

Nereid Charter Ltd

Risk Assessment

Introduction

Marine based events offer huge benefits for hospitality, team building & motivational activities for clients' staff and valued customers. However, as with everything in life there is a risk attached to every task performed during the day. This document identifies the hazards and assesses the risks to guests from those hazards.

The risk assessment is for a broad spectrum of events, ranging from corporate regattas to hospitality days on board.

Tasks and hazards

Tasks that could be performed whilst on board a yacht.

- Moving around the boat both on the deck and down below
- Stowing the mooring lines and fenders
- Transfer on and off the boat onto a RIB or floating dock

Hazards and degree of risk

A hazard is defined as the potential to cause injury or damage, whilst a risk is the likelihood of injury or damage resulting from such a hazard. Hazards fall into two categories:

Hazards before embarkation

- Accident in the car park of the boatyard.
- Falling over on the pontoon leading up to the yacht and landing in the water.

Hazards whilst on board

	Severity	Likelihood	Degree of risk (Severity x Likelihood)
Fall due to uneven deck	1	1	1
Fall due to wet deck	1	2	2
Exposure or hypothermia due to weather conditions	2	1	2
Heat exhaustion due to weather conditions	2	1	2
Drowning due to immersion in water	3	1	3
Hypothermia due to immersion in water	2	1	2
Collision with another vessel	1 to 3	1	1 to 3
Sinking due to collision	1 to 3	1	1 to 3
Sinking due to grounding	1 to 3	1	1 to 3
Fire on board	2	1	2
Aggravating existing medical condition	2	1	2
Fractures, grazes and cuts due to equipment	1	1	1
Food poisoning	2	1	2

Key to hazard severity

Score 3: Major injury or death

Score 2: Serious injury (off work/incapacitated for more than 3 days).

Score 1: Minor injury (entry in Accident Book).

Score 0: No obvious potential for this hazard.

Key to likelihood of occurrence

Score 3: Probably will occur

Score 2: May occur occasionally

Score 1: Likely to occur infrequently or not at all.

Key to Degree of risk

Score 1: Very low risk

Score 9: Very high risk

Assessment of hazards

Falls on board

Degree of risk: very low

Falling or stumbling on a boat is a hazard due to the fact that guests are walking on an unfamiliar surface. These falls can be painful but not serious and if the guest is not briefed properly can occur. The risk from uneven surfaces is very low as all guest areas are flat, but when the external areas are wet the risk is slightly greater.

Method of control:

Skipper and crews brief the guests before they climb onto the boat about what is safe to step on and touch. Event manager ensures that prior to the event all guests are given a list of appropriate footwear to be worn on board a yacht.

Exposure or hypothermia due to weather conditions

Degree of risk: very low

The UK's weather can be inclement and the risk of the cold should not be underestimated in the marine environment.

Method of control:

The event manager will issue a list of items to wear prior to the event, these clothes would include bringing a fleece/jumper and other warm clothes. Alternatively, if a guest is cold then they do have the option to warm up in the saloon and turning on the heating.

Heat exhaustion due to weather conditions

Degree of risk: very low

The UK's weather can get very hot in the middle of the summer and the sun's effect is magnified when on board a boat at sea due to reflection off the water.

Method of control:

The event manager will issue a list of items prior to the event that guests should bring. In this case they should have a hat and sun screen. The boat will also carry sun screen if the guests do not bring any. In addition, the boat carries a plentiful supply of drinking water, which should be consumed during the day to help prevent dehydration. The crew are briefed on the importance of keeping guests fluid intake up.

Drowning due to immersion in water

Degree of risk: low

When participating in any marine based event the greatest hazard is the water. So therefore the risk of drowning if immersed in water is scored 3 out of 9. So the risk is still low but it carries the highest degree of risk score in this assessment.

Method of control:

The boat carries a lifejacket for each person on board plus 2 spares. These are gas inflation jackets that are operated if a person enters the water involuntarily. When not inflated they are light to wear, not bulky and are comfortable to wear.

Current codes of practise state that guests do not have to wear a lifejacket. However, it is up to the skipper to decide when it is appropriate for them to be worn. If conditions are calm the skipper may not insist on lifejackets being worn. However, if the conditions deteriorate then safety harnesses are available to help prevent falls and man over board incidents. It is up to the skipper to decide when it is appropriate for guests to don lifejackets, they are briefed to use lifejackets if they are in any doubt.

Lifejackets should always be worn if a guest is a non-swimmer or there is an emergency situation on board. The skipper in his safety briefing prior to departure gives instructions on the use and donning of lifejackets.

Hypothermia due to immersion in water**Degree of risk: very low**

Immersion in water resulting from a fall, collision or grounding of the vessel carries a risk of hypothermia if the immersion is prolonged or the water is cold. Water temperature in the area of operation varies considerably throughout the year.

Method of control:

The wearing of warm clothes and a lifejacket will significantly prolong the survivable time that a person can be in the water before hypothermia can set in. The skipper of the boat is fully trained in man overboard drills.

Collision with another vessel**Degree of risk: very low to low**

The reason why the degree of risk score is between 1 and 3 is due to the fact that "collision" with another vessel can be anything from a slight bump resulting in no damage or injury to a major incident and loss of life. In our experience, the latter has not happened in recent history and the former happens infrequently.

Method of control:

With the tragedy of the "Marchioness" and the "Bowbelle" on the Thames in the late 1980's, the Department of Transport tightened up regulations for vessels operating commercially and in 1994 it produced the Code of Practise for Small Commercial Vessels. This document and legislation controls all aspects of the charter industry from boat condition, safety equipment and safe manning and skipper qualifications. This means that the risk of a boat having a collision or having a catastrophic failure is greatly reduced due to improved training standards and boat condition and maintenance.

If a major incident occurs in our main area of operation (i.e. the Western Solent) the water is firstly sheltered and there are 4 lifeboat stations within 30 minutes and also a Coastguard helicopter within our area of operation.

Sinking due to collision or grounding

Degree of risk: very low to low

See above.

Fire on board

Degree of risk: low

Fire on board a boat is uncommon in modern times but if it occurs can be serious in terms of guest safety.

Method of control:

Under the Code of Practise for Small Commercial Vessels, there are strict standards that boats have to meet. This includes the use of fire resistant materials and engine spaces, gas alarms and fire extinguishers, therefore, the risk is very minimal. In the case of burns the yachts carry full Category C first aid kits.

Aggravating existing medical condition

Degree of risk: low

There is a high chance that within of a group of guests a few will have an existing minor medical condition. In 99% of cases a condition is in a stable state. However, guests being in a marine environment and exerting themselves in a way not before experienced may bring on symptoms of an existing condition.

Method of control:

The event manger prior to the event will make all guests aware of the need to bring any medication along. At the event the skipper will discretely obtain relevant medical history if it is important via the passenger form. In the event of a serious incident the Coastguard can evacuate by helicopter. In a minor incident the yacht will not be more than 1 hour from a port for ambulance transfer

Fractures, grazes and cuts due to equipment

Degree of risk: low

Incidents such as rope burn and “walking” wounded injuries inflicted by a fall or minor accident can happen on board boats from time to time.

Method of control:

The skipper during the initial safety briefing and during the day will be constantly looking out for their guests and train them in safe practises. In the event of an injury the boat carries a Category C First Aid Kit and the skipper holds a RYA First Aid at Sea certificate.

Food Poisoning

Degree of risk: low

The risk of food poisoning is low but can occur.

Methods of Control:

Where food is served on board, the outside caterers employed have to meet current health and safety standards for the food industry. Food is brought down the morning of the event in cool bags and then put in the boat's fridge. Food served ashore in bars or restaurants is beyond the scope of this risk assessment.

Conclusion

Whilst water-borne activities do inevitably carry some risk to guests, on careful study and using the above methods of control, the risks are significantly less than at first glance.

Our first priority is the safety of guests, crew and other boats. We fully support and comply with the current MCA Code of Practise for Small Commercial Vessels and even on occasion go beyond the current recommendations.