



Small Craft Emergency Protocol

Nothing in this protocol should prevent any person involved in an emergency situation from taking reasonable and appropriate action (in accordance with their training and ability) to get a casualty to safety as quickly as possible, keeping others informed of the nature of the casualty and the landing place (as a minimum).

1. In the event of a safety boat recognising an Emergency situation the safety boat will call the Race Officer (RO) on the club's channel and briefly explain the situation and state intention to call the Coastguard on channel 16. The RO will confirm.

(This call can only be made on Ch16 as the Coastguard only has one VHF aerial that genuinely covers all Poole Harbour – that on Nine Barrow Down).

2. Both parties tune to Channel 16. The safety boat calls:
“Mayday, Mayday, Mayday; Portland Coastguard, Portland Coastguard; this is () Club safety boat, we have an injured person in Poole Harbour and need immediate assistance. Over”
3. There should be a laminated prompt card on all safety boats to this effect.
4. This call will have been heard by the Harbour Control Officer (HCO) (who monitors Ch16 in addition to Ch14).
5. The professional Coastguard is now in direct contact with the vessel on scene and can glean all the appropriate information in order to conduct an effective rescue and also organise shore side emergency services.
6. As the RO and the HCO are monitoring, they can offer support or additional information (ie number of competitors & safety craft available / shipping movements); once the Coastguard have assumed control, the RO is relieved of his duty of care in respect of the rescue of this casualty and can focus on his responsibilities towards the rest of the participants.
7. The Coastguard are aware and accept that they may be talking to the safety boat crew (rather than cox'n) who may not hold a VHF licence, and that this is in accordance with Article 47.2 of the Radio Regulations.
8. Remembering that this is an Emergency situation, the coordination remains on Ch16 until such time (or other circumstances) that communications can be safely moved to another public VHF channel, ie: not Ch '0', so that all parties can continue to be advised, or contribute, as appropriate. Equally, the Coastguard should keep all parties on one VHF channel as they only have the one aerial with which to co-ordinate the incident.



9. HM Coastguard and Poole Harbour Control to be advised of club racing programmes to enable them to respond to calls from members of the public by being better informed. (eg Parkstone race Wednesday evenings from 3 April to 25 Sep 13).
10. Ideally safety boat crew should have at least one member with a VHF operators licence. The safety boat crew should be briefed in dealing with emergency situations.
11. Repatriation reference points that all, including the emergency services, are familiar with should be used. Where there are fatalities then busy public areas should be avoided i.e. not PQBH. Recommended repatriation points:
 - National Trust jetty on N Haven point
(Minor junction to the right off Ferry Rd.) BH13 7QJ
 - Royal Motor Yacht Club 54 Panorama Rd. BH13 7RE
 - Parkstone Yacht Club Pearce Avenue. BH14 8EH
 - Poole Yacht Club New Harbour Rd. BH15 4AQ
 - Poole Lifeboat Station (Poole Bridge) The Quay. BH15 1HA

(Southwest Ambulance require a post code for these locations).

12. Training exercises should be conducted to ensure that the protocol is understood and refined and to reinforce confidence in non professional parties. This should take the form of practical and/or table top as deemed necessary.



The advantages of this method are:

- Coastguard immediately in contact with first informant and can obtain all the info they and Ambulance / hospital need.
- No delays introduced by relaying through RO and HCO
- No interpretations or mistakes introduced by relaying through RO or HCO
- Coastguard now in constant contact with first informant on scene.
- RNLI or helicopter in constant contact with first informant as soon as they launch
- All parties kept updated
- As this is on an open VHF channel, others are kept informed and can contribute (negates the one-to-one closed network caused by phone calls)
- The RO can concentrate on his other participants
- The HCO can concentrate on his priorities

The disadvantages of this method are:

- The Coastguard may end up talking to someone who is not very familiar with VHF procedures (but in truth they are used to that).
- The safety boat crew will be outside their comfort zone of Ch 'M'

Note: From February 2005 it is no longer a requirement for vessels to monitor VHF Ch16 where impractical to do so. However Poole Harbour Control and HM Coastguard do monitor VHF Channel 16.

n.b. The transfer of Portland Coastguard and Solent Coastguard to the new Coastguard National Maritime Operations Centre based in Fareham in the not-too-distant future is acknowledged, and text will be modified when appropriate.



Extracts from the ITU Radio Regulations:

When at Sea, the appropriate response should be :

Distress calls

- **Answer** any distress call made on Channel 16, give it priority and take steps to acknowledge the call and render assistance or seek help.
- **However do not** communicate with the vessel making the distress call for a short interval in situations where reliable communications with a coast station are practicable (allowing the Coastguard to respond first).
- **Stop all** transmissions when you hear a distress call being made from another vessel to avoid interference to that distress call.
- **Know** the correct procedures for making and dealing with distress messages and traffic and train others on board how to receive and make calls.
- **Avoid** making distress calls unless the master of the vessel orders that he or she is sure that you are in grave or imminent danger; or that another ship or an aircraft is in grave or imminent danger and cannot itself send a signal; or that the ship or aircraft concerned requires immediate assistance or additional help to that immediately available.
- **Be ready** to repeat your distress message on any frequency if you receive no answer on the distress frequency.
- **Know** your vessel call-sign to uniquely identify your vessel in distress.

General rules – DO NOT

- **Transmit without** the authority of the master or other person in charge of the vessel unless in an emergency situation.
- **Operate** the radio telephone **unless** qualified or under the supervision of an appropriately qualified person.
- **Transmit** or circulate **false** or **deceptive** safety or identification signals.
- **Transmit without identification.** This means your callsign or vessel name.
- **Close down** a radio telephone **before** finishing all operations resulting from a distress call, urgency or safety signal.
- **Broadcast** messages or programmes of music (broadcast means to transmit without a reply being expected) **except** for safety messages.
- Make **unnecessary** transmissions.
- **Transmit** profane, indecent or obscene language.
- **Use** frequencies or channels other than those stipulated in the Ship Radio Licence.
- **Broadcast** messages intended for reception onshore except through a Coast Station, other than as stipulated in the Ship Radio Licence.