

*Note: The term 'sailor' includes dinghy and board sailors*

## 1) Considerations

Fundamental factors to be taken into account regarding any decision by the Coxswain on restriction of sailing areas or water closure are;

- i) Availability of personnel
- ii) Serviceability of rescue craft and equipment
- iii) Wind speed
- iv) Wind chill
- v) Visibility
- vi) Feasibility of rescue operations taking place (safety of rescue craft and crew)
- vii) COVID risk assessments dictate limited rescue ability
- viii) Advice from experienced Coxswains / office staff / rescue drivers or Safety Officer

The Duty Coxswain will make his/her decision based on the above criteria and his / her authority is absolute.

## 2) Use of Flags

The following flags will be flown as appropriate to indicate sailing areas and limitations. **ONLY** one of the following flags to be flown at any one time.

**(i) GREEN:** indicates normal sailing areas as defined on the Sailing Areas Map and the Club Sailing Instructions (latest version). **ONE** or more rescue boats are on duty (i.e. On duty means a crew, normally not including the coxswain, is on site and can launch as necessary).

This flag is flown at all times the water is open when other flags are not flown.

**(ii) YELLOW:** indicates normal sailing areas as defined on the Sailing Areas Map and the Club Sailing instructions (latest version). **NO** rescue boat is on duty (i.e. Coxswain is on his own with no rostered additional support).

This flag is flown at all times when the Green flag may otherwise be flown, but no rescue boats are on active duty.

**(iii) RED AND WHITE (IC FLAG U):** indicates that conditions are suitable for experienced sailors only. It is the individuals responsibility to determine their own and their crews experience and competence with regard to the prevailing conditions. The Coxswain should advise if he / she believes a particular sailor is insufficiently experienced for the conditions (and note this in the diary at the time) but it's not their responsibility to remove them from the water.

In addition to the criteria specified in Section 1) Conditions, the Red and White flag will be flown as a MINIMUM if:

- a) The wind speed has averaged 13kts (approx 15mph) or more for a period of thirty minutes **OR**
- b) The wind chill over the same timescale is zero degrees centigrade or colder (windchill information is available from the chart in Appendix 1).

**(iv) BLUE AND WHITE:** indicates that conditions are such that dinghy sailing is not allowed but experienced windsurfers are permitted to sail.

It is the individuals responsibility to determine their competence relevant to the prevailing conditions. However, the Coxswain may advise sailors whom they believe are lacking in competence.

In addition to the criteria specified in Section 1) Conditions, the Blue and White flag will be flown as a MINIMUM if:

- a) The wind speed has averaged 28kts or more for a period of thirty minutes **OR**
- b) The wind chill over the same period is minus 15 degrees centigrade or colder.

**(v) RED:** The water is closed during advertised normal opening hours. N.B. This flag is also used to indicate normal closing time.

During normal opening hours, in addition to the criteria specified in Section 1) Conditions, the Red flag will be flown as a MINIMUM if:

- a) The wind speed has averaged 35kts or more for a period of thirty minutes **OR**
- b) The wind chill over the same timescale is minus 15 degrees centigrade or colder **OR**
- c) Visibility, either because of fog, or bad, or rapidly failing light, is poor. Note that a reasonably clear view of the north shore (approximately one mile) from the Coxswain's building is a minimum requirement **OR**
- d) Consideration may have to be given to closing the lake in the event of an impending electric storm **OR**
- e) Water state will make rescue boat operations unsafe.

### **Additional Flags**

**(i) RED AND YELLOW:** indicates that the water is open with restrictions. Sailing or windsurfing may be permitted on a case by case basis, and ideally this should be indicated on the Cafe screen or noticeboard. This flag may be flown with one of the previous 5 flags to indicate a basic opening status.

The flag may be used to allow groups with dedicated rescue cover, or restrict sailing to certain areas in high winds or low visibility.

Examples are:

- a) **Red and Yellow:** The water is closed to all except those with permission from the Coxswain.
- b) **Blue and White over Red and Yellow:** The water is open to experienced windsurfers only, and sailors with permission from the Coxswain.

**(ii) BLACK:** indicates wet or dry suits must be worn. This will be flown in conjunction with at least one other flag.

The criteria for flying black flag are:

- a) Between 1st November and 31st March, **and**
- b) At other times when water temperature is below 5 degrees centigrade.

**(vii) GREEN AND BLUE:** indicates that sailors need to shower thoroughly and follow good hygiene practices as blue-green algae is present in high levels in the water. The blue/green algae warning triangles should also be placed at the slipways and any other public notices posted on noticeboards.

The criteria for flying the blue and green flag are that a warning has come from the Water Authority, usually via the Fishing Lodge staff who will also advise when the alert is over. See Appendix 3 for guidance on blue-green algae.

N.B. Some information about Leptospirosis is given at Appendix 5.

**NOTE: The criteria relating to sailing areas and flags are for guidance only. If, however, a combination of circumstances or conditions arise which, in the opinion of the Duty Coxswain, warrants closure on the grounds of safety, he / she has the authority to take that action and should record the decision taken.**

### **3) Routine water closure**

A sound signal may be made from shore 30 minutes before closure of the water and the red flag will be hoisted, after which no craft should launch and craft should start to return to shore. Two sound signals may be made to signify the final closure of the water.

### **4) Emergency water closure**

In an emergency, everything reasonable should be done to alert those out on the water to the fact that the water is being closed and that rescue cover is ceasing, or may have *already* ceased for some reason.

Emergency closing procedure should comprise at least numbers i - ii of the following:

- i) Raising the red flag
- ii) The use of repeated sound signals
- iii) A tour of the lake with a rescue craft

The detail and circumstance of any unscheduled water closure will be recorded in the Coxswain's log.

Details of the Anglian Water emergency sirens and necessary actions are provided at Appendix 4.

### **5) Sound signals**

Sound signals should be kept to a minimum. One short blast only should accompany flag changes that may require some craft to return to shore.

For example, going from red to any other flag should NOT be accompanied by a sound signal. However, going from Green to Red and White should be as non experienced sailors would need to return to shore.

If no boats are on the water or preparing to launch, there is no requirement for sound signals. Members and visitors will be made aware of the significance of the above.

Tractor reversing beepers can be disabled at the discretion of the Coxswain. This is to minimise noise pollution to the village. However, it is recommended to disable the beeper ONLY when there are no people within the operating area. While the beeper is inoperative, reverse speeds are to be kept to a slow walking speed (2mph).