

# Scout Rules Aide Memoire - Dinghy Sailing

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This document exists to support applicants for permits in regard to key Scouting rules. It is not comprehensive and does not replace POR or the factsheets.

**Sources of Information:** Policy Organisation and Rules - POR - defines the Scout Association's rules. Factsheets expand on these rules and support them in implementation. Both can be accessed via: [www.scouts.org.uk](http://www.scouts.org.uk) - Members area - Search: Dinghy Sailing

**What is Dinghy Sailing?** The term 'dinghy sailing' refers to the use of sailing boats which have no built-in accommodation or fixed keels, and are not designed to provide stability to the vessel via the weight of such a keel. They will have movable centreboards or daggerboards.

## Types of Permit:

- **Personal** – Allows a young person (under 18) to take part in dinghy sailing with others who hold a Personal dinghy sailing permit. The permit holder may not take part in dinghy sailing with anyone who does not hold an activity permit.
- **Lead** – Allows the permit holder to lead dinghy sailing for a single group of not more than six dinghies or nine people, whichever is less. The permit holder must remain on the water with the dinghies at all times.
- **Supervisory** – Allows the permit holder to remotely supervise up to three dinghy sailing groups. Each group must contain no more than six dinghies or nine people, whichever is less. All groups must remain within communication range of the permit holder, who will need to be in (or have immediate access to) a suitable rescue craft at all times. Each of these groups remains the responsibility of the permit holder, but the permit holder may designate someone with the appropriate skills to be the leader of each group. The group leader remains as such only while the activity in question is being undertaken - it is not a permanent role. Young people can be group leaders, as long as they possess the relevant knowledge, skills and competence.

In order to adhere to the 'six dinghies or nine people' rule, the permit holder may not lead or supervise any group containing more than six dinghies, even if there are less than nine people in the group. Conversely, a group may not contain more than nine people even if no more than six boats are being used.

Note that any activity permit may be subject to individual restrictions, which are recorded on the rear of the written permit itself. The permit is rendered invalid if the holder does not comply with the restrictions.

**Classes of Waters:** It is important to be aware of the classification of waters on which your permit allows you to operate. The National Waters directory is at: <http://www.scouts.org.uk/waterways> This is a guide to waters, but should be read in conjunction with rule 9.44 of POR. The possible water classes are: C; B1; B2; B3; and A. Note that no activity permit is required to operate on Class C waters, but that a suitable risk assessment and the approval of the relevant District Commissioner are both required.

**Risk Assessment:** Every Scouting activity should have a risk assessment. For members of TeamViking, a generic risk assessment has been undertaken and can be found at: [wac.waltonviking.org.uk](http://wac.waltonviking.org.uk) or via the GSL. This does not replace the need to undertake an “on the day” assessment, to take account of the prevailing circumstances and conditions.

**InTouch:** Every Scouting activity should have a method of contacting participants and their next of kin. This system is known within Scouting as “In Touch”, and advice on its use can be obtained from either GSL or directly from Headquarters.

**First Aid:** During every Scouting activity, there must be immediate access to a first aider who holds at least a Scout First Response first aid certificate. All rescue craft should carry a first aid kit, and activity groups operating remotely without an accompanying rescue craft should consider carrying a first aid kit.

**Safety Boat:** A suitable rescue craft or another boat helmed by a competent skipper must be on the water whenever any sailing activity is being undertaken. In the case of a sailing activity including young people, then a suitable safety boat must be available. If operating a large sailing fleet, deployment of an escort craft may also be appropriate.

**Personal Buoyancy:** Appropriate personal buoyancy equipment must be worn at all times when on or near the water. Owing to the risk of entrapment, automatic inflation lifejackets will not usually be appropriate for participants in dinghy sailing activities. Rescue craft crew should wear buoyancy aids, rather than lifejackets, in case they are required to enter the water to assist a casualty.

**Weather Forecast:** A weather forecast must have been obtained and be acted upon. The Met Office provides official localised forecasts at [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk), and more detailed (but unofficial) wind forecasts are available at [www.windguru.cz](http://www.windguru.cz).

**Non Swimmers:** Non-swimmers (POR Rule 9.42) must have 1:1 cover and an appropriate buoyancy aid or lifejacket. There must be no more than one non swimmer in any craft, unless a 1:1 ratio can be maintained within the boat. In smaller dinghies (such as Toppers, or Laser Picos), it is unlikely that a 1:1 ratio will be achievable and it may therefore be necessary to restrict participation in small dinghy sailing to swimmers only.

**Boat Checking:** All boats (including rescue and escort craft) and equipment must be checked at the start of a session. It is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure that this is done.

**Knives:** It is strongly advised that those involved in leading, supervising and/or providing safety cover for dinghy sailing activities are in possession of a serrated knife for cutting lines and straps. A rounded tip is more appropriate than a sharp one. Possession of knives by young people must only be allowed if supported by a comprehensive risk assessment, and should generally be avoided where possible.

**Communication:** There should be a clear safety briefing for groups undertaking activities. Consider the use of VHF radio to communicate with groups, but bear in mind that range may be limited. Consider recording the telephone numbers of adult group leaders, as a useful alternative.

**Adults:** Whilst adult-only (over 18) groups do not require permits (see POR 9.8), any groups including young people do require all non-permit holding adults to be included in the ratios.

**Emergency Action:** After rendering immediate aid and ensuring the safety of all unimpacted participants, the group leader must inform the Duty Officer, the relevant GSL, the relevant District Commissioner, and Headquarters (in that order). If the emergency occurred during a national governing body training session, the relevant body should also be informed.

**National Governing Body:** The national governing body for dinghy sailing activities is the Royal Yachting Association (RYA). Information on RYA policy and procedure can be sought via [www.rya.org.uk](http://www.rya.org.uk)

**Keeping a Log:** We recommend keeping a simple log of your water activities. This will help you develop in the activity and assist in renewing your permit. If you hold a national governing body qualification, you may be required to keep such a log in order that your qualification remains valid: consult the relevant body for more information.

**Finally:** We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the risks inherent in water activities, and of the value of caution and preparedness. Please do consider the risks and benefits before undertaking any activity, on land or on the water.