Safety Boat Launching and Recovery

Deciding to Launch

The OOD will make the decision on whether conditions allow a Safety Boat to be launched and which one. The rib will need at least 8 people, including the crew, to be available for recovery (i.e. committed to stay until the rib is recovered and to be prepared to get wet), unless it is clear that there will be no waves at the time of recovery. If there are not sufficient people available, the Jeaneau should be used instead.

The waves on the slipway increase during the last hour of high tide, but normally have reduced again by one hour after high tide. The anticipated conditions at the time of recovery must be considered when a decision on which Safety Boat to use is made. If the waves are higher than expected at the time of recovery to the extent that it may be unsafe to recover the boat, consideration should be given to waiting until at least an hour after high tide or, as a last resort, taking the boat to Cardiff Yacht Club.

Launching

Ensure that the engine is in the fully lifted position before leaving the compound. There must be at least 6 people to control the initial descent. Both the ratchet strap and the rope should be holding the boat for the steep part of the descent in case one should fail.

Remove the ratchet strap after going down the steep part of the slipway and before launching, making sure that the boat is held on the rope. This is so that the ratchet handle does not spin out of control and injure someone.

Just before the boat enters the water untie the rope until it is held on a couple of turns around the trailer handle while maintaining tension on the rope to prevent the boat coming off the trailer prematurely. If the safety boat crew are to get in the boat prior to launching, ensure that there are enough people kitted up to push the boat into deep water.

When the boat is off the trailer in waist deep water and before the shore party release the boat, the engine must be lowered so that the prop guard is just below the level of the water and the engine then started. In rough conditions this must be immediately after the boat comes off the trailer.

The safety boat driver must engage reverse gear by pulling the throttle lever back. If the tide is over 10 metres or so down the concrete below the bend in the slipway, reverse the boat out in line with the lower part of the slipway until, ideally and if practicable, you are nearly in line with the yellow buoy, so that you keep clear of the rocks which run to the east of the launching area. In any case, don't put the engine fully down until out past the yellow buoy.

If the tide is near the bend in slipway be aware that there are rocks in line with the upper part of the slipway. Reverse out with the engine part way down until you know you are clear (halfway to the yellow buoy). Remember to put the engine right down once clear (over halfway to the yellow buoy).

If you think you can’t reverse far because waves are breaking over the back of the boat remember that it will still remain afloat even if brim full with water and if you put the engine into forward gear with the boat facing the shore it will head towards the shore!

Recovery

Safety Boat Crew

The rocks are in the same place.

If the tide is more than 10 metres or so down the concrete below the bend in the slipway raise the engine so that the prop guard is just covered when you are out by the yellow buoy. Otherwise when about 50m out.

Maintain a position at least 50m out and in line with the lowest visible part of the slipway. Wait until the trailer is in the water and you are given the all clear. Approach the trailer in line with the lowest visible part of the slipway. If the tide is at the bend, the shore party should indicate to come in along the line of the lower part.

As the shore party grabs the boat, cut the engine, lift the engine fully and leave the boat.

Shore Party

The following describes the best way to recover the boat in waves. In a flat calm most of these precautions are unnecessary and the boat can we winched onto the trailer. In waves, it is especially important that the boat comes onto the trailer and out of the water as quickly as possible; if practicable between waves. The winch is too slow. The procedure below has worked well on many occasions but to do this right every time everyone involved should understand what is being done and their role.

There should be six people in the shore party. Two in the water to catch the boat and line it up, preferably one each side; one to attach the carbineer, one to pull the rope and one each to stop the boat moving and to stop it tipping up.

Before the boat approaches, prepare the rope ready to attach to the Safety Boat by threading it through the eye on the carabineer. The winch should be wound up fully. The rope must be kept clear so that it can be pulled right to the front of the trailer. Those at the front of the trailer should check that the cradle rollers are aligned right and hold the rope up to prevent it being caught in the rollers or trailer handles.

The boat must be held steady about half a metre behind the trailer. The carabineer must then be attached to the loop of rope on the front of the boat. Once the person attaching the carabineer has given the OK, the rope must then be pulled as fast as possible to pull the boat onto the trailer so that the carabineer ends up right at the front of the trailer (where the tow hitch would be). The trailer will try to move forward and tip up, so this needs to be resisted until the boat is in place.

The person nominated to stop the trailer tipping up will need to stand on the front of the trailer (on the shore side of the winch, away from the side the rope is pulled). The person holding the trailer in place should push back on the winch assembly from in front of the winch. If the boat gets stuck part way, both will need to stand on the trailer bar.

Those in the water should remind the safety boat crew to lift the engine, cut the engine and get out (if they forget). It is much quicker and easier to get an unladen boat onto the trailer. The crew, when out, should help to steady the boat and hold it back in the waves.

When the boat hits the buffers those at the front should hold it there while those at the back push the boat clear of the water. The rope man then needs to put some turns around the towbar handle to hold it in place. The boat can then be pushed to a place where the winch hook can be fitted and the boat winched forward so that the eye on the front of the boat is 2 inches past the buffer.

The carabineer should then be removed and the rope passed through the eye on the front of the boat and made fast and tight. The carabineer should be attached to the loop in the rope (where the fixed end is attached to the trailer). Both the ratchet strap and the rope should be holding the boat for the steep part of the ascent in case one should fail.

The boat is now ready to be pulled up the slipway.