

RMYS Tower SOP

Race Prep

4 hours before first warning

The RO must check the weather and decide whether conditions are suitable for a race. Current RMYS policy dictates cancellation for the following conditions;

- Gale Warning on BOM current 4 hours before the race
- Wind Speed consistently gusting over 30 knots
- Wind speed consistently below 3 knots
- Wave height over 2m when tide is low and boats may not have enough depth over the line.
- Visibility less than 100m
- Lightning over the course

If the conditions look borderline and the race officer would like to abandon, they should call the office who will notify entrants.

The RO should also take into consideration the race being run – Squadron Sundays will have a lower wind limit.

80 minutes prior to first warning

The RO should report to the office to receive a briefing and to pick up the RO folder. The briefing will include:

- Weather
- Entrants including fastest and slowest boat, as well as deepest draft.
- Race set up, including divisions, class flags, changes to SIs or NORs, time limits and courses
- The route to the tower over the construction

Before leaving for the tower, the RO must have:

- Start sheet/Entrants list – including handicaps, divisions, boat names and sail numbers
- Finish sheets
- An RO sheet
- The tower key
- The iPad
- A handheld VHF Radio – either their own, or one from the training room.

Optionally, the RO may also want to collect the volunteer drink and meal vouchers, as well as the snack box for the tower. There may also be special SIs and NOR for certain events.

65 minutes prior to first warning

The RO should hold a crew briefing in the bar, bearing in mind the experience of their volunteers; and should include, at a minimum;

- The type of race e.g. Pursuit/combined, which may need to be explained to first timers
- Is best start required?
- The expected weather
- Whether there will be a race management vessel on the water.
- Other races happening simultaneously.
- The roles to be allocated
 - Line Caller – Usually the RO, who calls the exact moment a boat crosses the line.
 - Button Presser – The person who presses the buzzer and controls the light box. If this person is inexperienced, they may need to be educated pre-race on how to operate the light box. They will also record finish times on a paper finish sheet

- Time Caller – This person will watch the GPS clock and call the exact time every time the line caller says now. They may also be a backup recorder and assist with spotting approaching sail numbers
- Time recorder – This person records times as instructed by the RO, using the iPad

60 minutes before first warning

Walk out to the tower. Be aware of the route to the tower, including the safety issues of the steep stairs down from the bridge. The RO must ensure his crew maintain three points of contact and take care on slippery surfaces.

The gate at the entrance to the construction site must be locked behind the race management team, although the large metal gate along the rock wall may be left open.

Upon arriving at the tower, the RO will unlock the door, taking care not to let it slam in winds above 15 knots. Again, it is the RO's responsibility to ensure the safety of the crew when ascending the steep stairs, maintaining three points of contact at all times and closing the gate at the top as soon as everyone is upstairs.

For the comfort of the crew, open windows and set blind level and colours as necessary. Open the door out to the balcony.

Turn on the radio and set it to Channel 72, or as specified in the sailing instructions. Turn on the instruments, the light board and set up the video camera of the start line.

Prepare the burgee to hoist, accompanied by one sound signal using the light box controller. This should also serve as a test for the horn.

Consider using flag Y (lifejackets) if conditions require;

- Over 20 knots
- Unpredictable and significant squalls
- Large residual swells

Hoist Y flag, accompanied by one sound signal.

Test the light box, ensuring that all bulbs are working and that the countdown is operational.

Review the current forecast, using the RO sheet to note current conditions, wind direction and speed and anticipated changes.

Note down the wind speed and direction every ten minutes, looking for patterns and changes to help with course decision.

Check the target race time in the RO folder and use the course ready reckoner to settle on a course for the day. Aim to have a beat and a run, and if the weather is changeable or light, consider using a course with multiple laps to allow for shortening of the course. Explain the course decision to the rest of the crew.

30 mins prior to first warning

Radio Melbourne VTS on Channel 12, advising them that we will be conducting a race from RMYS Breakwater, along with the start time, anticipated finish time, the course, which radio channel will be monitored and whether boats will be crossing the channel.

Wait for a reply from VTS and make a note of any specific instructions.

Display the course number in the north and east facing windows of the tower and on the number board.

As each boat leaves the pen or mooring, it must be signed on using the iPad or noted on the start sheet as present.

15 mins prior to first warning

Select the mode of the race on the light box; either pursuit or fleet.

Advise competitors over the radio on channel 72, mentioning the time limit, the SI version, the course, whether Y flag is flying and if there are any changes to the light signals.

Start the controller clock for the warning signal using the GPS time.

During Race

Warning signal

Count down to signal over the radio. Start the lightboard on the countdown.

Ensure everyone is ready in their positions and roles.

Start (Fleet)

Watch for OCS boats. Press and hold the recall button until boats have returned to the prestart side of the line if there are any ocs boats.

Advise the fleet over the radio when everyone is clear.

Start (Pursuit)

Take the exact time of the start in seconds for the best start trophy.

Watch for OCS boats and use the light box to signal boats if OCS by less than 1 minute. Press and hold the recall button for either 45 seconds or until the boat is back on the pre-start side of the line.

The light box should make an automated sound signal at every minute. If it fails to do so, you may need to manually make the signal.

During Race

The RO must continue to monitor the weather during the race, watching for lightning over the course, severely reduced visibility, and changes to wind strength and direction that may require shortening course.

In races with spinnaker and non-spinnaker divisions, the RO should keep a watch for boats sailing the wrong course and make a note on the RO sheet if any do.

The RO must also keep a constant listening watch on channel 72 and 16, noting down retirements. An eye must be kept out for anyone in distress that may be out of radio range, for example a boat sailing a long way off course.

In the event of an incident at any time, contact the RMYS office if open, or the Officer of the Day (OOD). If the office is unattended, the OOD must be contacted and will attend the office for on-shore requirements.

The allocated OOD for Saturday will be the acting OOD for the following day (Sunday) if there is any boating activity on that day. The Boating Administrator will advise the Sunday RO who is scheduled to work.

When the first boats begins the last leg, hoist the blue flag, being mindful of boats that have been lapped.

Send a photo of the start sheet to the office, including best start if required, along with any significant information.

Finish

The time limit for the first boat to complete the race is specified on the start sheet. Boats have 1 hour to finish after the first boat crosses the line. Stop recording times 10 minutes before sunset and announce that the time limit has expired over VHF

Use a sound signal for the first boat finishing in each division.

Identify each boat as they approach the line, preparing their sail number in the iPad.

Record the finish times on the iPad, and on a paper finish sheet. The paper sheet must prioritise the order of finishing boats, as the iPad can record the times and add sail numbers in retrospect.

Compare the paper finish times with the ones on the iPad to ensure consistency, allowing for a second or two of difference.

Check that all boats have finished and returned to marina on the iPad or compare starter's list to number of finishers.

Post-race

Tower pack up

If requested by VTS at start, notify them that the race has finished on Channel 12.

Once all boats are back in the marina, announce that the tower is closing over the radio and remove the flags.

Tidy up the tower, putting rubbish in the bin and flags away. Make sure no personal property has been left behind. Close and lock all windows and the back door. Put away the blinds.

Turn off power to all instruments and the light box.

Use the QR code to report any issues or breakages.

The RO must ensure the safety of all crew when descending the ladder, using three points of contact at all times.

Lock the tower and toilet door.

Return to Office

Ensure that the large gate is closed as you leave the tower.

Ensure that the construction site gate is locked, with the padlocks allowing Parks to unlock the gate with their own key.

Return to the office for a debrief including;

- Conditions during the race
- Any boats that failed to sail the correct course, who failed to finish or failed to meet the time limit.
- OCS boats that failed to correct.
- Any anticipated protests or incidents on the water
- Events that may affect handicapping, such as boats starting particularly late, damaging sails or sailing in the wrong direction.
- Any damaged equipment in the tower.

Return the RO folder, along with;

- Paper finish sheet
- Completed RO sheet
- Best start sheet
- iPad
- Tower Key
- Snack and drink box.
- The handheld radio if it was borrowed from the training room.