

# Dinghy Cruising Safely

2/4/2022

## Safety Equipment

### 1) Essential equipment

- a) Life Jackets
- b) Warm clothing
- c) Water proof clothing
- d) Oars or paddle
- e) Anchor (min 2.5kg) on chain (min 4m 5mm chain) and line min 10m
- f) Extra warp for towing 10-15m
- g) Bucket – preferably 2 secured by lanyard to boat
- h) Whistle
- i) Knife

### 2) Recommended equipment – depending on how far from help you will be.

- a) Sponge and small bailer
- b) First aid kit
- c) Sun screen -recommended is Factor 50 applied every 2 hours.
- d) Hat for sun protection and sunglasses to protect eyes against glare.
- e) Drinks
- f) Snacks
- g) Fenders - minimum 2 if cruising where may have to raft up or moor at pontoons
- h) Extra warps of mooring on pontoons or rafting up against other boats.
- i) Compass if going out of sight of land or if risk of fog/mist
- j) Binoculars – always useful
- k) VHF Radio (DSC preferably) or mobile phone in waterproof pouch – Note need to do Ofcom VHF course to legally use a VHF radio in anything other than an emergency and this is highly recommended. SYC arranges regular courses for this. Use RYA Safetrax if going a long way.
- l) Hand held GPS or download Navionics App to your smart phone or tablet – approx. £35 for all UK pa. It's superb.
- m) Torch if risk of being out at night – shine it on the sail to alert others to your presence.
- n) Flares – 2 smoke and 2 parachute if going a long way offshore.

## Check before you go – be sure to

1. Respect the elements i.e., check the forecast and tides before leaving – it can change very fast.
2. Ensure you are sailing within the limits of your boat and the personal experience of the helm and crew
3. Ensure you have a high level of safety equipment including a means of communication (VHF or mobile).
4. Fill in the sailing log and notify others of your movements.

## When you set off

1. Always follow the guidance of the OOD on any SYC cruises
2. Stay within sight of the rescue boat if one is present.
3. Try to buddy up with another boat of similar performance to look after each other.
4. Stay alert to the movement of other boats around you and be prepared to go to the assistance of any fellow water users if they appear to be in difficulty

## Understanding the Estuary - See notes on recent survey of Estuary by Mike and Rod.

- The ever-changing sand bars and channels, where to avoid and safest courses.

- The areas of strong current to be aware of / avoid if possible.
- Review of Exe Water Users Guide and new bird protection zones

## Getting the best out of your boat – Learn how to adjust the rig and use the tell-tales

- 1) Mast rake for very slight weather helm and Rig Tension that keeps the leeward shroud just fluttering in gusts.
- 2) Jib luff tension to control draft of sail and sheeting angle to about 45-50% of length of jib luff.
- 3) Tell tales jib and main.
- 4) Adjusting rig for the conditions, outhaul - wind 0-5 kts and > 15-20kts = flat main i.e tight outhaul, 5-15kts = fuller main i.e. eased outhaul. Reefing for stronger winds.
- 5) Using kicker to control twist and leach tension, and Cunningham to move draft of main forward.

## Essential Manoeuvres we should all master – be your own biggest critic

1. Trimming the boat. Fore and aft - don't drag the stern. Side to side – keep boat flat most of time.
2. Upwind – jib tight, tell tales streaming (luff and leach both) Boom centred, kicker med to hard, plate and rudder full down. Main sheeted tight enough to stop leech falling away but not too tight to cause it to hook. Feather into wind in gusts – do NOT bear away and try not to ease mainsheet at least at first. In waves use traveller to set boom 15-30cm to leeward or use kicker to keep sail flat and ease main to allow boom to move outwards.
3. Downwind - Jib – ease sheets (after bear away), Main sheet eased (before bear away), boom over rear quarter for reaching, against shroud for running. kicker medium, centreboard half way up, rudder full down. Try to keep tell tales streaming. In gusts bear away downwind. In the lulls come back up to keep the sails drawing correctly.
4. Tacking – Use the tell tales. Windward ones pointing up and back and leeward streaming straight back. Continually move the boat in a sort of shallow S course, going closer to the wind until the tell tales just stall (start to fall down) and then bear away a little to get them streaming again, this ensures you are continuously staying as close to the wind as possible and are aware of any wind shifts ( the wind is always changing direction slightly and some times a lot so need to watch it. )
5. Gybing – Keep the boat flat at all times, and swing boom rather than let it come over itself.
6. Capsizing – Stay with boat at all times, un-cleat all sails, point mast into wind for cats and away from wind for monohulls, then stand on centre board and bring boat upright, climbing or rolling back in as the boat comes up so you end up in the boat as the boat becomes fully upright.
7. Recovering a crew member (approach from leeward into the wind so boat slows) and getting back in boat from water unaided, be sure you can do it.
8. Anchoring – ensure have anchor suitable for local ground conditions – see internet for advice on this, but briefly a 10kg Danforth Anchor works well in sand and mud, and a Fishermans Anchor works well on a rocky bottom, allow room to swing, ensure that pay out 4 times water depth, be aware of tides.

## Further Reading

**Sail Trim Mysteries by Ralph Taylor** <https://csyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Sail-Trim1.pdf>

Sail and Rig Tuning by Ivar Dedekam published by Fernhurst Books £13.99

**Rig Tuning Presentation with Michael McNamara at RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show 2016**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVFnnHGUIOs>