

OTLEY SAILING CLUB

ANNUAL SAFETY AUDIT REPORT

July 2009

Otley Sailing Club

Safety Audit – 12 July 2009

Objective

The objective of this audit is to examine the various assets and procedures of the Otley Sailing Club to ensure the safety of its members and the general public, and that the relevant levels of duty of care are discharged by the Club and its Committee to those listed above.

Statutory/Legislative Background

The Club is a self financing organisation, consisting of members and a Management Committee, which rents an area of land and water and owns various assets, including a building, boats and equipment that allow the objectives, as defined in its constitution, to be met. It also operates as a training establishment and is registered as such with the Royal Yachting Association (RYA).

It has a common law duty of care to its members, and the general public, albeit that each member recognises they also have a duty of care to themselves and other Club members. However, by virtue of it also being a training establishment, those under training when on its premises are subject to a higher level of duty of care due to their lack of competence and knowledge.

The club is registered with the RYA to provide training and is also registered as an Outdoor Pursuits Centre. Training is only given to its own members and is not undertaken for profit. The club obviously has, as an occupier of land, a duty under the Occupiers Liability Act in the way in which it discharges its duties.

No other legislation would appear to be specific with regard to the operation of the Club, but appropriate industry standards are used as the norm for making relevant judgments as to the suitability of policies, equipment etc. if these can be met and/or provided at reasonable cost.

Methodology

The audit was undertaken in two parts: i) on a functional basis examining both assets and policies in three distinct areas, namely land, shore and water. It was undertaken by a physical examination, study of documentation and questioning Club members, and ii) with reference to its procedures as identified in the ROSPA operating guidelines "Safety At Inland Water Sites".

Reference was also made to the audits carried out in previous years to cross correlate various items and to ensure that recommendations made in those audits and as agreed by the Committee have been carried out.

Audit Report

Land/Buildings

Safety Policy

The Club has a comprehensive safety policy which should be on display within the main Club Room. It was not available as it was off site being checked prior to an RYA inspection.

Recommendation 1: Display Safety Policy on site at all times

Emergency plan

Due to the type of incidents that can occur at the Club, its remoteness from the main road and the fact that often the access gates are locked with security padlocks, an emergency plan is prominently displayed within the club Room, which has two objectives, namely:

- a) giving instructions to club members on how to respond in an emergency and,
- b) establishing a procedure for ensuring that the emergency services are routed to the club and that gates are opened in advance for them. This procedure was available and on display.

First Aid

A previous recommendation that a separate first aid container e.g. type I74 should be purchased for use on treatment on shore. This had been accepted by the committee and a full container was available.

It had been recommended that the committee should consider whether it is practical for first aid kits to be carried on board powerboats. The committee had considered this and a decision taken that it was not practical.

The accident report book was not available. It was off site being checked prior to an RYA inspection.

Recommendation 2: The accident book should be kept on site at all times and be always available. Members should be reminded to record all injuries in the accident book not matter how trivial. Consider including in next Newsletter.

Fire Equipment

Following the introduction of the Fire Safety Act there is now a requirement for the owners and operators of premises to carry out a risk assessment. This requirement falls upon OSC. A Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out. Within the Club House there should be two water and one powder fire

extinguishers and a fire blanket. Two water extinguishers were available but had last been serviced in November 2004. The fire blanket was available.

Recommendation 3: Retest both water fire extinguishers and supply a powder extinguisher.

The club is equipped with a manually operated fire alarm. The test log was available but last dated August 2008, and a continuing fault which was reported on the 15.7.08, still needs attending to.

Recommendation 4: Check and repair fire alarm system. Test log to be updated regularly

The emergency fire exit sign opposite the store room had an incorrect direction to an emergency exit shown. This has been corrected.

Gas Heaters

Consideration needs to be given to the application of new legislation regarding the testing of gas heaters and other appliances within a tenanted property. This matter needs to be investigated to determine whether a) there is a legal requirement for the gas heaters to be inspected and the fact recorded, and b) whether or not there is such a legal requirement, should the gas heaters be inspected on a regular basis?

The gas boiler in the ladies' changing room should be guarded.

Recommendation 5: The boiler in the ladies' changing room should be guarded.

The hot water heating boiler located in the ladies changing room was last serviced on the 18th October 2007.

Electricity

The electrical installation seems reasonably sound, but there have been modifications made to it to. Consideration should be given to the installation of an RCCB, due to the wet conditions that sometimes prevail when using electrical apparatus and the fact that power tools are quite frequently used.

The last inspection of the installation was undertaken in January 2005 and minor improvements were identified and undertaken to bring the system up to an acceptable standard. As four years have elapsed since the last inspection was undertaken, a further inspection is required.

Recommendation 6: An inspection and test of the electrical system by a competent person should be undertaken.

Services

The site is provided with electricity by means of an 11Kv overhead power line and pole transformer. The line is adjacent to the building, but it is inaccessible to cars, trailers and especially boats with masts and is therefore considered to be safe without the need for further guarding. The supply from the pole transformer to the Club House is underground and creates no risk, unless any excavation should ever be undertaken.

The YEDL has installed additional warning signs along the line of the O/H route.

There is an overhead BT line into the building. The line is routed on the line of the main compound security fence and provided the guard structure above the gateway is not removed, then it is not at risk from any masts etc. However if the security structure is removed, the line can be snagged, but there would only be damage rather than risk of any injury.

Water Supply

Drinking water for all the premises is drawn from the lake and treated through a patent Ultra Violet sterilisation system. No on line testing or sampling is available. The only way to scientifically test the quality of the water is to arrange for a sample to be drawn and submitted to a test laboratory for examination. The water looked clear, tested satisfactorily and had no smell and was deemed satisfactorily. The Committee have considered in the past that no testing of the water supply is required.

Gas compound

The compound needs to be cleared of weeds and any equipment etc that may either create a source of ignition or be combustible.

Recommendation 7: Clear gas compound of vegetation, scrap masts etc.

Shore

Guide Rails

Guide rails were identified in previous audits to be provided to the steps and the 'patio area'. Following a previous recommendation and a review by the committee, signs have been erected indicating the following: 'Guide rail only - not a safety rail or fence'. This is considered to be adequate.

Slipways

The large and small slipways appear to be in reasonable order.

Pontoons

The pontoons continue to be in reasonable condition and securely anchored. Some planking on the "L" pontoon is deteriorating and needs replacement.

Recommendation 8: Replace damaged planking to pontoons

Island Access Ramp and Pontoon

The access ramp to the island is now acceptable. Replacement pontoons and a brow have been installed. These are far more stable than previous items.

Car parking

The car park area to the north of the clubhouse is growing in use. It is constructed on grass and slopes to the water's edge. There is a risk of a car with, or without occupants, rolling or sliding into the lake.

Recommendation 9: Construct vehicle stop for the northern car park from sleepers or logs

Vegetation

The island has been cleared of self-seeded vegetation to improve visibility of the lake for safety. The vegetation on all shores, especially the east shore, has been trimmed to prevent craft being hung up in them.

Water

Club Sailing Dinghies

The club has a number of sailing dinghies including Wayfarers, Toppers Picos and Access dinghies. All appear to be in reasonable order. The boat hire log was up to date. No recorded faults. There was no record of Club boats being tested for buoyancy. No log sheets were available showing repairs required to craft and actions to be taken. These were off site being checked prior to an RYA inspection.

Recommendation 10: Undertake and record buoyancy tests for all Club dinghies.

Recommendation 11: Keep craft maintenance logs on site at all times.

Powered Craft

The club has three power craft - a rib, the "Chugger" (a displacement craft), and a Pioneer multi access craft. From an inspection of all three craft all appear to be adequately maintained and have the necessary equipment

including outboards, anchors etc. Kill cords were all in place and warning notices affixed.

Safety Boat Provision

Following previous recommendations the committee resolved that any person in charge of a powerboat should hold the minimum of the RYA level 2 powerboat operator certificate. The Club policy is that for organised races taking place over weekends that a safety boat will be available. On Wednesday evening summer races, no safety boat will be made available. On the day of the inspection the safety boats were not in use.

However there is anecdotal evidence that the safety boat is being formally crewed at times with members who do not carry the appropriate certification and are purely being described as competent. It is suggested that a list of approved safety boat operators is available in the Club House and only those members on the list can provide safety cover.

On the day of the inspection a safety boat was not provided as advised by the Duty Officer and thus no check could be carried out on the operators. However when the rib was in use it was crewed by a competent and authorised crew.

Recommendation 12: Provide list of approved safety boat operators

Communications

Previous recommendations had been to provide radio communications between the duty officer, safety boats etc. Two-way radios were available on the day of inspection.

The radios and telephone were in place and fully working.

Buoyancy Test Register

The 2008 register was on display in the Club House. The Buoyancy Register appeared to be up to date with the last entry being 14th June 2009.

Life Jackets

The automatic waistcoat type life jackets were are disarmed against automatic operation and are reliant on manual operation. These are kept in the kitchen and only issued for use by disabled people by the Duty Officer.

Buoyancy Aids

A previous recommendation had been whether the committee should review where the maintenance and issue of Buoyancy aids should be placed on the same footing as that of life jackets. The committee reviewed this matter and it was agreed that a warning sign should be erected which is in place.

Swimming

With the development of swimming within a limited area of the lake by Triathletes Club members in training, the Operational Safety Rules have been updated to cover this activity. Swimming was being allowed as part of a current sail training programme. Use of powered craft was not permitted whilst this was underway.

Water Quality

Water within the lake is river fed and filtered throughout the bank separating the river from the lake. The river is defined as having a Class RE3 water quality objective, which is achieved. This is not a 'bathing water' standard, but is considered appropriate for semi immersion sports. The lake has not been examined from the bacteriological point of view. Due to an apparent zero incidence of gastric problems in lake users, it would appear that water quality is adequate. The lake does need to be continuously monitored for water quality and especially the potential growth of blue green algae during hot sunny periods.

Members should be reminded of the need for personal hygiene, especially with regard to the treatment of cuts etc. and the risk of contacting Weil's Disease.

Procedures

The Club has a Safety Policy. This addresses issues associated with membership, qualification of safety crews, maintenance of craft, protection against injury, risks associated with various types of craft i.e. wind surfers, canoes, kayaks etc, swimming or the use of Club facilities by single known individuals.

With reference to the check list included under paragraph 6.3 of the ROSPA operational Guidelines it appears that the requirements of the check list are met by a) the new safety policy, and b) other requirements identified and approved by the committee with the exception of the following:

- 1) Investigation and recording of near misses and accidents.
- 2) Procedures for the reporting of accidents.
- 3) Periodic review of safety practices.
- 4) That a logbook be established for the recording of near misses and accidents and for also detailing any investigation into said incidents.
- 5) Procedures need to be drawn up for the reporting of accidents, as members are informed and details are displayed in the Club House.
- 6) Periodic review of safety practices.

However, it is considered that the last item is in fact achieved by means of the annual safety audit, but it maybe appropriate to conduct either a desktop emergency exercise or a real life exercise in conjunction with the emergency services.

Conclusions

The management of the club and its operations still continue to be well organised by a strong and well-motivated committee. The day-to-day activities of the club are carried out in a professional and competent manner and are sufficient to ensure that the relevant levels of the Club's duty of care are adequately discharged, as are the standards of an RYA teaching establishment.

However - it is apparent that several areas were not compliant with the Club's stated procedures on the day of the audit and accordingly the Committee are requested to rectify these as a matter of urgency.

In the light of the requirements of the Fire Safety Act 2006 a risk assessment and resulting requirements has been undertaken.

The committee undertook a full review of the previous recommendation and whilst some actions were approved and duly undertaken others were diligently considered as to not be appropriate for the club.

The committee should continue to review the appropriateness of the recommendations and ensure those that are felt reasonable for the club to adopt are. Measures should be taken as soon as reasonably possible to ensure that the recommendations have been met.

I A White
12th July 2009