

Newcomer's Introductory Guide to Club Duty Roles



Don't panic!

If you are new to sailing or don't have much/any experience of duties, you will only be rostered for the duty roles that do not require any specific training or experience: Officer of the Day (OOD), Rescue Crew (RC), or Assistant Race Officer (ARO). These duty roles are dealt with below. The other duty roles of Race Officer and Senior Assistant Race Officer require a good level of experience in running dinghy races, whilst Rescue Helms are required to hold RYA Powerboat Level 2 qualification or to have demonstrated equivalent skills, plus have completed RYA Safety Boat training or the CVLSC Rescue Helm Safety Course, and therefore these roles are not discussed here.

This document is intended to provide an introductory guide to basic sailing duties. The Duties Book (found at <https://www.chewvalleysailing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/documents/CVLSC-Duties-Book.pdf>) provides all the detailed information and guidance needed as a blueprint to run the Club safely and in accordance with the Club's responsibilities, and should be referred to in advance of your duty. In particular, if you are rostered for a duty you should familiarise yourself with the CVLSC Safety Policy (Appendix B of the Duties Book).

Officer of the Day (OOD)

If you have been rostered for this role it is essential that you familiarise yourself with the Duties Book in advance of your duty.

You will be working with the other rostered OOD and rescue team (and race officer/ARO team if present) to ensure the smooth and safe running of Club sailing activities for that day. Once the preparation for sailing checks and actions have been completed, much of your time will be spent on the balcony of the clubhouse keeping lookout and radioing the rescue team on the water as necessary. NB be sure to bring a wetsuit or drysuit, a buoyancy aid and plenty of warm/waterproof clothing just in case you are called upon to be rescue crew if there is a no-show on the day – see below for further info.

The key elements are:

- About a week before, contact your fellow OOD and between you, phone round the remaining members of the duty team to check their availability.
- Arrive at 09:00 to open up the clubhouse and Undercover Boat Store (Duties Book section 2.1).
- Ensure the duty team members sign the Duty Register.
- Check wind speed/direction and water temperature.

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- Hold a brief meeting of the duty team, including race officers / event organisers if present, and complete the Risk Assessment (Appendix A of the Duties Book – paper copies available in the clubhouse). Section 3.1 of the Duties Book provides guidance on restrictions to sailing based on wind speeds and water temperatures, and more experienced club members around on the day can assist you with this.
- Ensure appropriate numbers of rescue boats are launched (Duties Book section 3.5).
- Raise the club burgee and red ensign to indicate that sailing can commence.
- Keep a watch from the clubhouse balcony on boats sailing and liaise with the rescue boat crews.
- Record and collect Guest fees and Club dinghy hire fees (Duties Book sections 4 and 3.7).
- Review the Risk Assessment if weather conditions change adversely. If necessary, clear the lake and suspend sailing and lower the club burgee.
- At the end of the day, close the lake and lower the club burgee and red ensign.
- Carry out the locking-up procedure (Duties Book section 2.2 and Appendices E and F).

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Rescue Crew (RC)

Your rescue helm will have experience and training and will give you advice and direction as necessary. However, you should also familiarise yourself with the relevant sections of the Duties Book in advance of your duty, in particular Appendix D: RIB Users Checklist. This gives detailed guidance for the rescue boat crews, and in particular the procedures for assisting dinghy crews and recovering capsized dinghies. It is recommended that you arrive at the Club about an hour before the scheduled start of sailing that day.

You will potentially spend a long time on the water and may have to enter the water to assist sailors in difficulties or to recover capsized dinghies. Therefore a wetsuit or drysuit, a buoyancy aid, and plenty of warm/waterproof clothing are a must.

The sort of things that are involved are: keeping a lookout for any boats that might be in difficulties, assisting sailors to right their boats, or to get back into them or bringing them into the RIB, on race days assisting your rescue helm to move racing marks (pulling up weedy mark ropes and chains and muddy anchors into the rescue boat).

This role is a great way to learn about the layout of the lake and the racing marks and gets you out on the water amongst the occasional thrills and spills.

Assistant Race Officer (ARO)

Race days only – Sundays and Wednesday evenings. You will be helping the race officer with the smooth running of club racing that day/evening, which might sound a little daunting, but the race officer will be an experienced club member and will give you all the advice and direction you may need. It is recommended that you arrive at the Club about an hour before the scheduled start of racing that day.

The sort of things that are involved are: putting the course board indicators up next to the race hut ahead of the races, raising and lowering race flags during the start sequence, and taking down notes for the race officer during the races such as sail numbers, dinghy class and finish times. Depending on the wind direction the race officer may choose to use the committee boat for the start/finish, so be sure to bring a buoyancy aid and plenty of warm/waterproof clothing just in case you have to spend time out on the water.

NB you may be called upon to be rescue crew (see above) if there is a no-show on the day and hence you should bring a wetsuit or preferably a drysuit too.

This role is a great way to learn a little about racing, with plenty of help and support on offer from the race officer, and there's plenty to keep you occupied.