

GSC Foul Weather Protocol

1. Always check the boating weather forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology by calling NSW Maritime recorded weather on Ph.13 12 36 (option 3) before running any sailing event. Monitor the VHF radio on channel 73 for weather updates from the Coast Guard and conditions other sailing clubs are experiencing.
2. Do not send competitors on to the course if the wind regularly exceeds 25 knots in velocity. (The safe limit for novice sailors should be considered as 15 knots).
3. If the wind increases to 25 knots or more during a event or in the opinion of the Principal Race Officer that the conditions are or soon will be too dangerous or in any way unsafe to continue, the races should be abandoned and all competitors should be accounted for via the sign-on / sign-off sheets at the clubhouse.
4. The procedure for abandoning the race is Code Flag N displayed over Code Flag A on the start boat's flag mast together with two sound signals. This signal's meaning is 'Races are abandoned more signals ashore'.
5. All powerboats should now be in SAR (Search and Rescue) mode and patrol the racing area assisting competitors. The aim is to save lives not boats. However if conditions allow, all efforts to take the boats in tow and returned to shore must be made.
6. If the crew are taken off a boat and the boat is abandoned, a float with the wording "crew safe" should be tied to a conspicuous part of its hull. This indicates that the crew have been taken off the boat and are safe.
7. The radio operator at the clubhouse and his/her assistants should account for all competitors that have come ashore and keep the powerboat crews up to date on who is missing and of any competitors that require assistance and their location on the course. A shore assistant, equipped with a portable VHF radio, should be stationed at the Club's launch ramp to provide timely information to the powerboats and Club radio operator about the competitors coming ashore.
8. When everyone is accounted for all crews can stand down. However, if anyone is missing and has not been seen ashore and not signed off, all of the powerboats must search the area and surrounding bays, sheltered shores, lee shores for the missing competitor(s). If after a reasonable time of searching has passed (perhaps 30 minutes) without locating the missing competitors, the Principal Race Officer must inform the Water Police (Balmain, Ph.9320 7499) of the situation and request their assistance in mounting a search and rescue, by **Declaring an Emergency**. When the Water Police assume command of the search all of the club's powerboats and crews will assist and follow the instructions of the Water Police.