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MASTHEAD FLOATATION POLICY & ENTRAPMENT ADVICE

Using masthead floats (MHFs) significantly reduces the risk of inversion and entrapment, enhancing the safety of sailors and reducing fatigue. Club Members, or other persons sailing their own boats, are not required to use a MHF in order to sail at Cransley SC but they may choose to use one or be advised, by a competent Instructor to use one in certain circumstances such as:

- 1) going out in strong winds;
- 2) when under instruction in their own boat;
- 3) sailing with young and/or inexperienced crew. Such persons may use their own MHF or use a Cransley SC owned MHF (if there are enough after Cransley SC boats have been provided for). It is important for the MHF to be returned with any damage reported. If a Cransley SC MHF is required more than twice, boat owners are expected to purchase their own.

CRANSLEY SC DOUBLEHANDERS

ALL Cransley SC double-handers **MUST** be sailed with a 40 litre MHF with the exception of:

- 1) Persons specifically given a dispensation from doing so by the Principal Instructor;
- 2) Cransley SC Staff qualified as RYA Dinghy Instructor or above, helming and crewing the same boat;
- 3) A person under instruction practicing inversion techniques

The above users of double-handers may still use a MHF if they choose to do so.

CRANSLEY SC SINGLEHANDERS

Cransley SC single-handers **MUST** be sailed with a 9 litre masthead float by those on courses who have not yet achieved RYA Level 2 (adult) or RYA Stage 2 (youth). For those hiring singlehanders, where appropriate experience is accepted in lieu of an actual RYA Level 2 or RYA Stage 2 certificate, 9L masthead floats are not generally imposed but may be chosen to be used by the sailor or imposed for any reason (such as borderline experience levels or stronger winds etc.) by an Instructor.

MHF's IN USE

MHF's should be securely attached to the head of a mainsail. Care should be taken to:

- 1) ensure that the MHF is in good working order and fully inflated;
- 2) avoid hoisting the MHF inside any shrouds;
- 3) ensure that the MHF has not become wrapped around the mast when lowering the mainsail (if it has then the boat should be capsized ashore to free it). It should be noted that MHF's may be a disadvantage in the following ways:
 - 4) they may reduce the performance of the boat (although this is understood to be so negligible that it should be of little concern to all but the most performance orientated sailors;
 - 5) they may cause the mast to bend or break when it hits the water during a fast capsize, as they prevent the mast slicing through the water (although this is very uncommon).
 - 6) as there is always a chance that MHF's could fail or become separated from a boat, or not be available in another location you may sail at, correct inversion technique should be understood and is delivered on appropriate courses at Cransley SC in a controlled way. Please ask the Principal Instructor if you require advise on capsize technique.

AVOIDING THE ‘PROMOTION OF ENTRAPMENT’

Sailors must be aware of their responsibilities in this respect. ‘*Promoting Entrapment*’ can be defined as, “*acting in a way that would cause the boat to invert or cause the helm or crew to end up underneath an inverted boat, were it not for the presence of the MHF*” (ie. doing any of the following when the boat is capsized on its side:

- 1) refusing to let go of the boat after the chance of achieving a dry-capsize has passed;
- 2) holding onto, or hanging off, any part of the boat above the waterline;
- 3) standing on any part of the rigging or sails;
- 4) unnecessarily delaying getting onto the daggerboard to stabilise the boat;
- 5) not moving quickly to the back of the boat when helm and/or crew are in the water between the boom and the hull).

SAFETY KNIVES AND TRAPEZE HARNESSSES

All sailors are strongly advised to carry a safety knife, ideally with a sharp, locking, serrated, onesided, round-tipped blade. Cransley SC recommends the [Sailboats Safety Knife 746450](#) - high-grade Tefloncoated sharp stainless steel serrated blade, blunt anti-stab tip for safety, locking blade, shackle key slot, solid thermo rigid plastic grip hole for 3mm lanyard (cord not supplied). All persons trapezing are strongly advised to use a harness with a quick-release hooks. Fixed-hooks can foul on standing or running rigging, or any other part of the boat’s equipment, during a capsized.

ENTRAPMENT ADVICE

It is critical to get an entrapped person to the surface as soon as possible by:

- 1) righting a monohull dinghy by using the centreboard/daggerboard. Centreboards/daggerboards should be firmly secured down when sailing by a well-maintained device in the boat. A knife can be used to lever-out a centerboard that has fallen inside a boat;
- 2) swimming underneath an inverted boat to save someone carries a risk to life so must be avoided. There are very few cases of entrapment reported. Almost all reported incidents of entrapment-related near-misses or fatalities from around the world relate to:
 - 1) problems with the hook on fixed-hook harnesses fouling on double-hander shrouds and rigging (*so use a quick-release harness and understand how to operate it in all situations*);

2) multihull sailors becoming entrapped in the toe-straps of an inverted catamaran, especially when safety knives have not been available at the time of the incident to cut the trampoline (*so carry a knife, as above*).

Cransley SC has addressed the risk of entrapment in the following ways:

- 1) creating and following this MHF policy;
- 2) using modern harnesses with RWO quick-release hooks for all hire and tuition;
- 3) fitting safety knives into safety boats;
- 4) making MHFs available to all sailors wherever possible, (as above).

For further information and advice please speak to Rhian Bevan, Principal Instructor