

Policy 30 – OTB Unsupervised Sailing Policy

Introduction

This policy has been developed to support Off the Beach (OTB) training and social sailing outside organised events and activities.

Weather on Port Phillip is diverse and conditions can change at short notice. This policy aims to improve the safety and reduce the risks of unsupervised sailing.

For the purpose of this policy, unsupervised sailing is defined as an OTB sailor or group of sailors going sailing without a RHIB on the water acting as a safety vessel.

All sailors should adopt the following guidelines. Sailors are encouraged to sail with other boats to reduce the risk of sailing alone.

Sailor Responsibilities

The responsibility for a sailor's decision to go sailing is theirs alone.

Sailors should ensure that their boat is seaworthy and carries all necessary equipment which should be attached to the boat. Adequate food and water should also be carried.

Sailors should also ensure that they are adequately dressed to suit the conditions.

Beach trolleys should be permanently marked with the boat's name, sail number and skipper's name as this information will be invaluable in the event that the sailor has not returned to shore.

Pre-sailing Risk Assessment

Sailors should always respect the elements and make a risk assessment for themselves prior to leaving the beach. They should always remember that the decision to take to the water is their responsibility.

Sailors should carefully check the weather warnings, forecasts and current conditions at:

<http://www.baywx.com.au/>

<http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/warnings/marinewind.shtml>

<http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/forecasts/portphillip.shtml>

<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/>

Consideration should also be given to the possibility of decreasing or increasing wind strengths as well as UV exposure, air and water temperatures.

If the Bureau of Meteorology Marine Wind Warning Summary is indicating that a gale warning is present for Port Phillip, sailors should not take to the water under this policy.

To assist sailors who are partaking in unsupervised sailing activities, sailors should address the below risk matrix prior to launching. Whilst assessing a range of criteria, if the risk rating matching the current conditions exceeds a sailor's rating score, sailors should not take to the water under this policy.

Recommended Sailing Areas

The recommended areas for unsupervised sailing are attached in Appendix 1 and all sailors should sail within these areas. These maps outline multiple areas depending on a sailor's ability or the class of boat in which they are sailing, whether that be a junior or youth/senior class. It is also strongly recommended that sailors remain as close as reasonably practical to the shore to assist with visibility.

Sailor Rating

Sailor rating	Sailor category <i>Sailors should not sail in conditions above their rating in the below matrix.</i>
8	Sailors who are capable of sailing in winds beyond 25 knots
7	Sailors who can sail in winds up to 25 knots
6	Sailors who can sail in winds up to 20 knots
5	Sailors who can sail in winds up to 15 knots
4	Beginners
+1	When sailing in close proximity with a group of one or more other boats launching from SYC

Risk Matrix

Wind strength and Month	0-4 knots	5-9 knots	10-14 knots	15-19 knots	20-24 knots	25+ knots	Gale warning
Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, Oct, Nov, Dec	4	4	5	6	7	10	10
May, Sep	4	5	6	7	8	10	10
Jun, Jul, Aug	5	5	7	8	10	10	10

Examples

Example 1:

Sailor A, who is capable of sailing in winds up to 25 knots has a sailor rating score of 7. Sailor A intends to go sailing unsupervised with no other boats.

The wind at Fawkner Beacon is blowing 22 knots and it is 13 September. Using the risk matrix, the risk factor is 8.

Given the risk factor exceeds the sailor's rating, Sailor A should not sail under this policy.

Example 2:

Sailor A, who is capable of sailing in winds up to 25 knots has a sailor rating of 7. Sailor A intends on going sailing with two other boats (Sailor B and Sailor C) who are also capable of sailing in winds up to 25 knots. Although there are three boats sailing,

there is no RHIB acting as a safety vessel so this is still considered as unsupervised sailing.

The wind at Fawkner Beacon is blowing 22 knots and it is 13 September. Using the risk matrix, the risk factor is 8.

Given all sailors can all sail in winds up to 25 knots, they each have a sailor rating of 7. As these sailors are sailing in a group (less risk), they can add 1 point to their sailor rating. This means they can now sail in conditions where the risk is deemed 8 or lower.

Example 3

Sailor A, who is capable of sailing in winds up to 25 knots has a sailor rating of 7. Sailor A intends to go sailing with two other boats (Sailor B and Sailor C) who are only capable of sailing in winds up to 15 knots (sailor rating of 5). Although there are three boats sailing, there is no RHIB acting as a safety vessel so this is still considered as unsupervised sailing.

The wind at Fawkner Beacon is blowing 22 knots and it is 13 September. Using the risk matrix, the risk factor is 8.

As these sailors are sailing in a group (less risk), they can add 1 point to their sailor rating. This means that Sailor A's rating becomes 8 and Sailor B and C's rating becomes 6.

Based on the described conditions, the risk factor is 8. Given the risk factor exceeds Sailor B and C's rating, these sailors should not sail under this policy. This now means that Sailor A would be sailing by themselves which would put their sailor rating back to 7. With this being below the risk factor of 8, Sailor A should therefore not sail under this policy.

Other Recommendations

In addition to the above, sailors sailing under this policy should consider the following:

- Each boat should have a hand held VHF and/or a mobile phone (in a water-proof case). Such device should be attached to the sailor, not the boat, so that in the event of the sailor(s) being separated from their boat, they can still call for help. A handheld VHF can be borrowed from the SYC Boating Office and it is recommended that sailors undertake a radio check with the SYC Boating Office prior to launching. The SYC Boating Office will normally be staffed between 0900 – 1700hrs and can be contacted on 9599 0922 or on VHF Channel 77 and 16 with the call sign being "SYC Boating Office."
- Prior to launching, sailors should sign on to the whiteboard located next to the flag pole at the top of the launching ramp. They should record the date, time of departure, estimated time of return, class of boat, sail number, the name of all crew and a contact phone number or VHF call sign.
- In addition to signing on, sailors should raise the yellow flag on the OTB flag pole prior to launching. This will indicate to those on shore that there is someone out sailing.
- Upon returning to shore, sailors should sign off on the white board and if there are no other unsupervised sailors on the water (check the sign on board!), should lower the yellow flag.
- It is recommended that when you are participating in unsupervised sailing, you let a person who is still ashore know of your plans and timings.
- Sailors are encouraged to take sufficient sailing gear to keep you warm if the

conditions deteriorate or you capsize.

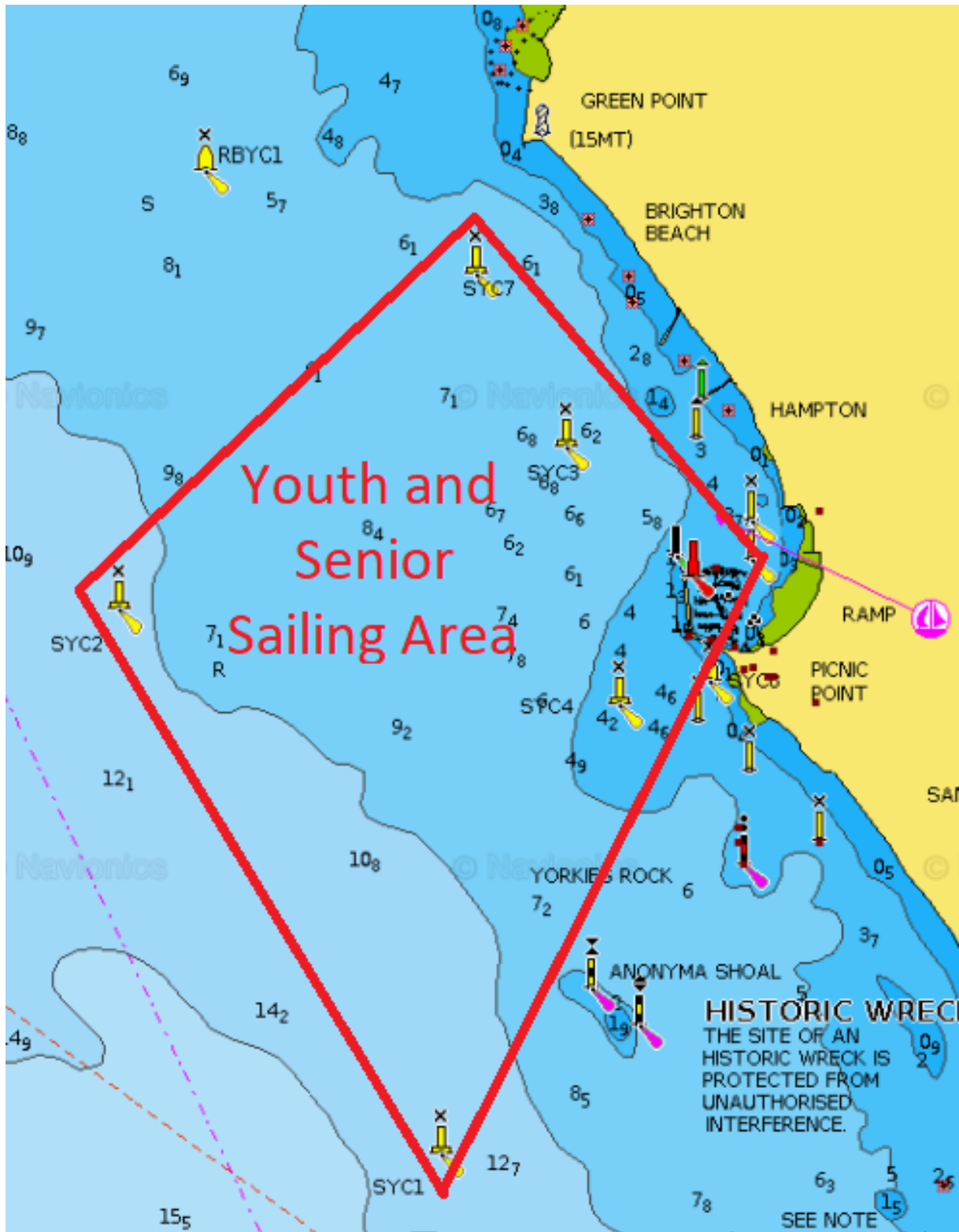
- Sailors are encouraged to sail in a windward direction first so that in the event of gear failure, they will drift towards the Club.
- Sailors should develop a checklist for their boat to ensure that they are carrying all of the necessary safety equipment (i.e. tow line, paddle, VHF radio/phone etc.).

Other Considerations

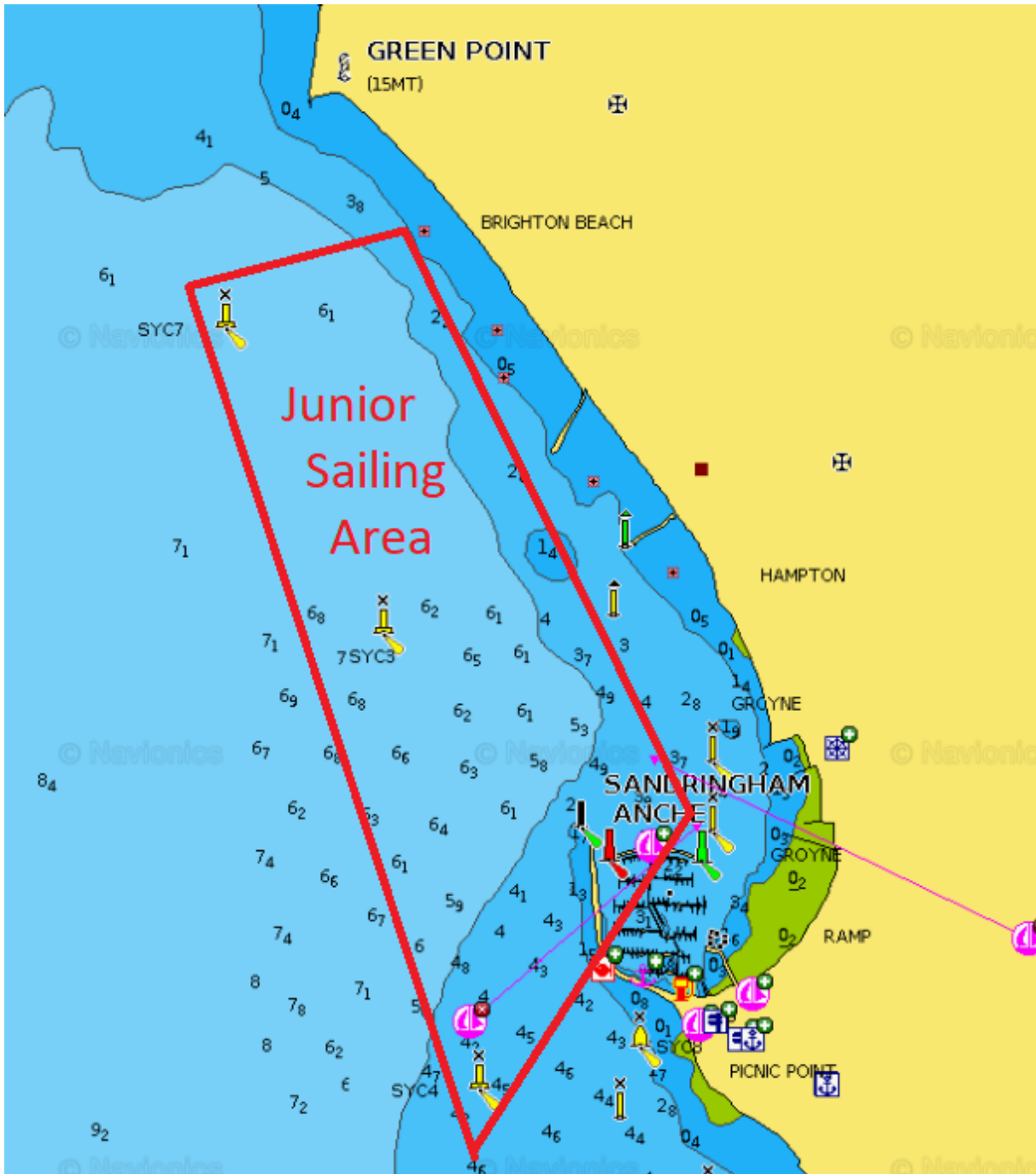
- The Boating Office hours are 0900 – 1700hrs (but may vary). The Boating Office may not always be staffed so sailors are encouraged to visit prior to launching to see if there are staff onsite. If in doubt, check with main reception.
- When Boating Office staff are onsite, they will check the whiteboard prior to leaving to ensure nothing is out of the ordinary. If there are boats out sailing, the Boating Office staff will make an announcement on VHF Channel 77 advising that the SYC Boating Office is closing down.

Appendix 1 – Maps of Recommended Sailing Area

Youth and Senior Sailing Area



Junior Sailing Area



Beginner Sailing Area

