of all identified hazards
- identify and record uncertainties for later analysis
- document all methods, results, assumptions and data.

Once the identification has been performed it is important that it is regularly maintained and used as a live document so that all future hazards are included.

2.3 Setting Objectives and Targets

For each of the hazards identified through the method outlined above an objective or target should be developed. This is a statement of the desired safety performance related to the hazard. The objective or target should be specific and measurable so that it may be monitored and reported in a consistent and unambiguous manner. The table below demonstrates the difference between safety policy statements and safety targets or objectives.

Target or Objective	Policy Statement
All officials will be trained as first responders	Nobody should be harmed by participation in the sport of sailing
Officials and volunteers will be provided with a safety induction prior to each event	XYZ Club is committed to safe sailing practices
A register of near misses and potential incidents will be created and reviewed after each event	ABC Centre aspires to the highest levels of safety performance

Targets and objectives should be comprehensive so that their monitoring provides a reasonable assurance that the safety management system is operating as intended and that safety results are within the range of acceptable outcomes.

2.4 Designing Structure, Responsibility, Resources and Accountability

The next step is to define, document and communicate the responsibility, authority and accountability for all elements of the Safety Management System so that all volunteers, officials and staff members are fully aware of what is expected of them. This process will also help participants, spectators and members of the public to know where to seek assistance or guidance.

For each hazard consider who is best placed to identify and assess the hazard, what level of authority might they require to appropriately respond to the hazard, what equipment or other resources would they require to respond to the hazard, and who is, ultimately, responsible for maintaining an environment that is as safe as reasonably practicable for the practice of sailing.

Club or centre directors and other officers may, for example, be responsible for:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding the nature of sailing operations and the associated hazards and risks.
- Ensuring that the Safety Policy and related requirements are implemented.
- Demonstrating active and visible leadership by providing strategic direction through effective consultation and communication.
- Maintaining a continuous overview of safety by setting objectives and receipt of results from monitoring and reporting processes.
- Checking that processes for responding to injuries, incidents, near misses and hazards are being followed.
- Responding to reported hazards through appropriate provision of resources to effect corrective action.
- Establishing a system for the control of safety documentation and records and ensuring that the system is implemented.
- Finding time for safety discussions with members of your club or DSC.
- Modelling appropriate safety conscious behaviours.

Volunteers or participants might, for example, have the following responsibilities:

- Complete the club or DSC safety induction.
- Familiarise themselves with the Safety Policy and safety requirements which are applicable to their activities.
- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- Cooperate with the Club or DSC by following instruction from their supervisor to ensure compliance with safety processes.
- Report to their supervisor all hazards, near-misses, incidents and injuries.
- Participate in discussions and consultation on the management of safety hazards.
- Follow policies, procedures and requirements with respect to safety.
- Wear appropriate clothing, footwear and protective equipment for the work being done and properly use relevant safety devices.
- Not wilfully place at risk the safety of others or misuse safety equipment.

Identify what resources are required by each person, or group of people, within the structure and ensure that these are available to them, or can be made available as required.

2.5 Reporting Performance and Incidents

Once the targets and the means for attaining them have been defined the system can commence operation. Your club or DSC should now start to generate information about how the safety system is working. This can take the form of monitoring (a continuous process of gathering information that what is intended to happen is actually happening) and review (a regular intermittent process of assessing the information generated by the system).

It is critical that the club or DSC should generate and maintain records that demonstrate that the safety system is in use. A system that has been created but left in documents that stay in the club house is not good enough; the system should be used every time sailing activities are underway.

Some examples of the documentation that might be generated include:

- Minutes of the board or committee meetings that have safety as an agenda item.
- Sign-in sheets that collect the names of all volunteers as they attend the safety induction prior to an event.
- Training records and certificates for staff who have received safety training or certification.
- Service records for safety equipment.
- Post event reviews with analysis of any 'near misses' or incidents.

As this body of documentary evidence is amassed and utilised it will suggest potential improvements. No system will be perfect when first designed and implemented, and even if it were, the sport of sailing is continually changing with new innovations that will create new safety challenges for clubs and DSCs to manage.

In particular the reports of near misses will require careful analysis and process improvements that would prevent the potential incident from occurring should be identified.

An absence of safety incidents is not sufficient to demonstrate that a club or DSC has acted responsibly in discharging its obligations to provide a sport that is as safe as reasonably practicable. It is important to have clear reports that processes were in existence, were adequate, were used and then that no safety incidents occurred. Evidence of absence of safety hazards is always preferable to absence of evidence of safety hazards. A diligent club will have the former; a negligent club will have the latter.

Clubs should distinguish between controlled documents (for example the policy and procedures for safety) which must be updated when a new version is produced, uncontrolled documents (for example information sheets produced for specific events) which will not be updated when new versions are produced for subsequent events and activities, and records (such as safety statistics, training attendance registers, etc.) which are required to be kept in their original version.

2.6 Training and Competency Development

Competency may be defined as “the application of knowledge and skills which allow an individual to successfully complete a range of activities required to fulfil their role”. Competency may be developed through training or acquired through practice. For higher levels of competency it is likely that some combination of training and experience will be required and that this should be attested by formal certification.

The diversity of participants, staff and officials engaged in the sport of sailing is likely to be significant, with individuals coming from a variety of cultural, socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Typically, many officials will be volunteers, however some senior officials may be compensated for their work at particular events. Asking a volunteer to give up their time and effort to help the sport and then demanding that they undergo a process of training before ‘being allowed’ to officiate is a task that must be approached with tact and sensitivity; however, it is vitally important that individuals in positions of authority are appropriately skilled to discharge their duties, regardless of their volunteer status.

To assist in clearly identifying the reporting lines it is helpful to draw an organisation chart to identify the reporting structures used to coordinate activities. This can be recorded in chart form (organogram or organisation chart) or as a list or table.

For each position in the structure defined above the Club should have a clearly defined competency level with experience or training requirements that will assure individuals have the skills before they are given the responsibility. For many roles this is simply achieved by a safety briefing prior to the event or activity; for other roles it may require years of progressively more onerous requirements. Clubs and DSCs should ensure that they have adequately trained all staff, officials and volunteers. Clubs that have allowed unskilled volunteers (or staff) to perform tasks that require skill will be found to have breached their duties to provide an environment that is reasonably safe and legal liability may attach to senior staff or club officials even if they were not personally present at the time of any incident.

2.7 Communication and Consultation

Nobody knows more clearly how to perform a task than the people who are performing it. Their insights and information are valuable at all stages of the safety system. Processes to gather feedback must be developed and included within the safety management system. This is known as consultation.

Consultation must be undertaken in a manner consistent with positive supportive working relationships. Consultation on safety issues should be meaningful and effective; rote repetition of policy statements is not sufficient, proper two-way dialogue is required. Contributions must be acknowledged, valued and taken into account in the design and implementation of the system. However, consultation must not delay the implementation of a policy or procedure to address an immediate or serious safety risk in a timely manner.

It is also important to ensure that people performing tasks are aware of the safest way to do so. A communication process is essential to convey this information. When information is vitally important for safety, repetition is always better than running the risk of not informing somebody of the hazards or the practices for their safe management. Communication may be verbal and face-to-face in informal discussions and meetings, or individual conversations, written, provided by signage, or conveyed by whatever means is most likely to be effective. The vital element is that the recipient must understand both the information conveyed and its importance. Larger clubs and DSCs may use other methods such as multimedia aids (including videos and DVDs), posters, leaflets and flyers, articles in newsletters, raising safety issues at committee meetings, and/or speaking to groups.

2.8 Documentation and Data Control

All documents within the safety management system should be subject to a process of documentation and data control. The process should identify and categorise controlled documents, uncontrolled documents and records. The process should also identify how records are generated and stored and who may have access. Electronic copies of safety records and controlled documents should be safely backed up and a record of how to retrieve the backup maintained for use in the event of destruction of the originals. Physical archives should preferably also be digitised and safely backed up. All records should be indexed and located so that retrieval is easily accomplished.

Responsibility for maintaining adequate safety records rests with the board or club committee. Safety records should be kept for a minimum of 6 years.

2.9 Emergency Procedures and Response

This section should be read in conjunction with the incident management documentation in the Australian Sailing safety and risk management resource.

Staff, officials, volunteers and participants need to have the skills and knowledge required to recognise and respond appropriately to emergencies and incidents. To be properly prepared for an emergency, the club or DSC needs to have clear action plans and to have trained its people (including staff, officials, volunteers and participants) in their implementation. The way action plans are developed, disseminated and monitored will depend on the needs of each individual club or DSC and the specific risks or hazards that might generate emergencies. The Incident Management Plan developed for a club or DSC can be initially developed using Australian Sailing's guidance on 'How to Prepare an Incident Management Plan, but the plan should be thoroughly customised to the individual club or DSC environment through the processes of communication and consultation outlined above.

The best advice in planning for an emergency is to plan for the unexpected. Planning for worst case will mean that all response plans are likely to be able to cope with the situation. Nobody expects an emergency or disaster; but emergencies and disasters can strike anyone, anytime, and anywhere. You may be forced to cease an activity or event when you least expect it. The best way to protect your club or DSC, your volunteers, officials and staff, and your participants is to expect the unexpected and have well-thought-out emergency plans to implement if an emergency arises.

2.10 Review and Continuous Improvement

Safety management is a rapidly evolving field, it is also a very important one. New improvements are adopted very quickly because the seriousness of the risks to human life and health requires that only the best safety performance will be accepted as managing risks to the lowest practicable level.

Within the safety management system there must be a periodic review of legislation, regulation and guidelines that affect your club or DSC and adaptation of the safety management system to comply with emerging best practice.

It is also highly unlikely that a safety management system will be perfect when first conceived and implemented. As feedback from consultation, and review of safety performance against the targets and objectives is gathered, potential improvements to the system will become apparent. Policy should be reviewed regularly (Australian Sailing suggest at least every 48 months) and any policy changes enacted through improved process and advised through thorough communication that reaches everybody concerned.

The entire safety system should also be subject to a process of ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement. Only rigorous and diligent attention to safety as an ongoing concern will deliver the outcome of a safe sport where nobody is harmed because they participated in sailing.