



## **OPERATING PROCEDURE No.26**

**Issue 4 April 2025**

### **ARC Skipper – Responsibilities, Competencies and Guidance**

#### **PURPOSE**

This Procedure defines the responsibilities of an ARC Skipper and provides some guidance on operating the ARC during a Session. It must be read by all Volunteers nominated as ARC Boat Skippers

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The skippers first responsibility is the safety of themselves, their crew and passengers, and their vessel.

They are responsible for checking their boat is properly prepared before leaving the pontoon (see Op Proc 12). This role may have been undertaken by the pontoon party but skippers should also do a final check before setting off.

They shall comply with the Safety Precautions listed in this Operating Procedure.

They should abide by the ColRegs, especially the need to keep a good look out (particularly for other river traffic including the leisure trip ferries) and maintain a safe speed for the conditions (note: the river speed limit is 6 knots).

They are responsible for ensuring radio traffic is kept to a minimum and ~~is~~ conforms to good radio etiquette.

#### **COMPETENCIES**

ARC Skippers will be approved by the Chief Power Boat Instructor in consultation with the Senior Management Team.

ARC skippers should have RYA Powerboat level 2 certificates and have demonstrated good boat handling and seamanship in other Dart Sailability vessels and have undergone training in operating the ARC, provided by a Dart Sailability Powerboat Instructor.

They shall demonstrate an ability to:

- handle the boat in the more challenging conditions of wind and current. In particular, the use of springs for manoeuvring in and out of pontoon berths.
- land the boat on a slipway for access via the bow door and maintaining position by driving slow ahead.
- make a beach landing in an onshore and cross shore wind, by using a stern anchor.

~~All powerboat skippers must be approved by the CPBI with advice from the Senior Management Team.~~

~~The minimum standard for a skipper is as contained in the RYA Start Powerboating course ('PB2'). Skippers for the ARC and Safety boat will have experience over and above this basic level.~~

~~In addition, skippers should be competent in performing the man overboard procedure used by Dart Sailability to recover disabled sailors from the water as well as being able to safely tow a Hansa dinghy alongside.~~

~~-They shall have read and understood this Operating Procedure~~

The ARC Skipper must ensure that their crew is aware of how to operate the craft if the skipper is incapacitated. This should include operation of engines, radio, location and content of Safety Box and operation of the bow ramp.

## Safety Precautions

If the stability of the ARC does not feel right eg she heels easily one way or the other she should NOT BE USED until the double bottom has been checked for water. Report to OOD and Boat Guardian.

Loading should ensure that the boat is trimmed by the stern, without heel either way, to ensure that any water on deck drains out through the drain holes aft.

Water can get on the deck through the seals around the bow door or by other means. This can lead to a ~~be~~ dangerous reduction in stability. Slow down to stop water coming in and move weight aft. Ensure that water is cleared through the drain holes aft or bailed out.

Report the leaks upon return to base.

Generally, sailors should not be strapped in on the boat or on their wheel-chairs. However, some sailors may need to be strapped into their wheel-chairs for their own safety and comfort. In this case they and/or their carer should have been made aware of the risk in the unlikely event that they end up in the water, and of the need to release straps- in the event of an incident where there is a risk that the sailor could end up in the water.

Although she handles well in a seaway she can roll heavily in beam seas. The ARC should not therefore proceed beyond the Castles except in benign conditions and only with the express agreement of the OOD, advised as necessary by the Chief Powerboat Instructor.

## GUIDANCE

### Loading

The ARC skipper is responsible for the safe loading of the ARC:

The maximum load is 14 Persons subject to a total load of 1300kg for persons and cargo

Normal Loading is 2 crew + 10 passengers.

~~If wheelchairs are to be loaded then this number may need to be reduced. In particular numbers must be reduced with powered wheelchairs (which are heavy). The heavier motorised wheelchairs weigh up to 70kg. No more than 32 powered wheelchairs users with accompanying carers~~ should be taken on board.

There is no restriction on the number of passengers who can be in standard light wheelchairs but there may be space constraints.

Loading wheelchair users at Dartside Quay will generally be done using the short ramp with hand rail. ARC should be positioned so that the door is opposite the ramp fixings on the pontoon. Besides fore and aft lines the ARC can be secured with the midship line rigged in a triangle via the two pontoon cleats. This provides a simple forward and aft spring without blocking the access door. The ramp slots into the two holes on the pontoon. Fit the handrail with long end at pontoon end. After boarding the ramp can be left on the pontoon. After disembarkation take the ramp on board before returning to centre pontoon.

At other boarding locations the folded ramp which is stored across the bow of the ARC can be used. Ensure the ARC is securely moored with bow/stern lines and a midships line. The ramp is unfolded and laid across the gap between the pontoon and boat with the rope end on the higher one of pontoon or ARC deck. The ~~pontoon~~ higher end should lie as flat as possible to avoid a step. The rope is then attached to a firm point on the pontoon or ARC to prevent the ramp from slipping. Beware that this can create a trip hazard. Most wheelchair users are capable of negotiating the ramp themselves - it is important that the chairs are central to the ramp and that the wheels are not in danger of coming off the side.

Loading should ensure the boat remains balanced side to side and with more weight towards the stern.

Where possible the ARC should load and leave the pontoon as soon as practicable so as to free up the pontoon for Sailability dinghies and other marina users.

If it is not possible to moor beam on to the pontoon for loading, the ARC can be loaded via the bow ramp on the slipway. This may need the use of the Blue Container ramp as an extension piece to the ramp. Instructions for operating the bow ramp are [below in ~~Operating Procedure 12~~](#).

### Passage

The ARC will normally motor outside of sailing area A.

At all times the safety and comfort of the passengers is essential. Particular attention should be given to becoming wet from spray and overall warmth of the passengers.

The skipper is responsible for agreeing planned trip with OOD and notifying Safety of proposed route, number of persons onboard, and likely passage duration.

Explicit permission from OOD is required if motoring beyond the castles (at the river mouth).

VHF communications with OOD/Safety will be lost when motoring up or down river. The skipper/crew should ensure they have a mobile phone and OOD mobile number as well as the standard VHF radio.

An Emergency Action Plan is contained within the safety box.

On return the skipper should liaise with the Pontoon Master to ensure there is space to dock and disembark passengers.

The Skipper is responsible for securing the boat as defined in Operating Procedure 12.

Report any defects with the boat so that they can be rectified ready for future sessions (See Op Proc 20 Defect Reporting)

### Bow Door Operation

To Lower. Insert the hand crank handle and raise the door fully to allow release of the securing clips. Lower the door to the required height and secure the ramp by the line on the starboard side so that the strain is taken equally on both sides. Deploy the extension.

To raise. Reverse the above operation. Once raised, secure the retaining clips. The bow door must be secured before manoeuvring the boat.

Should water be seen to enter from around the bow door, speed should be reduced, water removed, and the vessel returned to base with an urgent written report to senior management.

