RYA RISK ASSESSMENT FOR ORGANISED SAILING EVENTS

Risk is by definition a combination of the likelihood of an incident occurring and the severity of harm that can result. This combination can be given as a risk level determined as shown below.

The overall guiding principal is that events should be organised to reduce risk to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP). It is important that the judgement of risk is an objective one and the size and financial position of the Organising Authority (OA) is immaterial to making it. The degree of risk in a particular activity or environment can, however, be balanced on the following terms against time, trouble, cost and physical difficulty of taking measures to avoid risk. If these are so disproportionate to the risk that it would be unreasonable to incur them then the OA is not obliged to do so (Maritime Port Safety Code: 2.1.12)

In completing the following Risk Assessment please assess the Risk Level using the tables below and decide on the appropriate control measures that will need to be introduced in line with the ALARP principal.

Note that some risks are generic to sailing and racing, some are due to local factors and some, such as sea state, current and weather, are dynamic and therefore risk assessment will continually change and the control measures implemented will need to be continually reviewed to maintain the risk level.

Risk Assessment For	StMSC Club Racing		Version - 2026 v1
Prepared by	Approved By General Committee	Date	
Updated By	Approved by Sailing Committee	Date	
Types of Boat	Club Yachts, Open Boats & Dinghies	Number expected	10 - 30 boats
Event dates	Season 2026		
Location	Carrick Roads and Falmouth Bay	Coastal/Estuary/Inland	Coastal and estuary, close to safe havens.
Junior/Youth/Adult	All	Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced	All
Number of Support Boats	Event dependent	Number of Mother ships	One where committee boat start

BACKGROUND

Annual risk assessment for approval by StMSC General Committee

Impact

		Low	Medium	High
Likelihood	High	M	H	VH
	Medium	L	M	H
	Low	L	L	M

Risk level Further action required

- L Low Risk consider improvements if low cost or easy to implement
- M Further control measures should be considered
- H Further control measures must be introduced
- VH Unacceptable, further control measures must be introduced

Sailing Event Risk Assessment
1 - Risks Associated with Sailing

Event Name	StMSC Club Racing			
Event Dates	Season 2026			

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to take reasonable steps to control risks associated with participation in the event. Sailing is an adventurous activity whatever the setting and its risks should be mitigated where possible.

Possible Hazard	Danger before counter measures	Primary Countermeasures	Risk Level after counter measures	Notes
1.1 Crew member falls overboard	Drowning	Person-in-Charge of each boat is responsible for managing crew taking account of experience and competence. Mild water temperature. If necessary assistance summoned by VHF if own boat, and other boats nearby, have difficulty recovering person overboard.	Low	
1.2 Incident leading to an injury to the crew, e.g. slip, fall, contact with flailing rope or spar, fingers trapped in block.	Cuts, fractures, head injuries or similar	Person-in-Charge of each boat is responsible for managing crew taking account of experience and competence. Assistance summoned by VHF. If necessary, casualty evacuated ashore by alternative means such as RNLI, Club Safety Boat or other.	Low	
1.3 Collision with other vessels, marks, buoys	Damage to vessels. Injuries to any party.	Person-in-Charge is responsible for conduct of the boat. RRS apply between racing boats. IRPCAS apply to all other craft.	Low	
1.4 Swamping in heavy weather leading to crew in the water	Drowning of crew member(s) and loss of the boat	Crew wearing a mandatory personal flotation device if required by RO under RRS 40. RRS 1 requires all boats to provide help to vessel in danger. Assistance summoned by VHF if boats nearby have difficulty recovering people in the water.	Low	Safety Boats are able to render assistance
1.5 Gear failure leading to loss of manoeuvrability (commonly associated with heavy weather)	Danger of grounding and general inability to return safely to mooring	Person-in-Charge responsible for condition of boat and equipment. All boats have ability to anchor. Assistance summoned by VHF if necessary.	Low	Engineless Keel boats and Dinghies but Safety Boats are on hand to support or assist.
1.6 Crew member taken ill	Requires medical treatment for serious condition, e.g. heart attack or stroke, physical injury etc.	Person-in-Charge responsible for deciding fitness to participate of chosen crew members. Boat able to use VHF to summon assistance, including emergency services, and smoke flares to indicate position. Safety Boats / RNLI can evacuate casualty ashore if appropriate to do so.	Low	

Sailing Event Risk Assessment
2 - Risks Associated with Event

Event Name	StMSC Club Racing		
Event Dates	Season 2026		

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to take reasonable steps to control risks associated with participation in the event. Whilst sailing is an adventurous activity whatever the setting, participation in a racing event may heighten risks that would not otherwise be significant, e.g. more extreme weather conditions than those in which people would choose to leave the mooring.

Possible Hazard	Danger before counter measures	Primary Countermeasures	Risk Level after counter measures	Notes
2.1 Unsuitable weather conditions	Competing boats may be unable to provide suitable support to other boats that get into difficulty. By going to sea, Safety / Committee Boats may themselves be at risk.	RO to have a current weather forecast and assess the suitability to go afloat. The Person-in-Charge of each boat is responsible for deciding whether they should go to sea.	Low	Club does prescribe an upper wind strength at which racing is cancelled.
2.2 Unexpected deterioration of wind and/or sea conditions	Competing boats may be unable to provide suitable support to all the boats that get into difficulty. Safety / Committee Boats may themselves become at risk.	RO to be aware of possibility of deteriorating conditions and to monitor situation closely. Races to be shortened, abandoned or postponed by the RO in a timely manner. The Person-in-Charge of each boat is responsible for deciding whether they should stay at sea when conditions begin to deteriorate.	Low/Medium	
2.3 Loss of visibility	Boats unable to find way back to mooring.	RO to be aware of possibility of loss of visibility. Race to be shortened. abandoned or postponed by the RO. Particular attention to be given to dinghies, and other vessels known not to have VHF, by Safety Boats.	Low	
2.4 Unable to account for competitor or member of race management team	People and boat missing, possibly injured and/or in danger of drowning/hypothermia	All competitors and race officials on the water should be continuously monitored. Safety Boats patrol the race. Attention to be given to dinghies and singlehanded sailors. Robust communication controlled by the RO is vital.	Low	
2.5 Loss of communications	Loss of control of the race	Fixed and/or hand-held, multi-channel VHF's carried by participating boats (less dinghies) Safety Boat and Committee Boat (if applicable). RO to expedite change of working channel where practicable. Mobile phones provide a back up except in offshore COGS Race.	Low	Race office Fixed radio is a land station and only has channels M2/P4
2.6 Safety boat activity	Injury to Safety Boat crew or driver Injury to competitor in the water Damage to competitor boat Collision with other boats	Safety Boat drivers should be suitably trained: likewise, ideally, crew. All Safety Boats to be appropriately crewed. Personnel responsible for undertaking only tasks which they feel comfortable attempting and have the ability and training to attempt. The RO should maintain radio/telephone contact with the safety boats at all times and control movements.	Low	Safety Boats managed and rostered by a Club Member. Club supports certification and training. Safety Boat Lead Organise holds a team and safety briefing at the start of the season.
2.7 Major incident	Fatality or serious event involving a call to external services	The RO should establish immediate contact with Falmouth Coastguard and St Mawes Harbourmaster (if manned) and the Police as appropriate.	Low	Robust communication between all parties is vital. It is normal that Safety Authorities will take control of a serious incident once notified.

Sailing Event Risk Assessment
3 - Risks Associated with Location

Event Name	StMSC Club Racing		
Event Dates	sailing Season 2026		

It is the responsibility of the event organiser to take reasonable steps to control risks associated with the location. Whilst sailing is an adventurous activity whatever the setting, participation in a racing event heightens risks that would not otherwise be significant, e.g. the temptation for boats to secure competitive advantage by sailing closer to shore and other navigational hazards than would be considered prudent when not racing. Furthermore racing is not an isolated activity: Falmouth is a major commercial port and centre of marine activity including workboats, ferries and pleasure boats, and leisure sailing, motorboating and powerboating.

Possible Hazard	Danger before counter measures	Primary Countermeasures	Risk Level after counter measures	Notes
3.1 Interaction with large commercial vessels.	Interference with safe pilotage of large commercial ships restricted in their ability to manoeuvre, leading to complaint by harbour authority. Collision resulting in damage to competitor boat and potential injury to crew.	IRPCAS apply. Sailing Instructions state need to observe exclusion zone around large commercial vessels, and to obey directions from FHM vessels and PoFSA Safety Boats. Requirement emphasised in Sailing Instructions. RO can call Pilot Office prior to racing. RO can brief competitors via VHF of planned shipping movement and again when movement is imminent. RO to choose course that minimises interface between racing boats and Commercial Vessels.	Low	Competitors are made aware of the obligation not to interfere with pilotage of large commercial vessels through Sailing Instructions.
3.2 Interaction with other on-the-water activity on race course	Collision resulting in damage to vessels and potential injury to persons involved.	IRPCAS applies.	Low	Other water users such as ferries and pleasure boats familiar with sailing activity through frequent encounters with club racing and class events throughout the season.
3.3 Local navigational hazards	Grounding of a boat resulting in damage, total constructive loss or injury to crew	Main navigational hazards are charted/buoyed/marked. Boats that get into trouble near a hazard can hail another competitor or a Safety Boat for assistance or use VHF or mobile.	Low	Sailing is in well charted waters.
3.4 Congestion at a mark.	Multiple classess approaching at different speeds. Possibly also from different directions and rounding sides at the mark.	RO to endeavour to set courses so that all courses are the same hand rounding of marks, ie port or starboard. Separation of mark at end of each lap for Yachts and dinghies. Yachts to use the Turning Mark, Dinghies to use Outer Distance Mark. Separation of courses where possible.	Low	Separation of courses is often difficult given the limitation of windward marks from the Club line. Less so with Committee Boat starts.
3.5 Co-ordination with other Racing Events	Possiblity of other Clubs setting courses which utilise the same racing marks as St Mawes sailing Club but with a different rounding side, ie possibility of Collision of boats on opposte rioundings.	Conatct other Clubs in the area where possible and if possible co-ordinate courses so that ther is no conflict. The main Club to interface is Flushing sailing Club. The Racing Rules of Sailing do cover this situation so if Competitors comply with the rules risks are minimal.	Low	Phone numbers of other Clubs to be Posted in the Race Office.

Sailing Event Risk Assessment			
Risk Control Measures			
Event Name	StMSC Club Racing		
Event Dates	Season 2026		
Hazard	**Measures**	**General Comments**	**Specific comments, measures and assets where necessary**
All	Appointing race management team, normaly a Race Officer and Assistant Race Officer.	Appoint race management personnel with qualifications and experience to manage the event appropriately.	Suitably experienced RO. Safety Boat to normally be manned by 2 people, at least one of whom must be suitably trained and qualified.
All	Briefing race management team.	Race Office Team have experience of working together and all ROs are familiar with local area	Race office team briefed by RO on morning of each race day
All	Briefing competitors.	NOR and SIs published in advance and event briefing day before	Briefing meetings may be organised if the RO feels it is appropriate.
All	Feedback	ROs can feedback to the StMSC RO team by using the Whatsapp Group, contacting the Principal Race Officer/ Rear Commodore Sailing or at a review meeting usually held at the end of the season.	
1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 2.2, 2.3	Weather monitoring.	Use of weather forecast information and monitoring of the weather to exercise appropriate race management.	RO can monitor forecast in the run-up to event. On the day, RO monitors conditions in the race area. Safety Boats can advise on the water conditions. Races can be postponed, abandoned or shortened to suit the conditions. Prompt communications are available by the Racing Whatsapp Group, VHF or Flags at the Club House. RO can move race area to protected waters where a committee boat is used.
1.3, 3.1	Vessel movement anticipation.	Use of vessel movements bulletins and alert observation of actual movements to exercise appropriate race management.	RO can monitor shipping movements bulletin in run up to event. RO can contact Pilots Office prior to event. Race course can be set to avoid shipping movements.
1.1, 1,2, 1.4, 1.5, 2.3, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4	Robust communications	Provide reliable VHF radios to Safety Boat and manage working channel effectively. RO only has M2/P4 available on shore Station.	Report defects promptly to Principal Race Officer, Rear Commodore Sailing or Sailing Secretary for repair. Handheld VHF should be available for emergency use.
1.3, 3.4	Identifying danger points on course area and transit route	Adjust courses to suit conditions	ROs have a range of courses available to suit a range of wind strengths and directions.

Hazard	Measures	General Comments	Specific comments, measures and assets where necessary
2.4, 2.6	Signing on/off for race	Implement appropriate procedure for accounting for all personnel on the water.	Race Office records participation at start of each race and counts in all participants
2.2, 2.4	Postponing racing	Postpone racing before start if conditions unsuitable for racing.	Procedure in RRS to postpone or abandon and understood by RO and competitors. Enables fleet to be kept ashore until called-out by RO. Official means of communication (VHF for keelboats and visual signals for dinghies) augmented by Whatsapp.
2.2, 2.3	Shortening course	Finish an underway race prematurely if deteriorating conditions dictate	Procedure covered in RRS/SIs, understood by race management team and competitors.
2.2, 2.3	Abandonment	Terminate racing before the start, or a race after it has started, if deteriorating conditions dictate. More immediate effect than shortening course.	Procedure covered in RRS, understood by race management team and competitors.
1.3	Rules for avoiding collisions between boats racing	RRS require boats to avoid contact with each other.	RRS called up in the NoR and SI
3.1	Rules for avoiding interaction between boats racing and non-racing traffic	IRPCAS require vessels to avoid contact with each other.	IRPCAS called up by RRS. Local regulations covering vessels restricted in their ability to manoeuvre highlighted in SI.
All	Emergency procedures	Call-up external emergency services via MCA MRCC.	Involvement of MRCC by RO.
3.4	Large yachts, FWB and dinghies approaching the same mark leading to concentrating of vessels which may intimidate dinghies, particularly at the end of lap marks in the Harbour.	This has occurred at the Turning Mark in the Harbour	Separate marks to be used at the end of each lap for the Dinghies to separate them from all other boats. Dinghies will use Outer Distance mark, all other boats will use the Turning Mark.
2.4	Need to be aware of individual dinghy sailors particirpating in the Race who have not identified themselves to the RO	This has occurred where Juniors had not realised JST was not Sailing	Sailing to be under supervision of JST Instructor and JST participants to be advised.