

Rescue guidelines

These are guidelines not rules. Each situation is different and rescue crews must apply their experience and common sense to each situation to the best of their abilities.

Objective: **Rescue sailors not boats.** Be willing and ready to enter the water to assist.

1. Prioritising

For multiple capsizes prioritise which boat to approach, consider weather conditions, visibility, location of the incident, age and experience of the crew and the type of boat.

2. Approach

Avoid approaching a capsized sailboat along its previous track as the crew may have been separated from the boat.

Approach the capsized boat at speed to 20 m and then **slowly** from leeward to a point ahead of the capsized boat's bow. It is easier to control the rescue boat, with no chance of being blown onto the capsized boat.

If there is no sign of the sailor the most effective way of ensuring no-one is stuck under the boat is by rightening it as quickly as possible.

3. Assessing the sailors

Assess the condition of the sailor either verbally or visually when arriving at the boat.

Check that the crew wants assistance prior to helping. Remember the crew will be disqualified from the race if you give aid.

Remember that a sailor's judgement can become impaired when they are cold and tired.

4. Recovering a sailor

The rescue boat engine should be turned off when in close proximity to the sailor.

The sailor should be recovered over the side of the rescue boat

Recovered sailors should be put ashore as soon as possible.

Injuries should be treated as necessary and reported to the Incident manager (PRO).

5. Towing IN DETAIL ADVICE FROM RQYS

For most boats the main sail should be lowered and centreboards raised.

For most monohulls, feed the tail end of the tow rope through the tow ring on the sailboat (if available) and wind it twice around the mast. For catamarans wind the tail end twice around the front beam. The crew should hold the tail end, don't tie it on.

Multiple boats can be towed by attaching a rope (painter) from each boat with a rolling hitch (better icicle hitch) to a long line trailed behind the tow boat. The sailboats should be attached on alternate sides of the trailed line.

6. Mast in mud recovery with Kabi or Doc IN DETAIL ADVICE FROM RQYS

The following is one option for helping a capsized boat with mast in the mud. The aim is to avoid undue stress on the rig and to **avoid the bending of the mast.**

6.1. Anchor rescue boat

Anchor the rescue boat directly to windward of the capsized boat, allow a fair amount of anchor rope.

6.2. Drift back

Let the rescue boat drift back to the capsized boat and throw a tow rope to the crew in the water or enter the water and help the crew if they are inexperienced or too exhausted.

6.3. Attach tow rope to capsized boat

Run the tail end of the tow rope under the gunnel in the water of the capsized boat. If this is not easily or safely achievable with some boats (e.g. 14 ft skiff with bar and lots of ropes under water) run the tail end over the side of the capsized boat.

Wind the tail end twice around the base of the mast and instruct the crew to hold on to the tail end. Don't tie it onto the boat.

The crew should pull on the main sheet to **keep the boom out of the mud.**

6.4. Pull capsized boat

It may be enough to just pull by hand on the tow rope from the rescue boat to free the mast from the mud. A crew should be ready to go to the tip of the mast to keep it out of the mud.

Alternatively you may use the motor of the rescue boat and slowly (!) drive directly into the wind. The crew on the rescue boat needs to take up the slack of the anchor rope.

6.5. Remain with the capsized boat until they are sailing again.