

WELLS & DISTRICT WATER SKI CLUB SAFETY PLAN, RULES AND GUIDANCE

Contents

1	Introduction & Overview
2	Safety Statement
3	Personal Responsibility
4	Safety Guidelines
	General
	Boats
	Drivers
	Observers
	Skiers
	Equipment
	Route/Course
	Swimmers
	Insurance
	First Aid
	Accident Book
	Safety Officer
5	Safety Review
6	Risk Management
7	Channel Dredging Works
8	Skiing Suspension
9	Ski Course Map



1 - Introduction & Overview

This document has been approved and introduced by the ski club committee as a means of reducing and eliminating accidents. Its use provides a framework to help identify areas of risk and opportunities to improve club safety. The document stresses the importance of safety, identifies responsibilities, refers to specific risk areas, provides suggested safety guidance and provides a risk management and review process to ensure future improvement. The document should align with and will considerably assist the Harbour Commissioners in addressing the Port Marine Safety Code. Its communication to club members should raise the relevant importance of safety in everyone's mind.

2 - Safety Statement

Water skiing behind a boat is one of the safest forms of sport but it is however still classed as a risk sport and members join the ski club and participate in water skiing activities entirely at their own risk and in full knowledge of the dangers therein.

The ski club has had an excellent safety record with no accidents to non-club members and very few individual personal accidents. The club also carries out many swimmers and boat rescues each year and hence contributes to increased safety for other water users.

The committee would like to see further improvements to safety which will be achieved by reviewing areas of risk and any actual cases of accidents in the future. Current safety guidelines will be reviewed and improved. Accident statistics will be recorded and improvement targets produced. Safety rules and guidelines will be communicated to club members.

3 - Personal Responsibility

Safety is the responsibility of all members. At membership renewal and on first joining each member will be asked to declare that they accept responsibility for their own safety and that they will show a duty of care to all other members and water users. They must also declare to abide by all safety rules.

4 - Safety Guidelines and Rules

The attached subjects will be added to following future reviews

4.1 - General

4.1.1 - All water skiing at Wells comes under the jurisdiction of the Safety Officer appointed by the club and acting with the authority of the Wells Harbour Commissioners.

4.1.2 - All club members are expected to act in a safe and responsible manner and show due consideration to all other users of the harbour.

Issue: 8

This document has been produced by Wells & District Water Ski Club

Committee: Date of Issue: - 11/6/20

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4.1.3 - The maximum number of Boats on the water at any one time is limited to 15 of which 6 may tow skiers.

4.2 - Boats

4.2.1 - Drivers and passengers must wear life jackets.

4.2.2 - Speed limits -: All harbour /channel speed restrictions must be adhered to.

4.2.3 - Refuelling -: Risks during refuelling can be minimized by ensuring no one smokes. All ignitions/ engines turned off. Do not do it in a crowd. Use correct filling funnels. Boats should have a fire extinguisher. Leave any engine covers off for short period and allow fumes to dissipate before starting.

4.2.4 - Breakdown -: In case of breakdown a sea anchor with one metre chain and rope should be carried, an oar, misc. tools, distress flare or red sheet and usefully a mobile phone with numbers of other boat users and emergency services.

4.2.5 - Hours of darkness -: Skiing should not be carried out from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise. Boats should be correctly illuminated for any late returns up the channel.

4.2.6 – Mechanical / electrical -: All boats should be in mechanical / electrical good order. No skiing should be carried out with intermittent working engines.

4.2.7 - All boats must display clearly, boat numbers, current launch disc and club sticker, which remain the property of the Club and are not transferable.

4.2.8 – No one is allowed to sit on gunwales (sides) or decking of the boat whilst towing skiers.

4.3 - Drivers

4.3.1 - All powerboats towing skiers shall be operated in a careful and prudent manner, at a reasonable distance from persons and property, so as not to endanger the life or limb or the property of any person. Do not follow directly behind any boat towing a skier. Stay your distance.

4.3.2 - Boat drivers must be full ski club members aged 16 and over. They must be SBD qualified within 6 months of joining.

4.3.3 - Boats must not be operated whilst under the influence of drugs / alcohol.

4.3.4 - As with road driving, boats should not be driven by persons with health problems which could lead to blacking out.

WELLS & DISTRICT WATER SKI CLUB SAFETY PLAN RULES & GUIDANCE



4.3.5 - Safe Boat Driving -: The BWSW driver's course is recommended for novice drivers. All new drivers must be accompanied for the first time by a committee member for induction on safe navigation of the ski course / route.

4.3.6 - Landing / take-off should always be from the beach hut area and nowhere else, except in emergency. Drivers on take-off should always give way to those already towing skiers.

4.3.7 - Drivers should not look back at skiers whilst moving forward. That is the observer's role. Generally speaking the driver should concentrate on the front 180 degrees and observe the rear 180 degrees.

4.3.8 - Drivers should ensure both observers and skiers understand the rules and can communicate.

4.3.9 - Drivers should carry a copy of the Safety Plan and show / explain the contents to their team

4.3.10 – Drivers should give skiers a smooth and steady pull on take-off. Wait for the skier's signal and ensure ski-tips are above the water. Steer clear of other boats and any floating obstacles. Return immediately to pick up skiers. Always shut off the motor before taking aboard a skier.

4.3.11 – Do not operate the ski boat whilst sitting on the side or standing.

4.3.12 – Do not drive through swimming areas except to pick up skiers.

4.3.13 – Try to avoid sharp turns. Wide arc turns are safest for skiers.

4.3.14 – Do not allow wave riders and inflatable toys to be overloaded and stick to sensible speeds. Tow in straight lines and take wide turns. Avoid getting inflatables on the whip and also avoid slack ropes which may jerk riders. Do not try to throw the rider out. Do not tow an inflatable within a towrope distance of any solid object. Riders must wear ski vests. Do not tow an unaccompanied small child. Stop the tow if a rider falls. Approach a fallen rider on the driver's side.

4.4 – Observers

4.4.1 - The observer is not there just to keep the driver company (or because the sausage is full). Observers carry out a vital role. As stated above, the observer should generally concentrate on the rear 180-degree view as well as the skier. The observer's main role is watch over the skier and any obstacles and dangers. The observer should inform driver and skier of any problems.

4.4.2 - Observers must learn the hand signal codes as described in BWSW guidance and it is up to drivers to ensure observers understand this.

4.4.3 - Observers must be over 14 years of age and competent as an observer and a full member of the ski club.

Issue: 8

This document has been produced by Wells & District Water Ski Club

Committee: Date of Issue: - 11/6/20

Review date: Spring 2021

Page 4 of 9



4.4.4 - All boats must carry an observer in addition to the driver.
Towlines must be recovered immediately after dropping off skier.

4.5 - Skiers

4.5.1 - Skiers should have regard for other water users and walkers on the beach. These people may not share your confidence and their perception may be a lot different to yours. They may feel intimidated and complain. The failure of a rope or skier at last minute may cause collision. Do not therefore ski straight up to walkers and other water users, so turn in plenty of time. Do not attempt to spray them no matter how tempting.

4.5.2 - Avoid skiing too close to the beach or in shallow water. Keep clear of any solid objects and floating debris. Watch the water ahead of you at all times. Do not ski directly ahead of or close to the side of another boat. Do not ski on to the shore. Sit down if coming in too fast. Do not jump from a moving boat.

4.5.3 - Skiers must wear life jackets and wet suits but not footwear.

4.5.4 - Users of inflatable wave riders (the sausage) should not use footwear.

4.5.5 – Skiers should always use correct hand signals. Do not shout “hit it” till the rope is taught and ski tips are up. Do not wrap the rope round any part of the body or place any part of the body through the handle.

4.5.6 – Avoid falling forward, sit down or if falling sideways curl yourself into a ball. Throw away the handle on falling. Recover skis quickly.

4.6 - Equipment

4.6.1 - All ski ropes, skis, ski bindings and life jackets and inflatable toys should be checked and replaced if worn.

4.7 - Route/Course

4.7.1 - All boat owners will have a copy of the latest course map and will explain the route to their skiers.

4.7.2 - The area defined for skiing by the Harbour Commissioners is to the North and West of the Lifeboat House with the Eastern most boundary line being from the Eastern corner of the Lifeboat House to a line between buoys 12 and 13 (yellow buoy). Take-off and drop off points are between the two markers positioned by the Lifeboat House.

4.7.3 - Boats with skiers should pass on the right of all green buoys on the way out to sea and to the left of all red buoys on return.

Issue: 8

This document has been produced by Wells & District Water Ski Club

Committee: Date of Issue: - 11/6/20

Review date: Spring 2021

Page 5 of 9

WELLS & DISTRICT WATER SKI CLUB SAFETY PLAN RULES & GUIDANCE



4.7.4 - All boats and skiers must navigate the course in a clockwise direction. This means that ski boats are passing other oncoming boats on the opposite side to normal sea/water but other boat users will expect this on the ski course only. In the harbour and further down the channel normal passing rules will apply.

4.7.5 - Only 6 people to be towed on the banana/sausage on ski course. Only two people to be towed at one time on ringos or inflatables. That is maybe one ringo with two people in or two ringos, each with one person in.

4.8 - Swimmers

4.8.1 - The area between buoys 9 /11 and the swimmers line of buoys should be left clear as a buffer zone to swimmers.

4.9 - Insurance

4.9.1 - All boat owners must have insurance which covers third party claims up to £2,000,000 as well as cover for passengers. BWSW recommend only R A Carter Boat Insurance.

4.9.2 - BWSW membership does provide limited personal insurance but individuals should satisfy themselves that the cover is sufficient. The water ski club accept no responsibility for personal accidents.

4.10 - First aid

4.10.1 - A first aid kit is provided in the beach hut for members use.

4.10.2 - There are no nominated first aiders and members are advised to seek assistance from emergency services when needed.

4.10 - Accident Book

4.10.1 - An accident book will be provided in the hut to record all accidents. The Safety Officer will review / report on this.

4.12 - Safety Officer

4.12.1 - A committee member will be nominated as Safety Officer. When that person is not present on the beach then another person should be nominated for the role. The Safety Officer's role is to remind people of their safety obligations when risk situations are evident. The Safety Officer will also lead on safety reviews and risk management.

5 - Safety Reviews

5.1 - Safety Report will be an agenda item at all committee meetings and at the AGM led by the Safety Officer. Safety reviews should be conducted 6 monthly at committee meetings led by the Safety Officer and the Safety Plan updated

Issue: 8

This document has been produced by Wells & District Water Ski Club

Committee: Date of Issue: - 11/6/20

Review date: Spring 2021

Page 6 of 9



6 - Risk Management

6.1.1 - Risk assessment will be conducted annually by the Safety Officer. Basically, any existing and newly identified safety risks will be assessed and risk levels assigned. New safety guidelines / rules can then be defined if required.

6.2.1 – Risk assessment will be carried out using the five-stage approach as follows.

6.2.2 - **Step 1**, Look for the hazards. -: Look at the ski course, boats, skiers, swimmers, equipment and ski hut. Consider Fire, fuel, electricity. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on the significant. Ask others what they think. Consult BWSW safety guidelines and risk assessment in the hut.

6.2.3 - **Step 2**, Decide who might be harmed and how. -: Consider members, guests, other visitors, spectators, competitors, walkers, swimmers, and members of the public.

6.2.4 - **Step 3**, Evaluate the risks -: Evaluate the risks and decide whether exiting precautions, rules and guidance is sufficient or if more should be done. Consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm. Is the remaining risk high, medium or low.

If something should be done draw up an action list and prioritise on those that are high risk and / or involve several people. Use the BWSW guidance on quantifying risk probability as follows.

Probability	Description
Likely/ Frequent	Occurs repeatedly- event to be expected
Probable	Not surprised, will occur several times
Possible	Could occur sometimes
Remote	Unlikely though conceivable
Improbable	So unlikely that probability is zero.

Consider the impacts of the hazard for example what would happen to whom if the accident should occur. Would it be a minor inconvenience or slight injury to one person or a very serious life threatening risk to several people.

Impacts
Minor inconvenience
Minor injury to one person
Severe injury to one person
Several people affected with minor injury
Several people affected with major injury

6.2.5 – **Step 4**, Record the findings -: Pass to the next committee meeting with any recommended changes or rules / guidelines. Keep copies. Record in the minutes.

6.2.6 – **Step 5**, Review and Revision -: Set a new review date for the beginning of the season. Review also any new inflatable toys / activities etc. Redo risk assessment.

Issue: 8

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Channel Dredging Works

7. It was agreed at the last Committee meeting that due to the space available to the Ski Club, if the water level was such that we could not use the North side of the berm, as a return leg, only two ski boats will be allowed on the water at any given time - (skiing or towing toys). During this time it was agreed that if a boat was towing toys, only two laps of the course would be permitted.

Again, due to the space available it was agreed at the Committee meeting that the Safety Officer of the day would be responsible to risk assess the course and stop any skiing or towing of toys if he/she felt it necessary, which we must all abide by.

Skiing Suspension

8. Skiing must be suspended when the water recedes to the level of the swimming buoys.

9. **Ski Course layout attached - Approved by the Harbour Master on the 14/4/15.**

- Also available on the club website
- Displayed in the ski hut

KEY

- = Main Course
- = Extended Course
- = Course Behind Berm

DIAGRAM NOT TO SCALE

WELLS & DISTRICT WATER SKI CLUB COURSE LAYOUT

ALL BOAT OWNERS AND CREW MUST CONTINUALLY RISK ASSESS
THE COURSE WHILST ON THE WATER

PLEASE NOTE: TIDE 2.6 +

1/2 HR BEFORE AND 1/2 HR AFTER HIGH WATER THERE IS 1 MTR
PLUS OF WATER OVER THE BERM. THEREFORE RETURN LEG NORTH
SIDE OF THE BERM COULD BE USED

BE CAREFUL AS THE TIDE EBBS

SWIMMERS:

THEY OFTEN SWIM OUTSIDE THE SWIMMING AREA. PLEASE ADVISE
POLITELY AND RECORD ALL INCIDENTS ON THE CLUB SYSTEM.

LIFEBOAT:

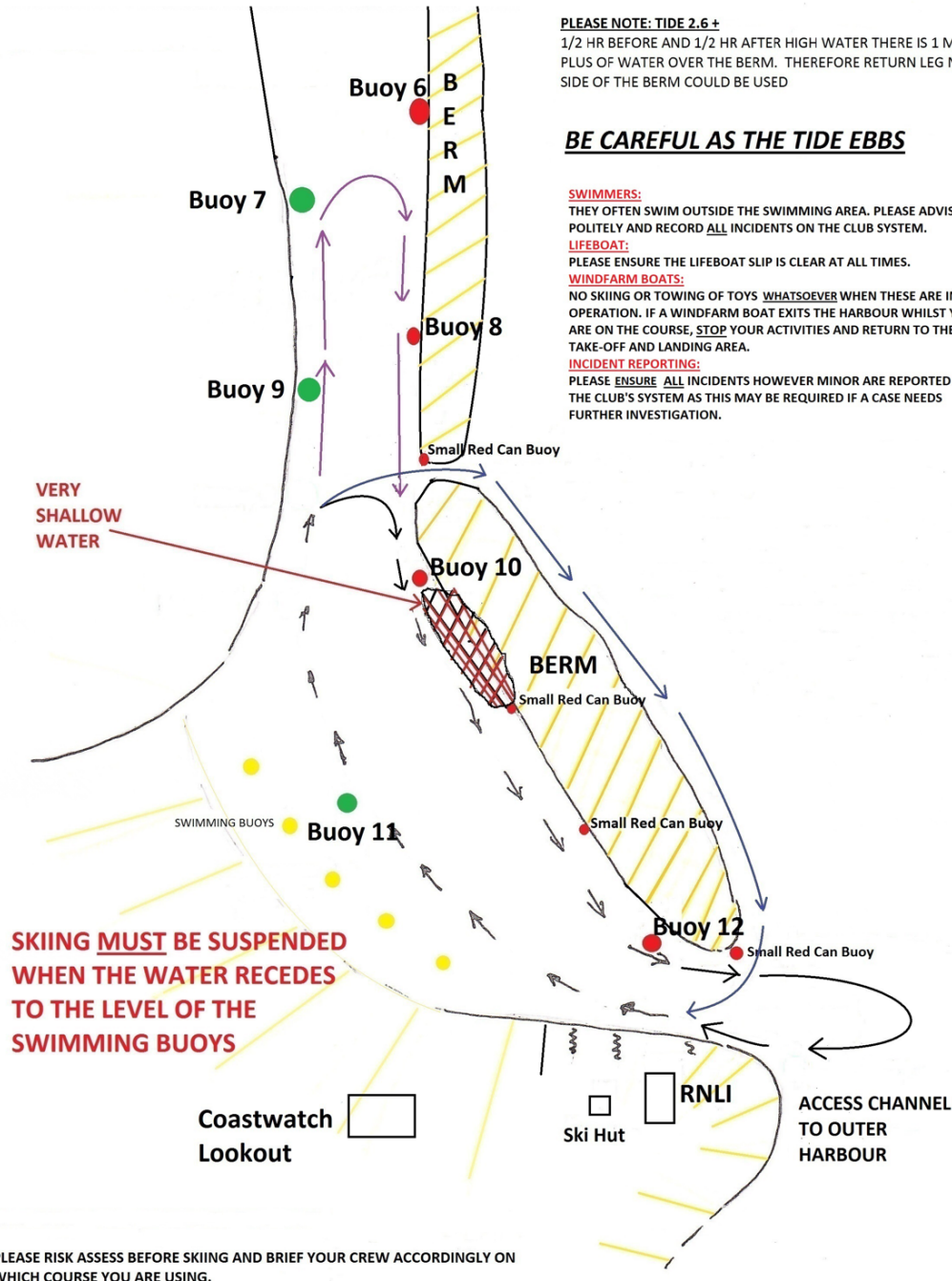
PLEASE ENSURE THE LIFEBOAT SLIP IS CLEAR AT ALL TIMES.

WINDFARM BOATS:

NO SKIING OR TOWING OF TOYS WHATSOEVER WHEN THESE ARE IN
OPERATION. IF A WINDFARM BOAT EXITS THE HARBOUR WHILST YOU
ARE ON THE COURSE, STOP YOUR ACTIVITIES AND RETURN TO THE
TAKE-OFF AND LANDING AREA.

INCIDENT REPORTING:

PLEASE ENSURE ALL INCIDENTS HOWEVER MINOR ARE REPORTED ON
THE CLUB'S SYSTEM AS THIS MAY BE REQUIRED IF A CASE NEEDS
FURTHER INVESTIGATION.



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