Guidance for RYA Training Centres offering Powerboating activity other than RYA recognised tuition

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Introduction

In addition to running recognised RYA Powerboat courses, many multi-discipline activity centres offer other forms of powerboat activity. It can be delivered in many ways, as a site seeing journey, a river study or just a ride on a boat. Some RTCs also provide introductory sessions to promote participation in future RYA courses.

This summary covers the following key areas;

1. Crew Qualifications
2. Crew / passenger ratios
3. Seating, comfort and safety
4. Communications
5. Weather limitations
6. Safety equipment
7. Introductory lessons.

Crew Qualification

Centre Principals should satisfy themselves that the person in charge of the vessel is competent both to handle the vessel and to deal confidently with passengers.

It is recommended that the skipper holds, as minimum, RYA Powerboat Level Two.

It is the responsibility of the Centre Principal to ensure that the skipper and, where necessary, the crew of the vessel have, in addition to any qualifications, recent and relevant experience of the type and size of vessel.

In some cases, vessels will operate in higher risk areas –e.g. through locks and tunnels- and also have higher risk passengers on board. In these instances it is recommended that an additional risk assessment be carried out. The Centre Principal should ensure that there are sufficient persons on board with relevant experience to cope in the case of an emergency.

Crew / Passenger ratio

The maximum number of passengers carried must never exceed 12. More than twelve and the skipper will require a National Boatmaster licence issued by the MCA.

The Centre Principal should determine the maximum number of persons that can be safely carried on the vessel. In many cases this will be less than 12.

Seating, comfort and safety

Where appropriate, passengers should be provided with a seat. In the case of a RIB, where passengers sit on the inflatable collar all passengers should have suitable hand holds.

Operate at a safe speed. Do not operate the vessel in a reckless manner in order to provide a “thrill ride” experience.

Communications

Effective communication is essential. If using marine VHF radio check the effective range from the centre to vessels on the limits of your operating area.

Many Centres use their own private channels, however, in times of emergency, when the rescue services are involved change to channel 16 so that everyone can communicate.

Weather limitations

When planning a trip on a given day always take into account the weather forecast and make an assessment of the conditions that maybe encountered. Choose a safe operating area accordingly.

If the conditions are less than favourable consider reducing passenger numbers and limiting speed.

Safety Equipment

The vessel should be equipped to the standards laid down in the current guidance notes for centre inspection appropriate to the operating area.

Powerboat Introductory sessions

A Powerboat introductory session is aimed at giving students an experience of learning to drive a powerboat.

Centres that offer short introductory sessions to encourage future participation in certificated courses, (e.g. taster sessions as part of multi-activity courses) may operate at a student to instructor ratio greater than that specified for certificated courses, providing the boats are not overloaded and taking into account the type of boat and conditions. The exact ratio is at the discretion of the Centre Principal, with due consideration to the RYA guidelines. The Centre Principal should be aware that increasing ratios for all such sessions may not be appropriate.

Powerboat Introductory sessions should be supervised by a qualified RYA Powerboat Instructor.