



AUSTRALIAN DRAGON BOAT FEDERATION

SAFETY MANUAL

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Introduction

The Board of the Australian Dragon Boat Federation (AusDBF) is the national body charged with overseeing the sport of dragon boating in Australia. Each State and Territory in Australia also has an association (with a Board) that manages dragon boating at the local level.

All Dragon Boat Boards/Committees are responsible for establishing and maintaining the safety standards for Dragon Boating in Australia. As a consequence each State and Territory has endorsed:

- the AusDBF's Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) policy safety policy; and
- this safety manual. This manual encapsulates dragon boat practices/requirements which are common throughout Australia.

Each State and Territory has also developed a Safety Annex to the AusDBF safety manual which address local issues. Ideally there should be one national manual but given the different legislative requirements throughout Australia it is necessary to have a document (the Annex) which addresses local issues.

This safety manual is based on the outcomes of a 2012 qualitative risk assessment on Dragon Boating in Australia. The risk assessment identified all known hazards associated with Dragon Boating and identified the appropriate controls to reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment, and to the reputation of Dragon Boating in Australia.

Managing these three risks is the responsibility of everyone associated with dragon boating. This includes, but is not limited to, people managing and administering the sport, sweeps, paddlers, drummers, regatta staff (including volunteers), contractors, service providers and officials. Managing these risks is a collective effort and focuses making dragon boating the safest sport in Australia.

The SHE policy statement and this safety manual are key documents associated with a safety management system that governs the safe conduct of dragon boating in Australia. A description of this Safety Management System is located on the AusDBF Website.

I commend this safety manual to everyone associated with the sport of dragon boating in Australia.

Kel Watt
President
Australian Dragon Boat Federation

Structure and Context

AusDBF's Safety, Health and Environmental (SHE) policy is included as Annexure A. This policy embodies our commitment to establishing and managing standards for best practice for the Dragon Boat sport in Australia.

The Policy includes the development of a fully supportive culture empowering Volunteers, Participants and Staff to ensure Safety, Health and Environmental issues are identified and acted upon.

The standards to be adhered to, along with policies and procedures for maintaining them have been divided into a series of further Annexures (B-J) according to AusDBF's main areas of responsibility in setting a National benchmark. As indicated, each State and Territory has a further Safety Annex addressing local issues and regulations.

Each Policy is a statement of commitment to the management of safety and risk in all areas.

The policies and procedures described in this Safety manual operate within the overall context of AusDBF's Safety Management System (SMS). The AusDBF SMS has been developed in support of and to demonstrate commitment and compliance to the Workplace Health & Safety (WH&S) act and their supporting Regulations in each Australian jurisdiction. A schematic of the SMS is included in **Attachment 1**. This shows the relationship of this Safety Manual with respect to the other policies and documents that make up the AusDBF safety management system framework.

ANNEXURES

A. SAFETY, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT POLICY

At AusDBF we are committed to being a leader in safety, health and environmental (SHE) performance for the Australian Dragon Boat sport and achieving a culture which empowers employees (where applicable), volunteers and participants to assume accountability for SHE performance.

Volunteers/participants and staff will be appropriately trained and informed of the personal and business benefits of effective SHE management.

We will endeavour to:

- provide, in *so far as is reasonably practicable*, a safe working environment for all volunteers, participants, customers, contractors, suppliers and the community;
- comply with applicable safety and operational procedures, regulatory and statutory obligations, and encourage a culture to exceed the level of minimum compliance, where appropriate;
- improve safety performance, including ongoing consultation and communications, and the periodic review and audit of the Safety Management System;
- manage identified hazards as part of a Safety Management System based on the principles of risk management;
- report all incidents and where appropriate conduct thorough investigations, and implement and record corrective actions;
- eliminate risk of injuries so far as is reasonably practicable,
- protect and conserve assets, including property and the environment in a commercially sustainable manner;.
- manage safety risks by communicating areas of actual or potential exposure and complying with the principles of the Safety Management System;
- promote safety, health and environmental practices with our volunteers, participants, customers, contractors, stakeholders and within the community generally; and
- ensure that appropriate briefing and/or training is provided to those with a safety responsibility.

Source: AusDBF SM-POL-001 SHE Policy.doc

B. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Compliance and Due Diligence

The operations of the new Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS Act 2011) has been accepted by the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia still operate under the OH&S Act of 1991. It is likely that these States will embrace the new WHS Act in the medium term.

As the management of dragon boating in Australia is mostly voluntary (that is there are very few full time employees being paid a salary), there are no legal requirements for AusDBF, its Associations and Clubs to embrace the requirements of either act. However COMCARE and WORKSAFE expect, as the safety regulators, that the sport of dragon boating in Australia be conducted in the safest manner possible. Given that there is no Safety Act dedicated to dragon boating it is beholden upon dragon boating management to follow as closely as possible the guiding principles of their respective acts. (DBNSW has one full time and one part time employee.)

As AusDBF is an incorporated company under the Commonwealth this safety manual will be based on the WH&S Act 2011. Dragon Boat Associations in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia must comply with the OH&S Act 1991 until these States embrace the WH&S Act 2011. However the principles between the two Acts are fundamentally the same. That is the safe protection of people. Therefore the guidance provided in this manual should be complied with so far as is reasonably practicable.

While personal liability for work health and safety offences is not a new thing, the nature and scope of this duty on officers is new'.¹ In essence the WHS Act 2011 imposes upon officers or "persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)" a proactive new duty to exercise due diligence to ensure compliance with the work health and safety legal obligations by that entity. For the purposes of this safety manual AusDBF, the State/Territory dragon boat associations and all Dragon Boat Clubs are defined as a business or undertaking.

The definition of an officer is contained within the WHS Act 2011. With respect to the Australian Dragon Boat Federation (its State and Territory affiliates and their clubs) an officer is a person who makes decisions and administers dragon boating (board members, club officials, coaches, sweeps, regatta staff, etc.).

However the WHS Act 2011 also imposes a safety duty upon others involved in dragon boating including paddlers. In other words all people involved in dragon boating have a responsibility to ensure that the sport is undertaken safely.

Due diligence is defined as:²

- knowledge of work, health and safety matters;

¹Due Diligence: Duty of Officers. Michael Tooma. CCH Australia Limited Workplace Health and Safety Series. May 2012. Page 2

² Op Cit. Page 2

- understanding the nature of dragon boating and the associated risks;
- resources and processes needed to ensure the sport is safe;
- information regarding incidents, hazards, and risks and responding in a timely way to that information
- legal compliance; and
- verification of the due diligence framework for dragon boating in Australia.

Due diligence is a proactive duty, and it is part and parcel of good leadership. Due diligence duty is also criminal in nature.³

This manual focuses mainly on the six aspects of due diligence. But it also contains specific safety information as it pertains to Dragon Boating.

Due Diligence - Risk Knowledge

AusDBF and the State/Territory Boards are working towards having a safety system in place that allows them to acquire and keep up to date with risk knowledge in relation to health and safety matters associated with Dragon Boating. This system provides them assurance that all incidents and hazards within their jurisdiction are being properly dealt with. Incident reports are to be forwarded by Clubs to their State bodies, then State to the National body where incidents will be held in a database similar to Filemaker Pro.

The system includes:

- a common safety incident database at the State/Territory and National level.
 - The dataset for these databases are exactly the same.

The dataset reflects the data required on the safety incident report form (see **Attachment 2**)

Incident data captured by the State and Territories is passed to the AusDBF Safety Officer who maintains a database of national incidents and undertakes a trend analysis of the incidents reported. The database of incidents along with the trend analyses of national incidents are regularly reviewed by AusDBF Safety Committee comprising all state/territory safety officers.

- State/territory safety committees which meet as required to review incidents that have occurred since the last meeting.
 - Members of these committees include, but are not limited to, Club Safety Officers and the Association Safety Officer.
 - These committees report to their respective state/territory boards which have safety as a standing agenda item for their meetings.
 - These committees assess each incident received from their respective clubs for relevancy before it is placed in the database and reported to AusDBF.

³ Op Cit Page 1

- These committees ensure that incidents are dealt with properly and in a timely manner.
- Where a State or Territory safety committee identifies a hazard and implements a control it reports the course of action to the AusDBF safety committee for consideration at the national level.
- Records of these meetings are kept and identify what actions have been taken to close out incidents or remedy hazards.
- The AusDBF Safety Committee meet regularly (minimum three times per year) to review all incidents that have occurred nationally since the last meeting and to review progress on addressing outstanding incidents from previous meetings.
 - Members of this committee include, but are not limited to, all state/territory associations' safety officers.
 - This committee reports to the AusDBF Board which has safety as a standing agenda item for its meetings.
 - This committee assesses incidents reported from the state and territories to identify and address emerging risks from a national perspective.
 - When an emerging risk is identified, the AusDBF Safety Committee develops an appropriate control and advises the state/territory safety committees. These committees will ensure that the agreed control is implemented.

Training also plays a large part in allowing coaches, sweeps and paddlers to understand the risks arising from dragon boating. The AusDBF runs national coaching courses which are accredited through the Australian Sports Association. Likewise state and territory associations convene sweep accreditation courses; the content of which is approved by the AusDBF. Importantly all coaches and sweeps are recommended to maintain a valid first aid certificate. Additionally sweeps are reaccredited every three years.

Finally all paddlers are provided a safety brief before proceeding onto the water. The content of these safety briefs are determined by the respective state and territory associations but contain some core messages required by AusDBF. These core messages are listed at Annex D.

Due Diligence - Understanding the Nature of Dragon Boating

Under the WHS Act 2011 the Dragon Boat community is taking reasonable steps to gain an understanding of the hazards and risk associated with the sport.

All AusDBF, State and Territory Board members and Club officials are, in the main, experienced dragon boaters. As such they have a sound understanding of the hazards and risk associated with Dragon Boating. However a formal risk assessment of the sport was undertaken in December 2012 and all known hazards (and their controls) associated with dragon boating in Australia were identified. All Boards were represented during the risk assessment workshop. This risk assessment has resulted in this policy statement being produced.

The only group in the dragon boat community who are not aware of dragon boat safety are new paddlers and helpers at regattas. As a consequence every dragon boat club in Australia has an

induction program (on DVD) to provide advice on technique and the safety aspects of Dragon Boating to these two groups.

Due to the differing paddling conditions around Australia, the State and Territory Boards ensure that the safety messages associated with their local environment are consistent across all clubs in their jurisdictions. Indeed all State and territory boards have promulgated a safety directive that addresses local issues and expand on issues contained within this policy statement.

Due Diligence - Resources and Processes

Officers associated with Dragon Boating in Australia are mainly volunteers. As a consequence much of what they do is done free of charge to the sport. Therefore there is very little financial drain on resources as far as salaries are concerned.

However insurance premiums and equipment attract significant resources. As a consequence membership fees are imposed upon all paddlers and dragon boat officials in Australia. These fees vary between State and territories but are determined by state/territory boards to address future requirements. Each State and Territory pays an annual member levy to AusDBF as well as a small annual subscription to be a Member of AusDBF.

Other national issues such as the national championships and the teams representing Australia in overseas competitions are self-funded via entry fees and participation charges.

Each state and territory board manage their budgets to address safety matters highlighted through their respective safety officers and committees. Boards assess the safety impact of their resource decisions and record them in the Board minutes.

The appropriate amount of resources (determined by the States and Territory Associations) is spent on maintaining dragon boat equipment in a safe state such that the boat will be “sea” worthy for paddlers.

Emerging national issues are treated differently simply because of the likely demand on limited resources. Where there is likely to be significant resources required to address the issue an AusDBF meeting (comprising representatives from all states and territories) is convened and an appropriate assessment undertaken using SFARP principles.

As far as processes are concerned the Australian Dragon Boat community has a set of established safety practices that assure safety on the water. These practices are based on international norms and local waterway rules and procedures. These are generally inexpensive and are more procedural.

A similar but separate set of processes are invoked during dragon boat regattas due mainly to the large concentration of paddlers in a small area; the risk of harm to people, the environment and the dragon Boat community’s reputation is greater. As a consequence a risk assessment is undertaken before each regatta and resources assigned accordingly. This assessment addresses all risks associated with the vision for dragon boating in Australia.

Above all the Australian Dragon Boat Community confers upon its members the right to question a safety practice or highlight an emerging safety issue on the spot. Indeed it bestows upon the individual the right to refuse to paddle if he/she believes that it is unsafe to do so. Accordingly any paddler is free to voice a concern if they believe that the coach or sweep is taking an

unnecessary risk – without detriment. This policy is articulated in safety policy statements of the state/territory Boards.

Due Diligence - Information Relating to Incident, Hazards and Risks

Analysing and learning from an incident is critical to eliminating risks associated with dragon boating. Accordingly should an incident require it, an investigation is undertaken by the Club involved and a report submitted to the respective state/territory safety committee.

The State/Territory Boards sight the respective incident/hazard log and incident report each time it meets and assures itself that the appropriate action is being taken by the safety committee. The safety committee is chaired by the state/territory safety officer.

The safety officer is the point of contact for all clubs within the respective state/territory associations on safety matters. He/she is responsible for maintaining the hazard log for his/her particular state or territory. He/she is also responsible for developing a program of safety checks and briefings for the dragon boat community in his respective area.

AusDBF will soon have (end of 2013) a system in place which allows it to collect national incident/hazard data (including incident reports) from the state/territory safety committees. Collecting data from each state and territory allows predictive and comparative analysis of dragon boat incidents to occur. The system includes a feedback mechanism to the States and Territory associations with advice on emerging trends and their potential solutions. The State and Territory Associations assess this advice for local implications and take the appropriate action.

Accidents in Dragon Boats can and do happen. While the likelihood could be minimal the consequences can be severe. Accordingly the Australian Dragon Boating Federation (AusDBF) and its associated state and territory associations provide an environment to reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the reputation of Dragon Boating to so far as reasonably practicable (SFARP).

Due Diligence - Legal Compliance

The AusDBF and its State and Territory associations undertake reasonable steps to ensure that safety compliance audits within the requirements contained in this manual are undertaken on a regular basis. These audits occur randomly (randomness / audit principles). The person undertaking the audits is the nominated safety officer of each State/Territory Dragon Boat Association. However the safety officer is at liberty to request a club safety officer to undertake an independent check of another club.

Where there are anomalies the safety officer renders a report to the Club Board with a notice of improvement. Clubs are expected to address this improvement notice within one month of it being rendered.

Likewise the AusDBF will undertake an audit of the state and territory associations for compliance with due diligence requirements of safety. This audit is undertaken on two associations randomly. One of these audits will be undertaken by an external auditor.

An example of a Safety Compliance Audit Plan is in **Attachment 3**. An example of a Corrective Action Plan (notice of improvement) resulting from an audit finding is included at **Attachment 4**.

An example of an inspection checklist is included at **Attachment 5**. Each State /Territory would use these examples as an aid in developing a local checklist to be used at their respective venues. Refer Attachment 3 for Safety Compliance Audit Plan.

Due Diligence - Verification

Due diligence means taking reasonable steps to verify that something has happened with a certain standard of care; that is verification

While audits are an important part of assuring compliance they can also become meaningless if clubs become aware of a forthcoming audit; an inordinate amount of time and energy could be expended to demonstrate abnormal level of compliance on the day of the audit. The problem of course ‘... is that the audit findings will be meaningless. The opportunity for learning and continuous improvement, the raison d’etre of the audit, is lost.’⁴

In recognition of this many AusDBF, State and Territory Association and Club officials are active paddlers and are continually observing dragon boat safety at the coal face. From a verification perspective these are construed as ‘site visits’. If they observe anything going astray they will discuss the ‘at risk’ behaviours with the responsible person. These discussions are free flowing and may lead to a problem in the system and not necessarily at the coal face. Regardless an incident report form is rendered if the AusDBF, Association or Club official believes that the incident was not a ‘one off’.

In addition to safety observations peer reviews are also undertaken. Peer reviews involve safety officers from one club (for example) visiting another club to verify compliance with ‘safety’ due diligence. Peer Reviews are usually planned and agreed. The review usually involves ‘... a “warts and all” explanation of the health and safety issues they face and to seek input and to workshop with their peers solutions for those issues.’⁵ The peer review is normally by invitation from AusDBF, the state or territory associations or clubs.

⁴ Op Cit Page 83

⁵ Op Cit Pages 84-87

C. GENERAL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

There are a number of general safety requirements which must be followed for the sport of dragon boating to be safe. These requirements follow.

Swimming Test

Dragon Boating is a water sport. And accidents on the water can lead to people drowning. Therefore in an effort to mitigate the risk of drowning all people on the water in a dragon boat are to be able to swim confidently 50m in clothing (with a shirt, shorts, sandshoes as a minimum) and tread water in the same clothes for 10-15 minutes without support.

Any person who cannot satisfy these requirements must wear a lifejacket or a PFD. It is up to Clubs are to encourage all paddlers to undertake a swim test on joining (or re-joining) the club. This test is best undertaken under the supervision of a nominated club member or members for verification.

Skylarking

There is to be no skylarking in a dragon boat or around a dragon boat storage area.

Medical

Dragon boating is a physically intense sport which clearly affects the heart etc.

Therefore any male over 40 or female over 55 years of age who have (or has had) coronary artery disease or a family history of premature coronary artery disease is recommended to seek clearance to paddle from a medical practitioner. And these people are further advised to have, as a minimum, an annual check-up from a medical practitioner.⁶

It is recommended that any male over 40 or female over 55 years of age who possesses two other risk factors (from smoking, diabetes, hypertension, high blood fats, family history, inactivity) or a severe risk factor (including treatment for these) get clearance to paddle from a medical practitioner annually. They are also advised to have an exercise stress ECG.⁷

It is further recommended that any male over 40 or female over 55 years of age who engages in habitual vigorous training and competition also have an exercise stress ECG.⁸

These considerations are picked up in the ESSA screening tool which is derived from the Sports Medicine Australia Pre exercise screening system 2005. The link to this document is at http://sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/new_pre_screening.pdf

These tools are indicative but not fail safe.

Clubs are to encourage all paddlers to consider Stage One medical screening using this document (it is voluntary to do the other stages).

⁶ The American Heart Association - Recommendations and Considerations Related to Pre-participation Screening for Cardio vascular abnormalities for competitive athletes:2007 Update

⁷ Op Cit

⁸ Op Cit

Paddlers who have a medical problem are requested to advise the Coach of their problem at the beginning of the season. In the event that a medical problem is exacerbated while undertaking a dragon boat activity, the paddler must notify the coach as soon as possible.

- Privacy act provisions dictate that people do not have to divulge this information.
- But if people chose not to surrender their medical information, they must fill out an indemnity form absolving the Club of all responsibility.

It is the responsibility of club members with a medical condition to equip themselves with the appropriate medication at all times while involved in dragon boating.

- Paddlers who are likely to suffer from an ailment or an illness etc while paddling must bring their medication with them on the boat.

It is advisable to carry a basic first aid kit at all times in the boat.

First Aid Precautions

Paddlers are to:

- take care to avoid infection if they have open wounds or a skin problem;
- disinfect any open wounds that might occur during training, as soon as possible;
- try to avoid getting open wounds wet by either covering them with a waterproof dressing or not training until they have healed; and
- report any injury (particularly a head injury) to the coach or sweep immediately.
 - The Sweep or Coach will assess the situation and take immediate action if the problem warrants it.

The Buddy System

On departure from the shore/wharf the crew should be 'numbered off' from the front of the boat and made aware they are each responsible for the person they are paired with (across the boat) and that in the event of a capsize or the boat being swamped, their first responsibility is to ensure that their partner is safe and well.

On the Water

- Paddlers are expected to listen and obey the sweep's commands.
 - The sweep is in command at all times regardless of who is taking the training session.
- A head check and a boat balance to be undertaken immediately the boat leaves the shore/wharf.
- Teams must not train during lightning storms or severe weather events.
- A safety bag - 15m "silver" non-stretch rope, torch at night, mobile phone - will be carried in the boat at all times.
- At least two bailing tools are to be carried in the boat;
- Alcohol and/or illicit drugs are not permitted on boats. Paddlers under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs are not to paddle.

- Illicit drugs are not permitted unless they are prescribed by a medical practitioner.
- When more than one boat from a Club is on the water, it is advisable for boats to remain within 200 metres of each other during winter and night time training.
 - This allows a boat to come to the rescue of paddlers within a reasonable amount of time.
- Coaches to ensure that their training plan accommodates this requirement.
- On water safety drills to be practiced at least twice in a season. View a capsized boat on the AusDBF website.
 - The first session recommended within a month of a new season commencing.

Small Boat Alerts/Strong Wind Warnings

Small boat alerts and strong wind warnings (26 to 33 knots as set down by Bureau of Meteorology) are issued for a reason. From a dragon boat perspective they warn us that the paddling conditions will worsen within the specified period. It also means that the likelihood of a boat sinking increases significantly. Accordingly no Dragon Boating is to occur when a small boat alert or strong wind warning has been issued. Refer to local conditions and laws.

The only exception to this rule is when:

- the weather is benign at time of paddling, and
- the training area is well protected from wind and/or waves.

If these conditions exist coaches and sweeps are to undertake (and record) a risk assessment to determine if it is safe to proceed onto the water. If the decision is made that it is safe to proceed, boats must stay within close proximity of the shoreline and proceed into the direction of the wind.

Strong Winds

If a small Boat alert *has not* been issued but winds and waves are increasing the Coach and sweep must undertake a risk assessment about proceeding into open waters. If a decision is taken to continue with training, boats must stay close to the shoreline. Sweeps are to steer the Boat into the waves for the first half of the training session and run with the seas in the second half of the session.

Gale Force Wind Warning

No paddling is to occur in any waters if a Gale force warning (34 to 47 knots as set down by Bureau of Meteorology) or worse has been issued.

Paddling at night

Sweeps must be particularly vigilant at night. In addition sweeps are to ensure that:

- boat lights are fitted on the dragon boat between sunset and sun rise and in periods of reduced visibility (if possible); Refer to local laws.

- The lights are to be waterproof and brightly visible throughout the session;
- At least one high powered torch is carried between sunset and sunrise;
- At least two bailing tools are to be carried in the boat;
- boats travel as close to the shoreline as possible in an anti-clockwise direction;
- they have an excellent working knowledge of the 'rule of the road' requirements; and
- Lifejackets/PFDs are recommended to be worn from sunset to sunrise particularly in Alpine conditions during winter paddling when the water temperature is below 18 degrees Celsius.⁹
- Recommend a first aid bag be carried in the boat.
- The safety bag must be carried in the boat.
- At least one person to carry a mobile phone in a waterproof bag that can be used in case of an emergency
- All sweeps to know their local area so that if an ambulance is called, they know the street address for directions
- Sweeps are encouraged to carry a whistle and a cyalume stick or small torch with them to attract attention in the event of trouble.

Winter Paddling

In addition to the other safety precautions mentioned 'on water' training during the winter should be undertaken as close to the shoreline as possible.

Sweeps are to ensure that their dragon boat crews are appropriately dressed for winter paddling.

Capsize Procedure

In the event that a dragon boat sinks or capsizes the following must be followed to ensure minimal harm to people.

- The crew must remain calm.
- Each paddler should immediately account for their buddy
- The sweep should immediately ensure that all the crew are accounted for by calling out their numbers and noting the response or if this is not possible by a head count.
- The crew must stay with the dragon boat and leave it in position.
- No one is to swim underneath an overturned dragon boat
 - it can be used as a floating platform, provided the crew space themselves evenly around the dragon boat.

⁹ United States Search and Rescue Task Force - Cold Water Survival

The sweep may authorise the dragon boat to be rolled back to the upturned position and used to support the paddlers by individuals holding onto the gunwales providing it is safe to do so.

In all situations the sweep should remain in control of the crew and, in a race situation, await the arrival of the rescue boats.

- the sweep remains in the water until all the members of his/her crew have been rescued.

The crew may recover their paddles if they are within easy reach.

- If there are rescue boats then the crews should not attempt to retrieve their paddles.
- Paddlers are to stay with the boat.
 - The main concern should be paddlers' welfare.

On the arrival of the rescue boats, the crew should move as directed by the operators of the rescue boats.

- If there are insufficient rescue boats to rescue all the crew in one go and the water conditions are kind, or it is shallow, crew members can remain with the dragon boat and start to swim it to the nearest shore.
 - This should only be done under the control of the sweep and when the swimmers are capable and not at risk.

Once the crew is safe a rescue boat may be used to recover the dragon boat.

If a rescue boat is not immediately available the Sweep, after accounting for his/her paddlers, must take action to ensure that his/her paddlers do not remain in the water longer than is absolutely necessary. This is particularly the case in winter paddling where immersion in the water will result in hypothermia.

- As a rule the Sweep must instruct paddlers to swim together (as a group) without exerting too much energy, to the nearest point of land.
 - It is important that all paddlers swim together; stronger swimmers helping the weaker ones.
 - If there are other water craft present paddlers should attempt to 'flag' them down for assistance.

If the environmental conditions allow it the sweep may instruct a couple of paddlers to remain with the boat to assist in its rescue. BUT the paddlers remaining behind must be volunteers and must be fit and strong swimmers.

If a capsize occurs in summer and hyperthermia is unlikely the Sweep may assess that it would be better for the paddlers to remain with the Boat instead of swimming to shore. If this occurs paddlers should carefully turn the boat right side up, and swim it to the nearest accessible bank.

- The whole team should move with the boat.
- Paddlers should not swim on ahead or be left behind.
- The sweep (or nominated person in charge) is to do several head counts as the boat is taken to safety.
- When on shore do another head count.

If paddlers are missing ring “000” for the emergency services.

Impairment through Injury or Exhaustion

If a paddler or sweep is injured during a dragon boat activity the boat is to be stopped and the injury assessed. If it is minor in nature the activity may recommence with an agreement between the sweep and injured person on the best course of action. If an injury occurs during a regatta the paddler will do a self-assessment and alert the sweep if he/she is uncomfortable. If this occurs the boat is to be brought to a stop and the appropriate action taken.

If a paddler becomes exhausted during a paddling activity he/she must stop paddling until he/she is able to continue (self-assessment) with the activity. If the exhaustion continues the paddler must inform the sweep who will decide on the best course of action (e.g. place the paddler in the safety boat if one is available).

Fitness

Paddling fitness is primarily a paddler’s responsibility. However it is important that club coaches assume that not all paddlers are ready for competition at the beginning of the season; they are to cater for paddlers of differing fitness levels, particularly at the beginning of the season. The intensity of training will increase commensurately.

Regular fitness tests undertaken through benchmarking may ensure that paddlers are fit enough to stand the rigours of dragon boat competition.

Where a coach assesses that a paddler does not have the requisite fitness levels to compete, the paddler must be advised that he/she will not be placed into a race boat until he/she acquires the appropriate fitness levels.

Where possible a club fitness program should be provided to paddlers. If a club does not have appropriate people to develop the fitness program club management should seek the services of their association to help out.

The Paddler

The following are some quick tips about paddlers, they must:

- be a minimum of 12 years old;
- be able to swim, confidently 50m in clothing (with a shirt, shorts, sandals as a minimum); or wear a pfd.
- be honest about his/her ability;
- be aware of hypothermia, hyperthermia and other dangers, and take the appropriate precautions;
- apply first aid if required, and be able to use all equipment in all likely conditions;
- must not paddle with a ‘nagging’ injury;
- be responsible for their own safety;
- report a safety concern to the appropriate authority; and
- respect the privacy and well-being of other paddlers.

Pregnancies

The guidance provided in the Australian Sports Commission's Guideline for the Australian Sporting Industry 'Pregnancy in Sport' must be adhered to. This document can be located at:

http://www.ausport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/146305/Pregnancy_in_sport.pdf

Clothing

As a rule paddlers and sweeps should not wear heavy and absorbent clothing or footwear as these have the potential to cause a person to drown.

All paddlers should dress for the conditions. In the summer months – a paddler's wardrobe should include:

- race shirt or singlet top;
- shorts or paddling shorts;
- boat shoes or the like (but not thongs or bare feet);
- hat, sun glasses, sunscreen;
- water bottle (hydrating at every opportunity); and
- Block out (+30 spf).

Clearly winter paddling requires warm clothing which is usually heavier than normal. The focus should be on thermal garments (for warmth) and wet weather gear (for protection). In the winter months, paddlers should dress for the conditions remembering that hypothermia can kill. As such a paddler's wardrobe might include:

- a wetsuit (without sleeves), spring suit;
- woollen or thermals leggings and top;
- waterproof jacket;
- wetsuit booties (socks etc.);
- wetsuit gloves;
- a beanie or a ball cap; and
- warm clothes to change into after training.

In both winter and summer paddlers are encouraged to wear eye protection such as sunglasses to protect their eyes from the sun and flying objects (insects etc.).

Motor Boats

Motor boats supporting a dragon boat activity must be driven by an appropriately licenced person. Each State and Territory has differing requirements for obtaining a boat licence. It is incumbent upon power boat coxswains to ensure that their licences are fit for purpose in accordance with local regulations.

Motor boats in support of a dragon boating activity must carry, as a minimum, the state and territory safety equipment requirements.

All motor boats in support of a dragon boating should be fitted with propeller guards.

All personnel in a motor boat, supporting a dragon boat activity, must comply with local regulations regarding the wearing of lifejackets/PFDs.

When using a motor boat for coaching purposes the coxswain is to ensure that he/she does not approach a dragon boat at high speed when within 20 metres of it.

Coaches should not use a power boat to generate waves unless the boat is full of experienced paddlers.

Cleaning Agents

While cleaning agents are not used widely they must be treated with respect when used. It is incumbent upon members to ensure that they comply with the product disclosure statement (PDS) and use/wear the proper protective equipment.

There must always be two people present when dangerous cleaning agents are being used; the second person is to act as a safety number and not use the cleaning product.

Emergency Communication

A list of vital telephone numbers should be displayed in every boatshed and inside every safety boat to include:

- Doctor / Ambulance /Police
- Fire Department
- Local hospital casualty department
- The emergency service that can provide the quickest on-water response
- The possible need for emergency communication from the water should be considered whether by two-way radio or by mobile phone.

D. BEFORE GETTING ONTO THE WATER

As with any water sport, and because of the environment itself, there is always an element of danger. Because of the size and design of the dragon boat and the water conditions in which training and racing takes place (that is placid water) dragon boating is generally safe and a capsiz, especially in such conditions and unless the crew is at fault, is a rarity.

However, people are people and the possibility an accident may occur remains. Dragon Boat Racing is no exception to the rule and it is the duty of all who participate in the sport – competitors, race organisers, coaches and officials alike – to be aware of the potential dangers inherent in the sport. Be safety conscious – not safety extreme – and ensure that dragon boat racing is conducted in a responsible manner

Each site has its own unique conditions that need to be assessed for risk to paddlers before they get into the boat. Many sites are far from clean and the entry into the water may have dangers (e.g. broken glass and sometimes syringes).

At night the dragon boat storage area and launch area should be well lit by torches or in built lighting before paddlers move in or around it.

All paddlers are to stretch and warm up before and after training and racing.

All paddlers are to ensure that they are dressed appropriately for the conditions.

During the period from sunset to sunrise during periods of reduced visibility the appropriate lighting is to be attached to the boats. Refer to local laws. Under no circumstance is the dragon boat to proceed onto the water if the batteries powering the lights are lacking charge.

The content of the first aid kit will be at the discretion of the State/Territory Dragon Boat Associations

A Safety Bag comprising of the following is to be also to be placed in the boat:

- 15 metres of “silver” non – stretch or as local regulations require rope (minimum 6mm in diameter);
- torch

Note 1: The sweep is responsible for ensuring the safety bag and the first aid kit is in the boat prior to its departure from the shore.

Note 2: Local and or State Regulations may require a longer length of (tow) rope to be taken on board the dragon boat. (e.g. NSW Maritime rules stipulate 25 metres, along with a flare and/or mobile phone after dark).

Additional safety equipment may also be required on board, such as bailers, or whistles (to attract attention). Check local regulations and adhere to them.

A weather check with the Bureau of meteorology is to be undertaken before a dragon boat or dragon boats proceed onto the water. If a strong wind is forecast sweeps/coaches (or in the case of regattas – the safety officer) are to undertake a risk assessment and decide if the boat/boats if can proceed onto the water.

If a thunderstorm is likely dragon boats are not to proceed onto the water due to the likelihood of lightening. If a thunderstorm develops while boat/boats are on the water training is to be curtailed and boats proceed back to base unless lightening is close. If that is the case boats are to proceed to the nearest shelter and wait until the threat of lightening has passed.

Prior to proceeding onto the water for a training session and at the beginning of a dragon boat event (regatta) a safety brief must be undertaken. There are no hard and fast rules required for a safety brief but all briefs must include: See Appendix)

- prevailing and anticipated weather conditions;
- if lifejackets/PFDs are to be worn;
- expected time off water;
- the paddling plan (not during regattas);
- the need for hydration and proper protective clothing; and
- advise people requiring medication to take it with them. (e.g. puffer etc.).
- There are other issues that a sweep/coach may wish to include in his/her safety brief. Other issues for consideration (but not mandatory) are:
- advising people that they are also responsible for safety and should speak up if they become concerned while on the water;

- what to do in the event of sinking/capsizing (best done on water after boat balance undertaken and before paddling);
- what to do in the event of an injury or exhaustion;
- if anyone has a medical condition that has not been declared previously.

Clubs should schedule into their annual training program a comprehensive safety brief for:

- all rookies on joining the Club, and
- all club members every three months during the paddling season with the first being at the beginning of the season.

All new paddlers are to be provided technique instruction on joining a club by a qualified coach.

E. PUTTING BOAT IN/OUT THE WATER

- Safe lifting technique (bend at the knees, not at the back) when lifting and carrying the boats.
- Boats are not to be lifted above the hip of a person without the proper technical assistance.
- Make sure enough people are there to carry the boat (suggested min 10). Ask other teams for help if needed.
- When lowering a dragon boat ensure it is put down slowly with paddlers bending at the knees.
- Lower the boat slowly when putting it down.
- People with an existing injury are not to lift the boat if their injury is likely to be affected.
- Decide the seating positions of paddlers before entering the dragon boat. Have paddlers of similar weight seated with one another.
- A dragon boat must not be pushed into the water whilst paddlers are standing. If a dragon boat is to be moved advise those standing to be seated and only then move the dragon boat.
- Paddlers should wear suitable footwear in a dragon boat.
- Paddlers unable to complete the swim test must be advised to wear a life jacket or PFD.
- One person is to hold the front of the boat to steady it (not weight bearing), pointing the back of the boat into the water.
- Paddlers are to take extreme care to not be crushed between boats or between the boat and storage cradles. This can be done by looking out for each other as well as being vigilant.
- At night the launch/recovery areas must be illuminated by light (albeit torches).

F. GETTING IN AND OUT OF THE BOAT

The most likely time a capsize will occur is when paddlers are loading into or getting out of a dragon boat and the following guidelines should be observed:

- If loading from a beach or ramp, make sure paddlers load from the rear of the boat first (i.e. paddlers should walk down the boat with seat ten (10) loading first, then seat nine (9) and so on.
- If loading from a pontoon / jetty paddlers should load in the middle of the boat first, then rows one (10) and ten (10) alternatively back to the middle of the boat. Paddlers on the water side should be helping to stabilise the boat or sitting in the centre of the seat until their buddy boards.
- Paddlers must avoid stepping onto the buoyancy chamber at the front and back of the Boat. (These are safety devices and are not designed to take weight) The back of the dragon boat should be in the water.
- Two paddlers hold the front of the dragon boat steady.
- Paddlers load and unload from the front of the dragon boat.
- When loading and unloading, the paddlers should avoid erratic movements.
- Paddlers should keep their weight low when moving through the dragon boat.
- At night the paddler's pathway is to be illuminated by torches.
- When loading or unloading from a pontoon, the dragon boat must be held securely, with the side of the dragon boat butted against the side of the pontoon.
- Once seated, a paddler must sit on the seat in the middle of the dragon boat. Only when their paddling partner is about to sit down should they move to their paddling side.
- The strokes (front row) and the drummer should be the last to enter and the first to leave the dragon boat.
 - **Note** : The sweep is always first on board and last to leave.
- All paddlers should know their buddy seated next to them. The drummer is looked after by row 1 (or the front row) and the sweep by row 10 (or the last row).
- When paddlers are seated, they should have their paddles in the "Paddles Flat Position" (or brace position).
- Once all paddlers are seated, the sweep must complete a head count.
- Number 1 is the drummer followed by number 2 left, number 3 right, number 4 left number 5 right and so on till the sweep is counted (i.e. number 22 in a full boat) .
- Finally, the sweep must ensure the dragon boat is balanced before leaving the shore. If after leaving the shore the dragon boat is still unbalanced, stop the dragon boat and make adjustments i.e. swap the paddlers from left to right and vice versa.

G. PRE - PADDLING SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

When the full team is in the boat (and on the water), the sweep will call for a head count and brief the paddlers on actions to be taken in the event of an emergency.

Once this is done a boat balance must be done. The boat should always be balanced left and right and trimmed fore and aft within 10 metres of the shore and before heading out for training or a race.

Paddlers are not to lock or tie themselves (or others) into their seats.

Paddlers must be seated unless a drill has been ordained by the coach and sweep.

H. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SWEEP

The sweep is the person in command of the boat and he/she has responsibility for the safety of the crew. The sweep is the only person that can issue paddling commands to control the boat. All commands must be obeyed immediately. During a training session the coach can give commands to the paddlers providing that he/she has made suitable arrangements with the sweep beforehand.

Sweeps Duties – refer to the local Sweep Guidelines

The sweep must:

- be fit to undertake the activity of sweeping;
- issue commands in a loud and clear voice; the drummer must be able to hear the sweeps commands clearly. If this is not possible a cox vox (or the like) is to be used
- be aware of boats and swimmers around him/her. All boats should be given a wide berth if possible;
- maintain situational awareness by periodically looking behind him/her to establish if any boats are approaching from behind;
- be cognisant with local waterway requirements regarding water safety;
- obey the rules of the road by:
 - keeping the land as close as possible on the right hand side of the boat; in other words boats must proceed around a body of water in an anti - clockwise direction;
 - pass other boats (when approaching head on) port to port (left hand side on left hand side).
 - give way to all watercraft approaching from the starboard side (the right hand side);
 - give way to other watercraft when overtaking;
 - be cognisant of rowing boats;(they cannot change course quickly or handle choppy water –and rowers do not face the direction they are moving, so have limited visibility);
 - do a head count and appointing a second in charge (an experienced paddler) before on water training;

- be experienced in handling the boat in choppy water;
- keep paddlers advised of his/her intentions;
- remind paddlers to lean out and keep paddling when he/she is turning the boat across the waves;
- keep at least 50m away from Ferry terminals and wharves or as local regulations stipulate; avoid collisions by sticking to one's lane and stopping the boat if necessary. Safety takes priority over winning. Remember, there is an obligation to avoid a collision even if you happen to be in the right; and use COMMON SENSE.

I. REGATTA REQUIREMENTS

The safety requirements contained within this manual must be followed as closely as possible during regattas although clearly there must be some deviations such as the need to carry a safety bag, and first aid bag.

At a regatta, safety comes before results.

Regatta organisers must undertake a risk assessment and record the outcomes in a document. The risk assessment must, as a minimum include the risk of:

- a paddler, official or member of the public being harmed;
- equipment being damaged;
- the environment being damaged; and
- the reputation that the sport dragon boating will be harmed.

A generic risk assessment plan is attached at enclosure 1.

AusDBF members and member clubs hold regattas at venues throughout Australia. Not all courses have lanes marked down the course such as a designated rowing course. At venues where there are no markings all sweeps should talk to one another and let each other know the landmark they are heading for at the other end of the course.

If a sweep loses control of the dragon boat and it looks likely that it will hit another dragon boat the sweep must stop the dragon boat under his/her control. If the boat is not stopped the crew can be disqualified.

General Safety Matters

The safety of Competitors and Race Officials taking part in any Dragon Boat Competition is a prime concern of the AusDBF Board.

Safety Officer

For all AusDBF Australian Dragon Boat Racing Championships and sanctioned events it is recommended that a Safety Officer be appointed (the duties of the Safety Officer are at **Annexure J**).

Medical & Rescue Services

At all AusDBF Australian Dragon Boat Racing Championships and sanctioned events, the Organisers must provide a medical and rescue service ready to act on and off the water, throughout the event, which includes all official training sessions before the first Race Day.

First Aid.

First Aid Cover must be provided by qualified personnel who must be in attendance throughout the competition.

Sweeps

Before sweeping at a regatta the sweep is always to check the race rules and ask question at the briefing for sweeps.

- Sweeps are to ensure their boat moves to the start line promptly. Crew can be left behind.
- When lining up at the start line, sweeps must talk to each other to ensure all take the correct line down the course.
- If at the start line a sweep is not ready or experiences a problem, the drummer must hold their hands up in the air to ensure the Starter / Water Judge are aware of a difficulty.
- Sweeps must brace themselves for the surge at the start of a race. Sweeps have been known to fall off the back of a dragon boat.
- If during a race a collision is about to occur, the sweep is to instruct the crew to stop the dragon boat. Race controllers may have more sympathy if a sweep stops his/her dragon boat, rather than continuing on a having a collision.
- Sweeps are to keep their crews calm and balanced once the race has finished. This is when capsizes can and often do occur.

Safety Boats

Competitions should not take place unless at least one (1) safety boat is provided to act as a rescue vessel in the event of a boat capsize or the loss of a competitor overboard during a race or crew training.

Rescue Boats

One rescue boat must be provided for every three dragon boats racing, to a minimum of two (2) or three (3) boats per event. Each boat should be capable of holding four to six people and should be of a design that will enable people to gain access to the boat from the water, un-aided. One rescue boat should follow each race down the course (this boat may also act as an Umpires boat).

Buoyancy Aids

Lif jackets and/or PFDs (buoyancy aids) should be made available for all Junior Crews in the event of inclement weather and for any competitor irrespective of age, who is a weak swimmer.

However it is important to note that life jackets or PFDs can overheat the body on a hot day. Team managers are to ensure that once off the water life jackets and PFDs are removed to allow the body to cool.

Crew Safety

Although it is incumbent on the Organising Committee to provide a rescue service, the Sweep of the dragon boat is primarily responsible for the safety of his/her crew. When on the water the Sweep must take responsibility for the crew's safety. Both the Crew Manager and the Sweep are to ensure that all their competitors are:

- suitably dressed for the weather, water and race conditions and that they are not wearing anything (such as personal accessories or jewellery) which may impede their ability to escape from a capsized boat or swim unaided once in the water (e.g. wrist weights).
- water competent and have passed the swim test or wear a PFD.
- 'Fit to Race' both medically and physically at all times during the competition.
- Fully briefed on all safety matters contained within the Competition Regulations and Rules of Racing for the competition.

Outdoor Protection

Protection from the elements must be provided for people involved in dragon boat regattas. The shape that this protection takes is up to the event organiser and Club officials.

Embarkation and Disembarkation Points - Protection

It is very important that the embarkation and disembarkation points for paddlers are protected from the prevailing seas. If a protected area cannot be provided event organisers are to undertake a risk assessment and add additional controls to prevent the landing area or boats from moving too much. Not to do this will result in an increased risk to paddlers injuring themselves (slip, trips, falls, and crush injuries) as they proceed across the pontoon and across their boats (if boats are rafted together).

Extreme Weather Precautions

Event organisers are to consider providing:

- water sprays to reduce body temperatures during events in hot weather;
- a fresh water truck for athletes to draw water from; and
- minimising the 'on water' time for paddlers outside of the race. This is to prevent crews from overheating or getting too cold.

Alcohol and Drug Testing

AusDBF reserves the right to undertake random alcohol and drug testing at national and local dragon boat events hosted by AusDBF and the State and Territory Associations respectively.

J. DUTIES OF THE SAFETY OFFICER

The remit of the AusDBF, Association and Club Safety Officers is to:

- monitor and assure safety at the national, state/territory, and club levels;
- report to their respective boards regarding safety at the national state/territory and club level;
- work together to improve safety in dragon boating;
- undertake safety briefings as required;
- manage the safety incident database at the national state/territory and club levels;
- attend safety meeting as required;
- co-ordinate safety audits; and
- undertake safety peer reviews and site visits;

Duties of the Safety Officer in Regattas

The AusDBF and Association's Safety Officers (SO) at Dragon Boat events are responsible for ensuring that:

- all matters concerning the safety of the competing crews whilst they were on the water are dealt with according to the procedures of this safety manual
- the following facets of safety have been planned and provided for;
 - an Event Safety Plan is made to ensure that:
 - emergency procedures and likely major incidents are identified; and
 - the details of these are communicated to all Crew Managers and Race Officials.
- a suitable number of trained rescue personnel and properly equipped rescue craft are available;
- PFD's are available;
- the arrangements for embarking and disembarking crews are suitable and adequate, for the number of competitors involved;
- a water circulation plan and system has been established and included in the instructions issued to managers and officials;
- a Crew Information Sheet is completed prior to a Crew racing which records the details of known weak swimmers and any medical history, such as asthma, epilepsy, which may adversely affect a crew member whilst on the water.
- an effective communication system between the SO; the Safety Boats (rescue craft) and the Umpire's boats and to ensure that the correct rescue procedures are adopted in the event of a crew capsizing.

The Safety Officer or their delegate (e.g. sweep) shall:

- be responsible for ensuring that a head count of crew members from a capsized boat takes place when the crew returns to land and before any of the rescue craft are stood down; and
- attend all Managers and Race Officials meetings to brief those present on safety systems and procedures in operation.

If immediately before, or during the competition, a change in the weather; or if water conditions, or any other factor constitutes, in the opinion of the Safety Officer, a hazard to the health and safety of the competing crews, then they shall advise the Chief Official to postpone, delay or cancel, one or more races, or the competition in its entirety, until it is safe to race.

K. COACH/SAFETY BOATS

In practice the coach boat is also frequently the safety boat. Any coach boat on the water can provide a measure of safety. But the term safety boat is used in this manual to indicate that the boat has designated "safety" duties, such as remaining within a certain distance of the paddlers it is accompanying, must carry specific safety equipment, even if it is also acting as a coach boat.

Coach/safety boats are to be equipped with safety equipment in accordance with the local rules of the waterway and this manual as well as such emergency items as a medical kit, spare lights (for coach/safety boat and rowing boats), and thermal blanket.

Coach/safety boats should provide for easy entry from the water (e.g. step, ladder, or handhold). Where motors are equipped with a kill switch, the kill switch must be attached to the operator.

Coach/safety boats and their engines should be properly maintained since failure, particularly at a critical time, could have serious consequences.

All coach/safety boats (and any other motor propelled boat) in support of a dragon boating:

- are to be fitted with propeller guards; and
- must be driven by an appropriately licenced person. Each State and Territory has differing requirements for obtaining a boat licence. It is incumbent upon boat coxswains to ensure that their licences are fit for purpose in accordance with local regulations.

All personnel in a motor propelled boat, supporting a dragon boat activity, must comply with local regulations regarding the wearing of lifejackets/PFDs.

When using a coach/safety boat for coaching purposes the coxswain is to ensure that he/she does not approach a dragon boat at high speed when within 15 metres of it. Coach/safety boats are to proceed in a safe manner when within 15 metres of a dragon boat.

Coaches should not use a power boat to generate waves unless the boat is full of experienced paddlers.

Club vehicle(s) and trailer(s) should be regularly serviced, particularly prior to long journeys.

Subject to local road regulations AusDBF recommends that where loads overhang past the back of the trailer a brightly coloured warning marker/flag of at least 300mm² is attached at the farthest point from the trailer. At night a red light visible to at least 200m must be fitted.

ATTACHMENTS

1. AusDBF SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK



AusDBF - SMS
Framework Diagram (

2. SAFETY INCIDENT REPORT FORM



Incident Report Form
(Sample 2).docx

3. SAFETY COMPLIANCE AUDIT PLAN



Compliance Review
Plan - 2013-14.doc

4. CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (EXAMPLE)



Corrective Action
Plan (Example).doc

5. INSPECTION CHECKLIST (EXAMPLE)



EHS Audit Checklist
(Sample).docx