

Preamble

Welcome to safety boating at Lake Harriet! Our club is built on volunteerism, and with everyone pitching in a few times a summer we are able to enjoy fair, safe, and fun sailboat racing. Safety boat duty is a key element in the smooth operation of our races, from getting people to their boats to providing after-race treats. Your first obligation, of course, is to provide safety for our sailors. Because of this we ask that you carefully review the following guidelines. Thanks for your help in keeping Lake Harriet a great place to sail.

Introduction

- All skippers are responsible for performing safety boat duty at least twice during the sailing season.
- The commodore will alert members when the schedule is open for sign up.
- The safety boat coordinator will assign anyone who does not sign up within the stated time period.
- The LHYC website will send reminders the week of the race for which you have signed up.
- Skippers are responsible for finding a substitute if they cannot perform their duty on the day they are assigned. If you are unable to perform safety boat duty on an assigned day, tell the safety boat coordinator as soon as possible who your replacement will be and when you will perform your safety boat duty.
- If, on the day of your assignment, you feel you cannot perform safety boat duty due to your physical capabilities and/or weather conditions, it is still your responsibility to find a replacement. In this situation you must alert the safety boat coordinator and the race officer as soon as possible.
- A skipper and one crew must occupy each safety boat. The skipper is responsible for providing the crew. Both skipper and crew must be physically capable of righting a turtled boat and helping a sailor climb into the safety boat. It is the skipper's responsibility to know how to operate a motorboat and how to conduct rescue operations, including how to right a turtled boat. If you are uncomfortable with these duties it is your responsibility to arrange for training with the safety boat coordinator prior to your first assigned date.
- LHYC Sailing Instruction 19.6 reads: "All registered skippers are required to perform safety boat or race committee duties (including showing up with a crew!) per published schedule. Each registered racing sailboat is considered one registered skipper for purposes of scheduling safety boat and race committee duties. Skippers who do not show up for scheduled safety boat (with an able-bodied assistant) or race committee duty will receive a penalty equal to the number of boats that came to the starting area + 3 for the affected races. This penalty score is not eligible for throw out".
- Safety boaters must bring their own lifejackets. Sailing gloves are highly recommended, since rescue operations can be hard on the hands.
- Safety boaters are responsible for providing treats after the races. Prior to race day the two safety boaters should consult and agree upon a plan for fulfilling this important part of their duty.

Equipment Setup

- Safety boat skippers and crew should report to the race officer at least ONE HOUR before the scheduled start of the race (Saturday - 12:00 pm, Sunday and Holidays - 9:30 am). BE ON TIME! Many people are depending on you.
- Set up both safety boats and the race committee boat following the instructions of the race officer.
- Check the gas cans to make sure they are at least $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Fill them outside the shed on the concrete so that any spillage will evaporate outside.

LHYC Safety Boat Instructions

- Test your radio with the race officer and the other safety boat driver before going out on the lake. (The race officer will utilize one channel during the starting sequence and then move to another channel for communicating with safety boats during the race.) After the race return the radio to its charger in the shed.

Taxi Service

- Take sailors to their buoys.
- No more than 4 people including the driver are allowed in a safety boat during taxiing. This is a regulation, and you can be fined for violating it.
- Every passenger must have a life jacket. (There are extras in the shed for sailors who have left jackets on their boats.)
- Operate the safety boat at half throttle or less through the buoy field and while taxiing unless there is an emergency. Minimize your wake in the buoy field. The area close to the dock is a no wake zone. Try to avoid disturbing other users of the lake with your wake. Our use of gas motors is a privilege, and we must operate them responsibly. Always give the right of way to other craft on the lake, and stay well clear of them if possible.
- Safety boats are not permitted to tow sailboats between the dock and their buoys, except in emergency situations.
- A safety boat may not deliver or take off crew from any sailboat after the sailboat has left the buoy or dock.
- The race officer will tell safety boaters when they should stop taxiing and proceed to the race course. (It is appropriate to stop taxi service fifteen minutes prior to the start of a race.)

The Race

- Safety boats should situate themselves on the course according to the race officer's instructions.
- Safety boats are responsible for monitoring the course at all times.
- If a boat capsizes the closest safety boat should immediately go to the boat and offer assistance. Alert the race officer and second safety boat so they are aware of the situation.
- Racers are allowed to take assistance in righting their boats, without penalty, in any circumstance. Safety boats must nevertheless ask if the racer wants assistance prior to touching the boat.
- In emergency situations the safety boat should immediately alert the race officer and take steps to assist.
- Safety boats should monitor boats retiring, either during the race or between races, and ask the race officer when it is safe to leave the course and taxi sailors from their buoys to the dock. The race is always the priority, and in some situations a retiring sailor may have to wait for taxi service.

Finishing Up

- After the first finishers reach the buoy field one safety boat should leave the course to begin taxi service. The other safety boat should remain on the course to provide safety for the rest of the racers. Check with the race officer to determine which boat should leave to begin taxiing and when.
- The race officer will tell the safety boat remaining on the course when to retrieve the marks.
- When pulling anchors coil the anchor line into an anchor bucket, taking all knots out of the line. **Put the end of the line in the bucket first.** After coiling all the line into the bucket, put the anchor on top of the line.

- After post-race taxiing is complete, the safety boaters are responsible for putting away all of the equipment. Do not leave until the equipment is stowed and secured properly.
- Have treats out on the picnic table when the first racers arrive at the dock.

Rescuing People

- The primary purpose of safety boats is to promote safe usage of Lake Harriet. Safety boats should observe all sailboats, canoes, rowboats, kayaks, paddleboards, etc. on the lake and provide assistance to those in trouble.
- The first priority is the safety of people. Rescue of equipment is secondary.

Injury: In the event of a serious injury, contact the race officer by radio. The race officer will call 911 so that emergency personnel can be standing by when the injured person is brought to shore. Transport the injured person to shore as quickly as possible.

Severe Weather: When severe or threatening weather occurs the race officer will abandon the race (with three horn sounds). Safety boaters must then help clear the lake of people and boats. Remember that the first priority is the safety of people. Leave a boat on the lake, if necessary, to pick up people in the water.

Water Temperature: Special attention should be given to water temperature in the spring and fall. A person in cold water will quickly develop hypothermia.

Person in the Water: First assess the situation and the extent of the danger. Use extreme caution when approaching people in the water. Always approach a person or overturned boat with the bow of the safety boat pointing into the wind. You will have more control, and the boat will not drift over the person. Remember, it may take some time to retrieve people in the water. Shift the motor into neutral when near people in the water. Shut off the motor before helping people get into the safety boat. After the motor has been shut off, a racer can get into the safety boat over the stern by using the plate on the motor shaft as a step.

Disabled (but not capsized) Boats

If a boat has been disabled by an equipment failure, such as a broken rudder, it may be towed off the course. If there are sailors in the water, attend to them before towing the boat. Otherwise approach the boat slowly, and ask the sailors if they want assistance. If so, have them drop their sails. Do not attempt to tow the boat with the sails up. Attach the towing bridle to either side of the safety boat transom. Attach one end of the towrope to the bridle and the other end to the bow eye on the disabled boat. Ideally, use a bowline knot to attach the towline to the towing bridle, as it is the easiest knot to untie after towing. Tow slowly! A towed boat builds up considerable momentum and is not easy to control. Have the disabled boat drop its leeboards or keel board and, if possible, steer with its rudder. The boat crew may have to move to the stern to keep the bow up during towing. Watch for other boats while towing. Tow the boat to the dock, and slow down well before you reach the dock area.

Capsized (but not turtled) Boats

- LHYC Sailing Instruction 29, Assistance to Capsized Boats, reads: "LHYC considers all crew members of capsized boats to be in danger. Thus a capsized boat may receive help under rule 41(a) from a safety boat or any other vessel". This means that capsized boats will not be penalized for accepting help. A skipper may nevertheless choose not to receive help.

- If the skipper wants help, approach the boat cautiously. Most boats lying on their side in the water will be able to self-rescue, but not all. If your assistance is needed to right the boat, quickly move to the masthead and have your crew grasp the mast and rest it on the gunwale of the safety boat. Again be careful with the propeller. Know where the sailors are in the water and don't run over the sail. Once the masthead is on the gunwale, shut off the motor.
- Before you attempt to raise the mast make sure the mainsheet and boom vang are uncleated, otherwise the boat may capsize again when the mast is raised. The safety boat crew should slowly raise the mast and walk it up, letting water drain from the mast. The driver may have to assist the crew, depending on their strength and experience. When the mast is nearly vertical, and there is no water draining from it, push the mast to vertical quickly. Once the boat is up make sure all the sailors get back into it. Some may need assistance.

Turtled boats

This is where safety boaters earn their pay! Approach a turtled (bottom up) boat cautiously. As always, the first concern is the safety of sailors. Clearly ask, "Are you OK?", and get a verbal confirmation. Make sure all the crew are accounted for. Throw flotation if necessary. Most sailboats will not self-rescue from this position, and your assistance will be necessary. You need proper leverage to bring the mast to the surface. There are several ways to get it.

Retrieve the Halyard: One of the sailors can swim under the boat and retrieve the halyard (the cable/line combination used to raise the sail). Have the sailor hand the halyard to the safety boat crew. The crew will pull the mast to the surface and place the mast head on the gunwale of the safety boat. Retrieving the halyard is not advisable if the sailboat crew is tired or uncomfortable going underneath the boat.

Retrieve a Control Line: If the halyard is not retrievable, have a sailor retrieve one of the longer control lines and throw it across the bottom of the boat. A sailor should grab hold of the line and stand on the bottom of the boat as close as possible to the gunwale opposite the side of the boat with which the line is in contact. The sailor should then lean back while pulling on the line to raise the boat. The safety boat crew, wearing sailing gloves, can grab and pull the side stay on the opposite side to help raise the mast to the surface. The driver may also need to help.

Raise a Board: If a leeboard can be raised, a sailor should grab hold of it and stand on the bottom of the boat as close as possible to the gunwale. The sailor should then lean back while pulling on the board to bring up the opposite side of the boat. The safety boat crew can assist as in the previous paragraph.

Use an Anchor Line with a Weight: Another method is to use an anchor line with a weight attached. The line can be run down one of the side stays, and the mast raised as in the halyard method. In this case, however, the safety boat must back away somewhat from the turtled sailboat in order to maintain the needed leverage.

Release Halyard Tension

Once the head of the mast is resting on the gunwale of the safety boat, release the tension on the halyard. Pass a rope through the top hole in the board at the top of the sail. Then take hold of both ends of the rope and pull to release the bead from its slot. Placing one foot on the top of the mast while pulling will give you more leverage. The alternative is to release the halyard shackle from the board at the top of the sail. This will leave the shackle at the top of the mast, but it can be retrieved later at the dock.

Raise the Mast and Lower the Sail

Once halyard tension is released the safety boat crew should raise the mast to the upright position as described in the “Capsized (but not turtled) Boats” section. The sails should come down as you raise the mast. Have the sailboat crew gather the sails into the boat once it is upright.

Tow the Boat to the Dock area

Towing a swamped sailboat is very challenging because the boat is heavy, unstable, and has great momentum. Follow the instructions for towing in the “Disabled (but not capsized) Boats” section, but have the crew open the bailers in addition to dropping the boards and steering with the rudder. The crew should move to the back of the boat and may even have to hang from the stern as the boat is being towed.

Last revised May 19, 2016, by Wendy Ott, Bill Hanson, and Bill Colburn