



# Sailability Hong Kong Limited

## Risk Assessment Policy

### Introduction:

This policy sets out the guidelines for Senior Instructors, Instructors & Volunteers. It is not possible to cover every single set of circumstance that could arise and therefore everyone associated with our programs is expected to use their best endeavours to ensure risks are kept to an absolute minimum and that sensible decisions are taken to reduce or eliminate them.

Potential risks exist when on shore and when sailing. Broadly, these fall into the following categories:

- Weather Conditions
- Rigging
- Use of slipway
- Preparing to sail
- Towing Out
- Sailing & Illness / Injury whilst at sea
- Coming alongside the Sailability Pontoon
- Damage reporting
- De-rigging and storage of boats & equipment.
- Reporting of incidents
- Use of HHYC Facilities

### Weather:

The weather in Hong Kong can be very unpredictable at certain times of the year. A fine morning does not mean the rest of the day will be the same and as most people who live here know, the weather can deteriorate rapidly.

To minimise risk – a marine weather forecast will be taken at both morning and lunch time. In addition, a VHF Radio will be on the command boat (and other safety boats) in case of rapid weather change and advice received (e.g. from HHYC Sail Training Centre or a shore based station). An Instructor decision as to whether sailing continues or is abandoned will be made at that time. This decision is final.

The Government issue advisory notices and warnings on current weather and any changes expected. Similarly, Sailability's Insurance policy carries limitations on acceptable wind speeds, forecasted conditions and Typhoon warnings. It is the Instructors and/or Senior Instructors responsibility to adhere to these conditions and avoid risk always.

## **Rigging:**

The correct rigging of boats is essential. It is unacceptable to send any sailor out to sea with a damaged or incorrectly rigged boat. Repairs at sea may not always be possible and not only is this a potential danger to those aboard, it may restrict the ability of a safety boat to deal with other emergencies or needs.

Volunteers are trained in the correct rigging of boats. Suspect sheets, frayed ropes, broken or missing parts must be reported to the Instructor and remedied ***before*** sailing. Where this is not possible, a label will be attached to the boat to indicate it is unserviceable for that sailing session and an appropriate repair will be made by those authorised to do so.

The Hansa Fleet are in 3 Classes (Hansa 2.3; Hansa 303 and Hansa Liberty) and have similarities – ***BUT*** rigging lay-outs differ dependent upon the actual boat being prepared. This means our Volunteers and sailors must become knowledgeable with these differences and fully conversant on each type.

A particular and common issue which can arise is the 'twisting' of main sheet assemblies and incorrect rudder / tow line configurations prior to towing out and/or sailing.

Centre Boards are heavy (either 20; 30 or 72 Kilos) and can cause damage to the boat if dropped. A crane / winch exists at the top of the slipway and another at the end of the pontoon for the 2 heavier Centre Boards. The winches / cranes are used for lowering Centre Boards and for raising them at the end of the sailing session. Use of this equipment may only be made by those who have had appropriate training and are properly approved to do so. It is not acceptable for Volunteers to lift the 2 heavier centre boards manually as personal injury is a risk and/or damage to the boat becoming more likely.

Our 2.4mR fleet are more sophisticated and normally our Volunteers do not get asked to rig these boats until they have received special training. All such 2.4mR training is conducted by the 2.4mR Team Coach and/or one the experienced Para Sailors.

## **Use of Slipway**

The use of the slipway carries with it a high risk of slips and falls at low tide as seaweed and other marine material gather on the concrete in a short period of time.

Extra care must be taken at such times. Those with a disability should not go near this area and should only use one of the two access points to gain access to the pontoons.

## **Preparing to Sail:**

Everyone entering on to a Pontoon or going on the water needs to wear a Life Jacket (non-swimmers) or Buoyancy aids for those who can swim with confidence.

Apart from sensible footwear and appropriate clothing, each sailor and Volunteer should also have an adequate supply of water; sun screen protection and a hat.

Volunteers should direct sailors to their assigned boat and where necessary, ensure final rigging takes place e.g. Outhaul & Mainsail adjustments.

## **Towing Out**

The Instructor / Senior Instructor or Coach may decide that due to wind conditions it is appropriate to tow boats out to the sailing area. Shore-side Volunteers will be required to assist with this process to ensure tow lines are attached properly between boats and are free from entanglement. This is a risk area and extra care needs to be exercised to ensure tow lines are not caught under rudders or centre boards prior to the tow.

## **Sailing & Illness / injury at sea:**

Whilst sailing, it is the duty of the Instructors to ensure the sailors can enjoy the experience and are not endangered by other water borne traffic. Our sailing area has a busy estuary and at times congestion can occur, particularly over weekends and public holidays.

Volunteers on the Safety Boats will assist with keeping an eye open for other craft and will ensure each sailing dinghy under their control is well within sight and in relative proximity. Sailors are not permitted to sail out of the assigned sailing area and should be recalled if they stray from the designated area.

In the event of illness or accident at sea, the Sailing Volunteer or Buddy will use the whistle (or VHF radio) provided in the dinghy to alert the Instructor and Safety boat team. It is the responsibility of the Instructor and/or qualified first aider present to assess the situation.

If necessary, the first-aider may recommend that the sailor be removed from the dinghy and brought ashore by using the safety boat. In such circumstances, the first-aider or Instructor should then call an ambulance to attend HHYC.

The safety boat will alert the HHYC Sail Training Centre and ask for assistance as appropriate to maintain adequate safety cover for those sailors left at sea.

## **Coming alongside the Sailability Pontoon:**

Volunteers are required to assist sailors returning to the pontoon. This is particularly necessary in high winds or when the wind direction does not enable inexperienced sailors to turn into wind or 'slow down'.

Due to depth issues, boats are normally moored alongside the pontoon with the Hansa Liberty nearest the sea, the Hansa 303 next in line and then the Hansa 2.3 nearest the shore. This is not always possible due to the order of return, but this is the ideal order.

Some sailors will require assistance with exiting the boats and once out, they should be directed off the pontoons to land.

## **Damage Reporting:**

Volunteers must report broken (or lost) equipment upon return to shore.

Such reports should be made to the Instructor in charge who will arrange a repair / replacement as necessary.

This is an essential part of a Volunteers responsibilities. It avoids unnecessary delays to our sailing programs and avoids potential risks to our sailors.

## **De-rigging & storage of boats and equipment:**

Dependent upon our sailing programs, our boats are either left moored on the pontoons or taken out of the water. The Instructor will advise Volunteers accordingly.

Boats left on the water will require rudders and booms to be taken to shore, Centre Boards lifted and sails to be reefed appropriately.

Hansa 2.3's & Hansa 303's being taken ashore will require their Centre Boards lifting before they are put onto trolleys, taken up the slipway, de-rigged, washed down and then 'racked'. This process requires some manual effort and risks are involved, particularly lifting the Centre Board out of the boat and the boat racking process (See Manual Handling Policy).

Hansa Liberty's are left on their launching trolleys at the top of the slipway.

Rudders, Boom, Centre Boards all have their own storage area. All equipment should be stored tidily ready for the next sailing program.

## **Reporting of Incidents:**

It is the responsibility of the Instructor / Senior Instructor to report all instances of injury or illness occurring during sailing programs, whether on or off-shore. All incidents will be reported to the parents, guardians or carers of the sailor and an Incident Report Form will be completed.

An Incident Report should be made in writing and forwarded to Mike Rawbone, Chairman by email ([mike@sailability.org.hk](mailto:mike@sailability.org.hk)) on behalf of the Directors. Recommendations (if relevant) as to how such incidents may be avoided in the future. In the event of injury, the Directors are responsible for investigating accidents and to record their findings and recommendations for the future.

## **Use of HHYC Facilities:**

The Club has appropriate facilities for our sailors including changing rooms, showers and a disabled wash room. It is a privilege for non-members to use these facilities and all who do so are requested to treat them with respect and with all due regard to other users.

Any accident occurring on HHYC property must be reported to the General Manager (Lisa Keatley) & the Sail Training Centre Manager (Rob Allen).

Personal property left at the club whilst sailing is the responsibility of the sailor whether these be a car in the disabled car parking space or personal valuables. Lockers are available from the Sail Training Office if required.