Lymington Yacht Charters

# Risk Assessment
# Corporate Events

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## 1. Introduction

Marine based events offer huge benefits for hospitality, teambuilding & motivational activities for clients' staff and valued customers. However, as with everything in life there is a risk attached to every task performed during the day. This document identifies the hazards and assesses the risks to guests from those hazards.

The risk assessment is for a broad spectrum of events, ranging from corporate yachting regattas to hospitality days on board large yachts and powerboats, therefore "yacht" refers to both sail and power vessels and some of the risks assessed will not be relevant to powerboats and visa versa.

## 2.i Tasks that could be performed whilst on board a yacht.

- Moving around the boat both on the deck and down below.
- Stowing the mooring lines and fenders.
- Hoisting the sails.
- Trimming the sails.
- Winding winches.
- Steering the yacht.
- Transfer on and off the yacht onto a RIB or floating dock.

## 2.ii Identification of hazards and degree of risk

*A hazard is defined as the potential to cause injury or damage, whilst a risk is the likelihood of injury or damage resulting from such a hazard.*

### a. Hazards before embarkation

1. Accident in the car park of the boatyard.
2. Falling over on the pontoon leading up to the yacht and landing in the water.

| b. Hazards whilst on board. | SI | LO | Degree of Risk SI x LO highest = 9 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Fall due to uneven deck. | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 2. Fall due to wet deck. | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 3. Fall due to impact with sails or boom. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 4. Exposure or hypothermia due to weather conditions. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 5. Heat exhaustion due to weather conditions. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 6. Drowning due to immersion in water. | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 7. Hypothermia due to immersion in water. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 8. Collision with another vessel. | 3-1 | 1 | 1 to 3 |
| 9. Sinking due to collision. | 3-1 | 1 | 1 to 3 |
| 10. Sinking due to grounding. | 3-1 | 1 | 1 to 3 |
| 11. Fire on board. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 12. Aggravating existing medical condition. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 13. Fractures and cuts due to sails or equipment. | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 14. Food poisoning. | 2 | 1 | 2 |

*Key to hazard severity index (SI)*
*Score 3: Major injury or death*
*Score 2: Serious injury (off work/incapacitated for more than 3 days).*
*Score 1: Minor injury (entry in Accident Book).*
*Score 0: No obvious potential for this hazard.*

*Key to likelihood of occurrence (LO)*
*Score 3: Probably will occur*
*Score 2: May occur occasionally*
*Score 1: Likely to occur infrequently or not at all.*

3. Assessment of hazards.

a. (1 to 3) Falls on board – Degree of Risk score 2 – Low

Falling or stumbling on a yacht is a hazard due to the fact that guests are walking on an unfamiliar surface. These falls can be painful but not serious and if the guest is not briefed properly can occur.

Method of control:
Skipper and crews brief the guests before they climb onto the yacht about what is safe to step on and touch. Event manager ensures that prior to the event all guests are given a list of appropriate footwear to be worn on board a yacht.

b. (3) Fall due to impact with sails or equipment – Degree of Risk score 1 – very Low

Falling due to being hit by part of the yacht's equipment can be serious for the novice, accidents usually only occur when the guest is in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Method of control:
The skipper during his safety briefing will make guests aware of the height of the boom and will also remind guests whilst sailing of the risk this poses. In terms of falling due to being hit by sails etc. this would only occur if the guest were out of the enclosed cockpit, there are times when guests would want to help with the sails so the risk of falling would be higher when out of this protected area. If guests are on the working deck of a yacht they are under the supervision of the skipper or crew and will only be there if they are happy and confident being in this situation.

c. (4) Exposure or hypothermia due to weather conditions – Degree of risk score 2 – Low

The UK's weather can be inclement and the risk of the cold should not be underestimated in the marine environment.

Method of control:
All guests are issued with appropriate foul weather gear by the crew. This kit goes over the clothes worn by the guests. The event manger will issue a list of items to wear prior to the event, these clothes would include bringing a fleece/jumper and other warm clothes. Alternatively, if a guest is cold then they do have the option to warm up down below.

d. (5) Heat exhaustion due to weather conditions – Degree of risk score 2 – Low

The UK's weather can get very hot in the middle of the summer and the sun's effect is magnified when on board a yacht in the sea due to reflection off the water and a lack of shelter on deck.

Method of control:
The event manager will issue a list of items prior to the event that guests should bring. In this case they should have a hat and sun screen. The yacht will also carry sun screen if the guests do not bring any. In addition, the yacht carries a plentiful supply of drinking water, which should be consumed during the day to help prevent dehydration. The crew are briefed on the importance of keeping guests fluid intake up.

e. (6) Drowning due to immersion in water – Degree of risk score 3 – Low

When participating in any marine based event the greatest hazard is the water. So therefore the risk of drowning if immersed in water is scored 3 out of 9. So the risk is still low but it carries the highest degree of risk score in this assessment.

Method of control:
All the yachts carry a lifejacket for each person on board plus 2 spares (for yachts of up to 12 capacity). In the main they are gas inflation jackets that are operated if a person enters the water involuntarily. When not inflated they are light to wear and are not bulky at all, they look like a waistcoat.

Current codes of practise state, that guests do not have to wear a lifejacket. However, it is up to the individual skipper to decide when it is appropriate for them to be worn. Our position is that if there is little or no wind, skippers will not insist on a lifejacket. However, if there is enough wind to start to heel the yacht and the guests are complete beginners then lifejackets will be worn. In addition, if the conditions get very rough then safety harnesses are issued to help prevent falls and man over board incidents.

It is up to the skipper to decide when it is appropriate for guests to don lifejackets, they are briefed to use lifejackets if they are in any doubt.

On larger yachts and powerboats with more enclosed areas on hospitality days then lifejackets are only issued if a guest is a non-swimmer or there is an emergency situation on board.

The skipper in his safety briefing prior to departure gives instructions on the use and donning of lifejackets.

f. (7) Hypothermia due to immersion in water – Degree of risk score 2 – Low

The risks of immersion in water resulting from a fall, collision or grounding of the vessel. Hypothermia will be the result from being immersed in water for a length of time depending on the time of year.

Method of control:
The wearing of warm clothes and a lifejacket will significantly prolong the survivable time that a person can be in the water before hypothermia can set in. In addition, on regatta days where there is a higher risk, a fast support and safety boat (RIB) with a RYA (Royal Yachting Association) First Aid at Sea qualified driver on board will shadow the yachts in case of an incident where a guest enters the water. This RIB will significantly cut down the amount of time the guest is in the water and the driver will be able to render immediate medical assistance, if required. The skipper and crew of the yacht are also fully trained in man overboard drills in case the RIB cannot give assistance as quick as the yacht. It should be noted that it is not a requirement to have a RIB. Indeed, on the larger yachts on hospitality days, due to the risk of immersion being lower we do not require this facility as the boats can provide their own assistance in a man overboard situation.

g. (8) Collision with another vessel – Degree of Risk score 1-3 – very Low to Low

The reason why the degree of risk score is between 1 and 3 is due to the fact that “collision” with another vessel can be anything from a slight bump resulting in no damage or injury to a major incident and loss of life. In our experience, the latter has not happened in recent history and the former happens infrequently.

Method of control:
With the tragedy of the “Marchioness” and the “Bowbelle” on the Thames in the late 1980’s, the Dept of Transport tightened up regulations for vessels operating commercially and in 1994 it produced the Code of Practise for Small Commercial Vessels. This document and legislation controls all aspects of the yacht charter industry from yacht condition, safety equipment and safe manning and skipper qualifications. This means that the risk of a yacht having a collision or having a catastrophic failure is greatly reduced due to improved training standards and yacht condition and maintenance.
If a major incident occurs in our main area of operation (i.e. the Western Solent) the water is firstly sheltered and there are 4 lifeboat stations within 30 minutes and also a Coastguard helicopter within our area of operation.

h. (9 –10) Sinking due to collision or grounding – Degree of Risk score 1-3 – very Low to Low

See above.

i. (11) Fire on board – Degree of Risk score 2 – Low

Fire on board a yacht is uncommon in modern times but if it occurs can be serious in terms of guest safety.

Method of control:
Under the Code of Practise for Small Commercial Vessels, there are strict standards that boats have to meet. This includes the use of fire resistant materials and engine spaces, gas alarms and fire extinguishers, therefore, the risk is very minimal. In the case of burns the yachts carry full cat C first aid kits.

j. (12) Aggravating existing medical condition – Degree of Risk score 2 – Low

There is a high chance that within of a group of guests a few will have an existing minor medical condition. In 99% of cases a condition is in a stable state. However, guests being in a marine environment and exerting themselves in a way not before experienced may bring on symptoms of an existing condition.

Method of control:
The event manger prior to the event will make all guests aware of the need to bring any medication along. At the event the skipper will discretely obtain relevant medical history if it is important via the passenger form. In the event of a serious incident the Coastguard can evacuate by helicopter. In a minor incident the yacht will not be more than 1 hour from a port for ambulance transfer, or if RIB support boat is on stand-by, then a high speed transfer to ambulance is possible.

k. (13) Fractures and cuts due to sails or equipment – Degree of risk score 2 – Low

Incidents such as rope burn and “walking” wounded injuries inflicted by a fall or minor accident can happen on board yachts from time to time.

Methods of control:
The skipper during the initial safety briefing and during the day will be constantly looking out for their guests and train them in safe practises. In the event of an injury the yacht carries a cat C First Aid Kit and the skipper holds a RYA First Aid at Sea certificate. In addition, on a regatta day, the RIB safety boat can lend assistance, with the driver holding the same qualification.

l. (14) Food Poisoning – Degree of Risk 2 – Low

The risk of food poisoning is low but can occur.

Methods of Control:
The outside caterers employed have to meet current health and safety standards for the food industry. Food is brought down the morning of the event in cool bags and then put in the boat’s fridge.

## 4. Conclusion

Whilst water-bourne activities do inevitably carry some risk to guests, on careful study and using the above methods of control, the risks are significantly less than at first glance.

Sea Venues Ltd's(Trading as Lymington Yacht Charters) first priority is the safety of guests, crew and other yachts. We fully support and comply with the current MCA Code of Practise for Small Commercial Vessels and even on occasion go beyond the current recommendations.