



SYC Dinghy Cruise Crews Guidelines

SYC Organised Dinghy Cruising: Essential information and questions for all boats and crews.

*If you have downloaded this document from the SYC website and would like to chat with one of the more regular SYC “dinghy cruisers” about sailing on the Exe Estuary and SYC organised dinghy cruises, the people below would all be **very** happy to receive a call from you!*

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1. The aim of these organised dinghy cruises is to give an additional layer of safety for dinghy cruising on the Exe Estuary by providing:
 - a. an Officer of The Day (to oversee the cruise)
 - b. one or more crewed power safety boats
 - c. the benefit of many boats cruising in company (helping each other etc)
 - d. a common destination (with start time, and approx finish time)

2. However, members sail entirely at their own risk and the safety of the boat and the decision to join the cruise is entirely their responsibility and not that of the OOD or safety boat drivers.

3. SYC **requires** a certain level experience for those joining SYC dinghy cruises and that participants boats are seaworthy.

To try to ensure that SYC dinghy cruises are as safe as possible for **all** participants, it is expected that all participants have sailing skills *equivalent* to at least RYA Dinghy Sailing Level 2 **plus** at least a year’s recent sailing experience. Can you answer “yes” to the following questions?

	Description	Initials
1	Able to safely sail all points of sailing (e.g. close hauled, beam reach, broad reach and running)? Are you able to do this in the wind forecast mentioned in the briefing (allowing for gusts)?	
2	Able to tack and gybe safely? Are you able to do this in the wind forecast mentioned in the briefing (allowing for gusts)?	



3	Able to apply the “five essentials of sailing” – namely boat trim, boat balance, sail trim, use of centre board / dagger board & course made good? Are you able to do this in the wind forecast mentioned in the briefing (allowing for gusts)?	
4	Have you sailed regularly for at least one year / season in the last 2 or 3 years?	
5	Is your boat seaworthy with adequate buoyancy and all controls working correctly?	

4. To take part in the dinghy cruise, all helms and crews **must** be confident in their ability to sail to the destination and back **unaided**.
The safety boat(s) is there for unforeseen circumstances only.

While safety boat(s) are provided on SYC dinghy cruises, our aim is that they are not called upon to do anything more active than admiring the views on any cruise!

If you have some doubts about whether your current experience will allow you to sail to the destination and back unaided, please do not join the cruise as it increases the risks for other dinghy cruise participants.

If a safety boat has to spend a lot of time with your boat because you don't have the experience required to sail it unaided, please consider that it will significantly reduce the safety cover provided (and increase the risks) for the other cruise participants.

If you have doubts on the day about whether your sailing experience is sufficient, please do discuss this with the Officer of the Day or your fellow dinghy cruise participants.

Please see the end of this document for safer alternatives to dinghy cruises for gaining initial sailing experience.

5. The decision to allow junior (under 18) sailors on the water is the responsibility of a parent or guardian. For Juniors to take part in the cruise, parents / guardians should complete a Parental Consent Form and hand it to the OOD.
6. The start time needs to be strictly adhered to, since the safety of all boats and crew are at risk. The briefing is 30 minutes before the start time published in the SYC Sailing Programme. Boats need to be on the water near buoy 29 by start time.
7. The signal to start will be given by the OOD – please don't leave before the signal.



- a. On arrival at destination, check time/instructions for the return trip from OOD.
8. All crews need to sign both the “dinghy cruising sign on log” in the Committee Room (which is also used by the Berth Marshall to determine boat usage during the year)
9. The faster dinghies should take action, whenever possible, not to leave the main group (tack back/ heave to - your choice), so that the fleet does not get too spread out.
As a minimum, all boats (especially the faster ones) should aim to remain in sight of the safety boat which will generally be at the back of the fleet.
10. If the safety boat cannot see you then you have, by default, chosen to sail without safety boat cover. Be aware that the safety boat may have to leave its normal position to deal with a specific sailing boat.
11. Boats of similar speed should agree to “buddy up” and sail together. If a boat capsizes, then the buddy should stay close to the capsized boat to give support or attract the attention of the safety boat
12. River Exe is used by different craft, large and small. Understand the IRPCS (Collision Regs).
Dinghies should try and keep out of the moorings where they can be swept on to yachts by the tide and they can be out of sight of the safety boat(s). Any other danger areas (ski zone etc) should be given a wide berth.
13. It is recommended that you take normal equipment and actions relating to good seamanship including:
 - a. An alternative method of propulsion (e.g., oars etc)
 - b. An anchor

You can discuss this with an experienced sailor if you have a problem here.

- 14.** Adequate personal floatation devices for all crew members shall be worn at all times afloat. Please note that neither a wet-suit nor a dry-suit either individually or combined constitute adequate personal buoyancy.



Where can I gain experience if not joining the dinghy cruise today?

If you decide that you are not quite ready to sail on a dinghy cruise, where can you gain experience more safely than on a dinghy cruise?

- ✓ *The ideal events are the Free Sailing events scheduled through the summer.*
- ✓ *You don't have to race to go out on Sunday (and summer Wednesday evening) race days! You are very welcome (and actively encouraged by the SYC Sailing Committee) to go sailing at these times as you can be near the club with safety boats on the water.*
 - *If you take this option, why not pop up into the Race Box and let the Officer of The Day (the one sitting on the chair at the front ☺) of your plans*
 - *The OOD will also be able to advise on how best to avoid the race start line and race turning marks*
- ✓ *Junior sailing Friday evenings are also ideal events as there is a small "armada" of safety boats on the water at these events.*
- ✓ *The Dinghy Cruise Officer of The Day will usually do all they can to try to help you crew on another member's boat on a dinghy cruise (subject to the weather conditions and space availability). This is a great way to experience those 4 knot Spring tides dragging buoys underwater at the Warren and to see the commercial craft (ferries and trawlers) using the far end of the estuary.
Speak to the Dinghy Cruise Officer of The Day.*

HAVE A REALLY GREAT, AND SAFE, CRUISE