

<b>Series Number 1700</b>	<b>SOP No</b>	<b>1701</b>
	<b>Author</b>	<b>SO2 J7 PD</b>
<b>Subject: BFC WATER SPORTS SAFETY</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>J7</b>
	<b>Last Updated</b>	<b>11 Jan 12</b>

#### References:

- A. AGAI Volume 1 Chapter 18.
- B. JSP 375 Guide to H&S at Work in the MoD.
- C. Treaty of Establishment Jul 06.
- D. The Sea Bathers (Protection) (Consolidation) Ordinance 1986
- E. The Sea Bathers (Protection) (Specified Areas) Order 2008
- F. The Sea Bathers (Protection) (Specified Areas) (Amendment) Order 2009
- G. The Powerboats Ordinance 1999 The Powerboats (Amendment) Ordinance 2001
- H. The Powerboats (Amendment) (No 2) Ordinance 2001
- I. The Powerboats (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 The Powerboats Regs 2001
- J. The Powerboats (Amendment) Regs 2002
- K. The Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Ordinance 2008

#### Introduction

1. We live on an Island that provides the opportunity for a wide range of water-sport activity. The inherent dangers associated with these activities are well documented, not least within Reference A, but there is always a risk to life in any form of activity conducted in, on or over water. There is therefore a legal obligation to ensure that we take all reasonable precautions and do not act recklessly or expose those for whom we are responsible to unnecessary risk when taking part in water-based activities. This SOP, however, is not meant to amend or substitute the requirements of Reference A, which should be applied at all times.

#### Aim

2. The aim of this SOP is to establish a clear framework of responsibilities within which water sport centres/clubs or individuals can safely participate in water-based activities.

#### Assurance Advisory Visits (AAVs)/ Inspections.

3. **AAVs** All water sports centres/clubs are to receive an assurance visit which will be conducted by SO2 J7 PD<sup>1</sup> annually, usually at the beginning of the season around Mar/Apr. The aim of the visit is to:

- a. Monitor compliance with current Tri/Single Service policies and regulations, in particular the requirements of Reference A.
- b. Monitor compliance with this SOP.
- c. Advise centres/clubs on Adventurous and Recreational Training (A&RT) issues.
- d. Appraise the Chain of Command and the centres/club with any specific areas of note or concern.

4. **Inspections.** Where a club/centre is delivering qualifications on behalf of a National Governing Body (NGB), they are to be compliant with the NGB's Training Centre requirements and if necessary, should be inspected in accordance with the NGB's inspection programme. Examples are:

- a. Sailing Clubs/Windsurfing Clubs - Royal Yachting Association (RYA).

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<sup>1</sup> Assisted by available on-island SME, as required.

- b. Kite-surfing - British Kite Surfing Association (BKSA).
- c. Water-skiing - British Water-Ski & Wakeboard (BWSF).

## Execution

### 5. Concept of Ops.

a. **Club management.** Each water-sports club is to have a military OIC of at least OF2 rank. He/she will be appointed by and accountable to their respective station commander and will be personally responsible for compliance with Reference A and the terms of this SOP. Each centre/club is to have a set of Terms of Reference (TORs).

b. **Rules, their jurisdiction and application.** HQ BFC considers Reference A (AGAI Volume 1 Chapter 18) to be the master reference document. In the absence of guidance within AGAI Vol 1 Ch 18, then NGB regulations will be applicable. AGAI Vol 1 Chap 18 applies world-wide and although it can be modified in the context of local weather and water conditions, such modifications will be subjected to the application of strict risk assessment procedures (Reference A, para 18.013). For the purposes of the activities covered by this SOP, the activities of BFC water sports clubs/centres are not considered to be '*sport or leisure pursuits arranged privately*'. This SOP applies to any water sport or activity when:

- (1) Conducted as part of military training.
- (2) Participating as an organised Service Body, on duty and operating under a nominated or de facto leader.
- (3) Crown employees, their dependants or club members are using '*Service, welfare or unit owned equipment, whether the participants are on or off duty*'.

c. **Legislation.** "Within SBA waters, SBA legislation applies and must be complied with SBA legislation listed at Reference D to K and can be located via the internet at:

[http://www.sba.mod.uk/SBA%20Legislation/SBA\\_LEGISLATION.htm](http://www.sba.mod.uk/SBA%20Legislation/SBA_LEGISLATION.htm)"

d. Other guidance, such as RYA, BWSF, BKSA, RNSA, RAFSA, ASA rules will also apply as appropriate, but where there is a conflict, HQ BFC will determine the 'best practice' to be adopted.

e. **Health and safety.** Health and safety is paramount. Each club OIC is to appoint a health and safety representative who is suitably experienced and qualified<sup>2</sup>. Each water-sport activity should have a full written risk assessment document that is completed in accordance with Reference B.

f. **Safe system of training.** As part of the safety procedures to be considered during the conduct of water sport activities, it is best to apply the safe system of training, which covers 4 areas:

- (1) **Safe Persons.** These are personnel who have received the appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision for a particular task and are deemed Competent by virtue of qualification, currency, maturity and experience.
- (2) **Safe Place.** A location which has been risk assessed against the proposed use, control measures put in place and their implementation directed through the appropriate orders and operating procedures.

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<sup>2</sup> Ideally they should be competent in at least one of the activities carried out at the centre.

(3) **Safe Practice.** The conduct of drills and procedures by competent persons in accordance with the relevant publications, standing orders and operating procedures.

(4) **Safe Equipment.** This is equipment which has been brought into service with the appropriate documentation defining its safe operation and maintenance under Service conditions.

g. **Scope of activities covered.** This SOP only relates to the following water sport activities:

- Dinghy Sailing (Annex I to Reference A applies).
- Windsurfing (Annex N to Reference A applies).
- Kite-surfing (BKSA regulations apply)
- Water-skiing (Annex K to Reference A applies, including mono, wakeboard and inflatable).
- Canoeing and kayaking (Annex E to Reference A applies).
- Power boating (including Jet-skiing) Annex J to Reference A applies).
- Sub Aqua Diving (Joint Service Sub Aqua Diving Regulations apply<sup>3</sup>)

h. **Activities Not Covered.** The following waterborne activities are not covered in this SOP and are considered as sports leisure pursuits when they are arranged privately by individuals who are not undergoing training/on duty, operating under a nominated or de facto leader or using service welfare or unit owned equipment:

- Swimming (competitive and leisure).
- Snorkelling.
- Any other water-based challenge activity.

i. Reference A, however, applies if any of these activities are conducted by centres/clubs as an organised activity and a full risk assessment must be carried out in accordance with Reference B. In addition, this SOP does not cover activities conducted from RN / RLC / RE craft where the safety of passengers and crew rests with the designated Captain or Coxswain of the craft. Other aspects of club management; such as hygiene, catering, bar management, security and parking are not covered by this SOP.

j. **Safety orders.** Each club or centre is to have a set of safety orders in place, which pertains to each activity undertaken by the club. These safety orders should be approved through SO2 J7 PD during the annual arranged AAV. The safety orders must be in accordance with the requirements of Reference A, or NGB regulations if appropriate, and it is mandatory to include the following:

(1) The duties of the Beach Master / Officer of the Day.

(2) A detailed pre-use inspection checklist for Instructors and users to establish suitability and safety of equipment. Any suspect item is not to be used and is to be reported and logged in an appropriate log/register. A replacement item should then be inspected and used if suitable.

(3) The wearing/carriage of safety equipment (buoyancy aids must meet UK/European kite mark standards). All life jackets, buoyancy aids and helmets are to be individually marked and placed on a register. An inspection/maintenance record is to be maintained on all Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

(4) The detail of Safety Boat cover (which varies between different activities) and is covered in more detail in the following paragraphs.

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<sup>3</sup> If clubs opt out of the JSAT scheme for Sub Aqua then NGB guidelines ie BSAC must be adhered to.

(5) Kite-surfing, windsurfing and water-skiing are not permitted within 10 metres of sea bather buoys, except when launching from or returning to the beach.

(6) Details of the club's operating times and actions by users when the club is closed or there is insufficient safety cover.

(7) Other areas to be considered for inclusion in the safety orders, where appropriate, are as follows:

- Reference documents.
- The extent and limitations of the area for the club's activities.
- The limitations imposed by ground and water hazards.
- Weather.
- Equipment.
- Qualifications.
- Composition of safety organisation.
- Details of planned pre-training.
- List of safety drills and immediate actions.
- Completion and location of risk assessment documents.
- Details of safety briefings.
- Communications plan.

k. **Safety Boats/Craft Ratios.** The operation and manning of Safety Boats must be in accordance with Reference A, NGB guidelines and subject to a thorough Risk Assessment. The following rules regarding the manning, usage, equipment to be carried, positioning and craft ratios for the Safety Boat are to be applied:

(1) **Prop Guards.** In accordance with NGB guidelines (RYA) prop guards are not required to be fitted to safety boats. The direction is:

The RYA recognises that some recognised training centres fit guards to the propellers on their outboard powered craft used for training and rescue duties. However, whilst they may provide some protection to a person in the water, they do present a number of significant disadvantages. The most important point to make in support of the above is that, assuming good practice is followed by coxswains, there is no advantage in having a prop guard. Such good practice includes the normal procedure of cutting the engine completely when approaching a person in the water and wearing a kill-cord at all times. These two measures, together with the proper observation of IRPCS rules 5 (lookout) and 6 (safe speed) should avoid injuries to people in the water. Our experience has also led us to the conclusion that prop guards have certain disadvantages, ranging from dramatic loss of acceleration and top speed, to heavily increased fuel consumption and poor manoeuvrability. We believe the engine manufacturers and distributors will confirm that there is also evidence of engines which have suffered bent prop shafts, shattered gearboxes and even complete failure due to having prop guard-induced damage. For safety boats there is a clear payoff between getting to an incident quickly and manoeuvring easily, and the extra protection offered by the guard in case of a collision which should have been avoided. In the case of small safety boats with engines of limited size, the addition of a prop guard can have serious impact on the boat's ability to plane, particularly with extra people on board. This then has serious implications in terms of delivering casualties or reaching incidents. To summarise, it is important to educate coxswains on good practice when driving outboard-powered boats and not rely upon pieces of equipment, which could adversely affect your ability to perform the task. Clubs and other organisations using outboard powered craft are encouraged to use experienced, competent coxswains to minimise the risk of injury from the propeller. The RYA does not require its training centres to fit prop guards.

(2) The minimum requirement for the Safety Boat Driver is to hold the RYA level 2 boat operator qualification and have conducted local rescue training at the club where he/she is to operate, which has been conducted by a qualified in-date RYA Safety Boat Driver. The OIC of the club/centre and must ensure that this training takes place and that the recovery of all types of crafts used by the club/centre is incorporated. In the absence of a Prop Guard, a Safety Boat driver must hold RYA Level 2 with Safety Boat qualification<sup>4</sup>.

(3) In accordance with para (1) powerboats used for towing water-skiers/wake-boarders/inflatables are not required to have a prop guard fitted. However, all drivers must hold a Ski Boat Drivers Award (SBDA) or BFC Waterski Boat Driver (Site-specific) qualification. A BFC Water-ski Boat Driver must be a RYA Level 2, complete a minimum of 10-hours continuation training on towing activities under the supervision of a BWSF Instructor<sup>5</sup>. Finally, he/she must pass a written and practical test before those individuals can deliver towing activities. Clubs are to notify SO2 J7 PD of all issue localised certificates to successful candidates.

(4) The club OIC is to ensure that a nominal roll of authorised Safety Boat drivers is held and that these drivers are correctly qualified and insured.

(5) When a Safety Boat is required, that boat must be fit for purpose, serviceable and be crewed and equipped (including communications and first aid) in accordance with Reference A (paras 18.037-18.041). There is to be a minimum of 2 in the crew, one of who is to be first aid trained<sup>6</sup>. Between them, the Safety Boat crew must have the knowledge and experience to affect a rescue for whichever activity they are covering.

(6) The positioning and readiness of the Safety Boat is a matter for the OIC, Beach Master or activity supervisor, to determine balancing risk management procedures with the type of activity being undertaken, coupled with the sea and weather conditions of the day. In general, the Safety Boat should be on the water, manned and ready to respond immediately.

(7) The ratio of safety boats to craft is dependent on the activity and subject to a detailed risk assessment that takes into account the environmental conditions, the sea-state, the type of craft being used, the experience of the safety boat driver and the experience and ability of the personnel participating in the activity. As a minimum, safety boat ratios are as follows:

(a) **Dinghy Sailing.** For dinghy sailing, the number of safety boats must be based on a risk assessment as outlined above but as a minimum, quantities should be:

i. **Formal Instruction.** When delivering formal instruction under RYA Centre Status, safety boat ratios are as follows:

- 6 Craft - 1 x Safety Boat.
- 7-15 Craft - 2 x Safety Boats.
- 15+ Craft - 3 or more safety boats.

ii. **Recreational.** Where a club is conducting recreational sailing, one safety boat should be provided for every 12 craft.

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<sup>4</sup> For the 2012 – 13 season commencing 1 Mar 12, all safety boat coxswains must not hold a local award but will hold the RYA level 2 **and Safety boat qualification**.

<sup>5</sup> For the 2012 – 13 season commencing 1 Mar 12, all powerboat drivers that tow (inflatable's, water ski and wake boarding etc) will not be authorised to tow using the BFC/Club local award but **will hold the SBDA qualification**.

<sup>6</sup> Hold a minimum of First Aid qualification in accordance with NGB guidelines.

(b) **Windsurfing.** Regardless of whether it is instructional or recreational, one safety boat should provide cover for a maximum of 12 windsurfers.

(c) **Kitesurfing.** When kite-surfing is taking place under private arrangements and using personally owned equipment, then users do so at their own risk. Where formal instruction is taking place or club-owned equipment is being used, a safety craft is to be available and should be capable of affecting a rescue within 3-minutes.

l. **BFC Water Sports Safety Committee.** The BFC Water Sports Safety Committee (WSSC) will convene once every 2-months throughout the year commencing in Jan and the final mtg in Nov. The OIC from each club is required to attend, or if absent on leave, a suitable member of the club committee is to attend in his/her absence. The aim of these meetings is to address individual and collective Water Safety concerns and to implement corrective action where necessary. The WSSC Terms of Reference (ToRs) is at Annex A.

m. **Insurance.** It is mandatory for all OICs to ensure that each activity and each individual is suitably covered by third party liability insurance to the value of at least £5m. Club rules should be explicit in defining which activities are not covered; for example, a member using privately owned equipment. The club's insurance policy is to be available for scrutiny during the annual advisory visit.

n. **Swimming Competency.** With the inherent dangers associated with water-sports and the risk of drowning, it is appropriate that this SOP should provide clear direction with reference to swimming ability. All centre/club members intending to participate in water-sports must be able to prove that they have passed the RN, Army or RAF swimming test. In the absence of such evidence that a member has passed a Single Service-swimming test, centres/clubs must require prospective members to undertake a basic 50m swim test to satisfy them that each member can swim before the issue of membership. The centre/club is to maintain a record of all tests conducted and by whom. They should also have a system for clearly identifying individual members who cannot swim e.g. Issue them with a different coloured members card which does not allow them to sign out any club waterborne activity equipment.

o. **Non-Swimmers.** Non-swimmers are not to participate in waterborne activities. The only exception is when conducting dinghy sailing. Where in accordance with Reference A, Annex I, individuals who cannot swim may participate in dinghy sailing subject to a local risk assessment and provided they wear a **Life Jacket** at all times when on or in the vicinity of water.

p. **Pontoons.** Pontoons are items of equipment set out near the shore for the use of organised waterborne activities. Alternate usage of this equipment by individuals is considered to be a leisure pursuit privately conducted off duty.

q. **Governance.** Many of the requirements in this SOP are already in place within our centres and clubs, some are reflected in existing orders, but are not applied diligently and have, on occasions, been ignored. Other aspects will be new periodic spot checks that will be carried out to ensure the requirements of this SOP and the associated regulations are being complied with.

## Summary

6. Water sports/activities will always contain risk. It is the safe management of that risk that it is important to get right and it is every individual's responsibility, but in particular the OICs of each centre or club will be held accountable. The implementation of Reference A, the subsequent annexes, including the requirements of this SOP, the mandatory application of the risk assessment process, and the regulations of National Governing Bodies, will ensure the appropriate measures are adopted. This will maintain the challenge and enjoyment of water-based activities, whilst ensuring appropriate precautions are in place to minimise the risk.

Annex A. BFC Water Sports Safety Committee (WSSC) – Terms of Reference (ToRs)

<b>Series Number 1700</b>	<b>Annex A to SOP</b>	<b>1701</b>
	<b>Author</b>	<b>SO2 J7 PD</b>
<b>Subject: BFC WATER SPORTS SAFETY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>J7</b>
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## INTRODUCTION

1. This instruction details the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the British Forces Cyprus (BFC) Water Sports Safety Committee (WSSC) which forms part of the Water Sports (WS) governance process. WS refers to all water sports undertaken within SBA waters.

## AIM

2. To detail the aim, membership/attendance, periodicity, responsibilities and agenda of the WSSC to ensure that it provides timely identification and rectification of WS safety issues affecting WS centres/clubs across BFC.

## MEMBERS

3. The WSSC will be chaired by SO2 J7 PD and representation will include all WS Centres/Clubs that are responsible for the delivery of WS in BFC. The following will be required to provide representation at each of meeting:

- a. Chairman - SO2 J7 PD
- b. Committee Members<sup>7</sup>:
  - (1) SBA Customs Rep
  - (2) SBAA – AGLA (as required to attend).
  - (3) OIC Joint Water Sports Centre Akrotiri.
  - (4) OIC Akrotiri Water-Ski Club
  - (5) OIC WSBA Sub Aqua Diving Club
  - (6) OIC Swordfish Club
  - (7) OC CJSATC
  - (8) OIC Dhekelia Sailing Club
  - (9) OIC Dhekelia Water Sports Centre
  - (10) OIC Eastern Cyprus Sub Aqua Diving Club
  - (11) OIC Military Training Wing
  - (12) OIC Episkopi Services Sailing Club
  - (13) OIC Kings Div Cove
  - (14) OIC Episkopi Water Sports Club (Lemmings)
  - (15) BFC ASA Rep
  - (16) J3/7 Clerk - RoDs
- c. Additional Attendance. In addition to the standing membership other persons/SME deemed relevant to the agenda of a meeting may be called to attendance; as required.

## PERIODICITY

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<sup>7</sup> The OIC may appoint the most suitably qualified/experienced person within the centre/club to represent them. This must be first agreed with the Chair WSSC and all contact details of that individual is to be added to the WSSC Contact List.

4. The BFC Water Sport's season is 1 Apr - 31 Oct each year. The WSSC will meet 6 times per year starting one month before the start of the WS season and ending one week following the close of the WS season.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

5. The aim and responsibilities of the WSSC is to:

a. Provide the safest possible environment in which WS are conducted within BFC, by:

(1) Providing an overarching BFC Water Sports Safety Policy (BFC SOP 1701), that is perennially reviewed and updated, to ensure that best practice is carried out in accordance with the highest safety requirements available<sup>8</sup>.

(2) First Line Assurance. Monitor compliance to BFC SOP 1701 by ensuring that all WS Centres/Clubs are annually inspected to demonstrate they are safe and fit for purpose, including:

(a) By advising WS Centres/Clubs on recreational training issues.

(b) Ensuring personnel engaged in WS course/activity delivery are adequately qualified and experienced to do so.

(b) Ensuring Centre/Club facilities, including training areas, changing rooms, rest areas and WS equipment (boats, life jackets etc) are adequately provided, serviced and maintained to a high standard in accordance with current H&S and NGB guidelines.

(c) Ensure that all Centre/Clubs have an adequate up to date and relevant management process:

- (1) Standing Orders (SOs)
- (2) Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- (3) Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)
- (4) Risk Assessments (RAs)
- (5) Centre/Club Membership Policy/Register
- (6) Centre/Club Financial Records
- (7) Insurance
- (8) WS Instructor Development Plan
- (9) Maintaining a Near Miss register

(3) The Chairman of the WSSC is a standing member of the HQ BFC SWGM (???). Following each WSSC mtg any important issues that need chain of command support/guidance will be passed to the Chairman of the HQ BFC SWGM; as required.

## AGENDA

6. The standing Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

Ser	Item	Lead
1	Chairman's Opening Remarks	SO2 J7 PD
2	Previous Minutes / Review of Actions	SO2 J7 PD
3	Centre/Club Appointments	All
4	Centre/Club Inspections/Advisory Visits	SO2 J7 PD

<sup>8</sup> BFC SOP 1701: AGAI Vol 1 Ch 18 and NGB Guidelines.

5	ASA Matters	BFC ASA Rep
6	SOP 1701 Matters/Update	SO2 J7 PD
7	Near Misses	All
8	Open forum - Safety	All
9	Club Matters – Forthcoming FOE	All
10	Arrangements for the next meeting	SO2 J7 PD

## **RECORD OF DECISIONS**

7. A Record of Decisions (RoDs) will be produced within 7 days of the meeting to capture and record all WS safety issues in a timely manner. Any immediate concerns will be raised directly to the Chairman of the HQ BFC SWGM for further guidance/action.