Guidance on major events and COVID-19 (and applicable to local events)

These are GUIDELINES only

Each Event Organiser and Organising Committee has to make its own decisions based on Government and Public Health advice at the time and the skills and equipment available for managing event participants.

Participants would include competitors, boat owners and support persons (as defined in the RRS) together with the Organising Committee, Race Committee, Race Officials and suppliers of goods and services for the Event.

These Guidelines are to provide current information and best practice and will evolve over time

1. Executive Summary

When considering a major or local event in the current climate, event organisers should consider the following key points:

- Appointing a COVID Officer as part of the event organising committee
- What is the purpose of the event?
- What classes & fleets will be part of the event?
    - Do restrictions impact some classes more than others?
    - Do restrictions limit or prequalify participants per boat
- Does COVID change the size of event that the venue can realistically handle?
- What current restrictions on mass gatherings impact the size of event?
- Prepare some scenarios on what the event may look like with different restrictions in place
- Develop a timeline identifying key dates where go / no-go decisions can be made

The larger the event the harder it is to manage. Consideration should be given to each area of the event and within each area what operations are involved that may involve interaction between people giving rise to the possibility of transmission. Suitable control measures should then be put in place to mitigate the risk of transmission.

2. Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak continues to be a rapidly evolving situation. This document has been developed with Irish Sailing event organisers and race officials to assist those currently considering or planning for major events which are now possible as eased restrictions allow.

For ease of reference, a major event is taken to mean, in the context of this document, any regatta or race which could be expected to bring in participants from outside the host venue. It will likely be larger than regular club racing. This may include an open meeting, traveller regatta, regatta week, national championship, or an international competition.

We invite any queries or feedback on this document to be sent to slrossiter@sailing.ie

Guiding Principles

Irish Sailing's guiding principles will underpin all guidance across the boating community.

1. Irish Sailing will always follow Government advice. The Covid-19 preventative measures are vital to protecting health and wellbeing and to minimise pressure on frontline services. We all have a role to play by following the Government guidelines.

2. We will, as a boating community, take a **considerate** and **conservative** approach

   - **Considerate:** be mindful of the potential impact that you could have on other water users and do not place unnecessary extra strain on the RNLI and emergency services

   - **Conservative:** help to minimise risk by taking an extra conservative approach to your boating

Other Guidance

In addition to this document, Irish Sailing has produced the following guidance documents which may be relevant and are available through https://www.sailing.ie/Coronavirus. **This is dynamic and**

**includes the Roadmap on Return to Sailing and current status of phases and risk assessment**

World Sailing has provided advice on the specific risks associated with running sailing events and Covid-19. This includes documents titled Guidance for Event Organizers for the Protection of the Health of Sailing Communities and Guidance for Event Organisers for Offshore Yacht Races.

This can be accessed via the World Sailing Medical page.

3. Event Organising Committee

The following plan is suggested as a basis from which a good management structure for the Event Organising Committee can be evolved. The Event Organising Committee is appointed by the Organising Authority to deliver the event and reports to the Organising Authority.

Figure 3-1 Event Management Structure
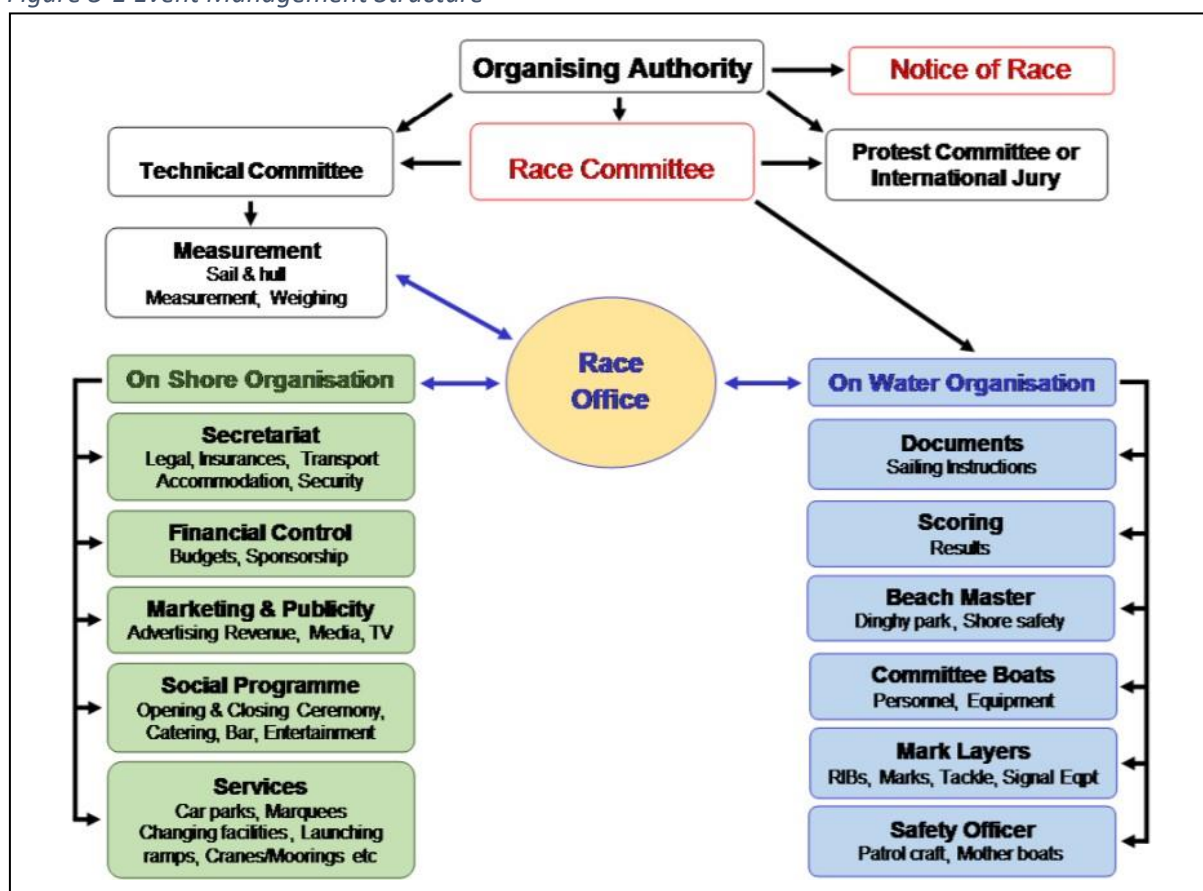
It is recommended that the **Event Organising Committee appoints a COVID-19 Officer (CO)** to be responsible for oversight of the risk and mitigation planning, communicating information to all stakeholders and ensuring that the necessary standards are met

The CO does not necessarily have to be medically trained and, dependent on the size of the event, this role can be combined with other roles. Someone with experience in risk assessment and risk mitigation processes may be well suited to the role. The CO should work with each of the various sub-committees shown in Figure 3-1 to ensure that the mitigations being put in place in each area are appropriate and consistent.

4. Scenario Planning

Whilst we cannot know for sure what restrictions are going to be eased and when, event organising committees can review the current restrictions in place outlined by Government and Irish Sailing to identify from the notices of potential updates what possible restrictions may be lifted or reapplied prior to the event.

It is suggested that the event be mapped against each step or phase in advance, with alert levels to see at which point the event is possible to run and how it may be scaled up or down dependent on the alert level.

This provides a methodology of managing risk at timelines in the countdown to an Event and to give clear and effective decision making. Risk management may be by introducing additional measures.

Level	Description – Defines Risk Level	What it means for the event
1	Covid-19 is not known to be present in the Ireland	*i.e. event can run as normal*
2	Covid-19 is present in Ireland, but the number of cases and transmission is low	TBD
3	a Covid-19 epidemic is in general circulation (define)	TBD
4	a Covid-19 epidemic is in general circulation: transmission is high or rising fast	*i.e. event cannot run in any form*

5. Timeline

Event Organising Committees should prepare a timeline working back from the date of the event. The timeline should highlight the key milestones at which certain actions are required to have been taken. Go/no-go decision points should be built into the timeline at which point the event organising committee should review the situation, assess if restrictions have been eased sufficiently or may be sufficiently eased to allow the event to proceed.

If the event is unlikely to be able to proceed it should be scaled down or cancelled. Organising Authorities should ensure they have appropriate cancellation policies within their Notice of Race.

6. Risk Assessments

Event organisers should consider the COVID specific risks to their event in addition to their normal risk assessment points. This means assessing how transmission could occur for each operation undertaken as part of the event and considering how the risk may be mitigated.

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7. Considerations and Controls

Consideration should be given to each area of the event and within which area what operations are involved that may involve interaction between people giving rise to the possibility of transmission.

This section aims to highlight some of the areas and operations involved with a major event and to discuss how they may prevent a risk of transmission and what possible control measures there may be in place. The control measures presented are suggestions and ideas of what may be considered. Different control measures will be suitable depending on the event and the current phase of the country's recovery from the pandemic. Whilst not explicitly stated below, it is expected that good hygiene measures will underpin all elements in each area.

Pre-event

Areas	Considerations
Notice of Race	- State quotas for each class to manage event capacity - Consider including COVID statement or additional venue requirements and expectations for personal responsibility
Entry & Registration	- Utilise online entry & registration system if possible - Keep a record of all attendees to the Event (for track and trace) - Gain attendee approval under GDPR for limited use of personal data to provide communication and support to the attendee. - Require those feeling unwell, who have recently been unwell or who have had contact with someone who has been unwell to not attend - Consider whether it may be appropriate to require participants to declare they are symptom free - Perform registration in open area - Provide screens at registration desk - Limit number of people entering race office - Use one-way systems - Reinforce government guidance on those who are clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable suggesting individuals should consider whether their personal circumstances are conducive to taking part in the event
Volunteer Briefings	- Limit written briefing notes - Hold briefing online via Zoom, Skype or similar - Only hold individual team briefings rather than all volunteers
Competitor Briefing	- Do not hold a traditional competitors' briefing - Pre-record and deliver briefing via social media channels - Alternatively real time via Zoom, Facebook live or similar - If physical briefings hold in the open area with a PA system - Hold separate & smaller briefings per class / groups
Environmental	- Consideration to keeping single use waste to a minimum. - Ensure there are facilities for additional waste to be disposed of responsibly and securely i.e. gloves, masks, disposable wear. - Encourage reusable water bottles to avoid cross contamination and reduce waste.
Accommodation	- Consider if reduced volunteer numbers is feasible - Use local volunteers to avoid requirement for accommodation - Use household groups for volunteer roles - Provide single room accommodation
Venue	- Capacity of various rooms and boat park dependent on the level of social distancing - Locate where good broadband coverage and have a backup plan for broadband outage or excessive contention/poor signal e.g. separate broadband networks for race committee and safety.

Race Office

Areas	Considerations
Set Up and Location	- Utilise online event management system that allows submission and reply to queries online - Provide email address & telephone number for queries with race office team support provided remotely - Locate race office in an open area - Provide competitor contact point with limited race office staff on 'front-line' - Provide screens at race office front desk to separate race office team members & competitors - Limit number of people entering race office - Use one-way systems - Provide signage reinforcing social distancing requirements
Results	- Provide results service on-line only including queries
	- Finish records can be transmitted from CV to the Race Office directly via WhatsApp or email for input to the results software - Resolve any queries via telephone or video call
Notice board	- Provide a real time online noticeboard only – documents, results, changes etc – grouped in folders and each posting timestamped - Use WhatsApp groups or other notification-based software to send verifiable notices to competitors and volunteers by class or team
Paperwork	- Consider if paperwork can be completed electronically – an online form or submitting an image (photo or pdf) - Where paper is required consider how to reduce number of people who handle it e.g. scan and circulate

Boat Park & Launch / Recovery

Areas	Considerations
Arrival at event	- Pre-booked arrival times to avoid crowding - Limit entries to ensure adequate boat parking space
Rigging / de-rigging	- Assign boat park spaces to ensure social distancing can be maintained between boats - Use one-way system for people moving from club house to areas of boat park
Manoeuvring to slipway	- Stagger launch times for classes and fleets to avoid crowding around slipways - Use one-way system
Launch / recovery	- Consider self-launching policy - Beachmaster to ensure compliance with guidelines and to offer advice - Provide gloves for trolley volunteers and ensure regular hand washing - Provide visible and accessible disinfection station in the launch/recovery area

Race Management

Areas	Considerations
Equipment Collection	- Schedule times for equipment collection by race teams - Have a small equipment team responsible for equipment distribution to relevant areas - Clean all equipment after handling
Committee Boat/Vessel Management	- Consider if a Committee Boat/Vessel is required - Consider multi-tasking and how many people are required to undertake tasks - Consider how race teams can comfortably self-isolate based on wind direction. Avoid slipstream effect of one person downwind of another - Can any tasks be automated through use of technology i.e. use of automatic timer and sounder, less flags, greater use of radio and amend SIs or NOR as appropriate - Can household groups be used or set up as PODS to limit mixing.
Mark Laying	- Can fixed marks or waypoints be used, reducing, or eliminating the need for mark layers - Can household groups be used for crewing - Ensure each crew person only handles their allocated marks
Fleet Management	- Size classes to reduce numbers to manageable levels - Stagger Fleets to reduce marina/facilities interaction -Marina or Club guidelines - Consider how course size, type & location may help or hinder - Locate Race Committee boat/vessel (eg CV and results) if possible to areas of adequate mobile signal coverage for online data

Event Safety

Areas	Considerations
Comms/Bridge Waterside Co-ordination	- Limit number the of people in the Event Communications hub or bridge to radio operators & Safety Co-ordination - Use one radio operator to cover multiple channels
Patrol boat operations Safety/ Medical	- Can household groups be used for crewing - Access to and from boats. (Marina guidelines etc.) - Note boat positioning and wind direction to maintain isolation - Cleaning procedures at end of day - Isolate fast patrol boats allocated to emergency response - Provide PPE for use if close contact with sailor required
Food & spares boat	- Remove provision if possible - Require boats to be self-contained - carry own food & some spares
Tally	- Put in place cleaning protocol for tally bands - Utilise electronic tally systems* if possible - Open tally stations earlier than normal to avoid crowding - Allow tally collection in stages
PODs	- Use a POD system for sailing teams and Race Committee teams to limit mixing. Brief the parties and document with contacts/GDPR
Medical	- Create an incident plan in case a participant develops symptoms - Have a contact tracing protocol set up (re: Irish Sailing guidelines)
* Note that tallies are often used to also provide a means of identification for individual sailors during emergency situations in addition to being an indication of which sailors remain afloat	

Technical/Measurement

Areas	Considerations
Pre-event Equipment Inspection	- Remove pre-event inspection in favour of post-race inspection - Conduct random pre-event inspection rather than all competitors
Equipment Limitation	- Require competitors to fit event limitation marks (e.g. black bands etc) rather than officials
Post-race Equipment Inspection	- Utilise quarantine areas onshore. Define and mark out operating space - Limit inspection to visual checks only with no requirement to handle equipment unless with cloves and mask.

Jury/Protest Cttee

Areas	Considerations
General	- Technically advise OA and the Race Office with online documents and on-line real time reporting if required - Use the phone and messaging– e.g. WhatsApp or similar social media and mobile - If on site define and mark out operating space to allow social distancing - outside working if possible - Limit participants at meetings to allow for social distancing - Limit paperwork and use gloves and masks if appropriate - Clean all equipment after use
Hearings	- Conduct virtual hearings with all parties, witnesses and PC members connecting from home via their own devices OR - Alternatively conduct hybrid hearings with parties and witnesses onsite but partly remote PC to reduce participants - Encourage scoring penalties prior to hearing and arbitration
Protest submission	- Utilise event management system and allow for online protest submission and notification - Provide protest form download and accept submission by email - Limit paper forms and allow competitors to photograph and send for submission. Allow verifiable photo evidence
Notices	- Provide online noticeboard - Use WhatsApp or similar to circulate notices
On-water Operations	- Limit on water judging where appropriate - Only provide single judge per RIB where skills and safety allow

Social

Areas	Considerations
Catering (depending on the event)	- Consider taking pre-orders to avoid queuing- sourced from a caterer (e.g. Club kitchen or third party with a Health & Safety approval) - Volunteers to arrange their own or takeaway from a caterer
Prize giving (depending on the event)	- Do not hold OR - Hold post-event via social media channels OR - If held in an open area with social distancing, stagger and shorten

8. Notice of Race (NOR) Considerations

Consideration should be given to include event cancellation & refund policy in the NOR

Also clauses on:

PARTICIPANT WELFARE
Due to the current COVID 19 pandemic, the OA should adhere to any legislative and national guidelines in place. This may include the need to register participants and visitors for contact tracing. Numbers may need to be restricted, both ashore and at sea, and in that instance, a boat's entry date will determine its place on any eligibility list, should that be required. The OA takes its responsibility very seriously with regard to any risk minimisation and may place social distancing and other measures in place in the environs of Event (TBD).

RISK ASSESSMENT
Rule 4 of the Racing Rules of Sailing states: "The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone."
Sailing is by its nature an unpredictable sport and therefore involves an element of risk. By taking part in the event, each competitor agrees and acknowledges that:
(a)   They are aware of the inherent element of risk involved in the sport and accept responsibility for the exposure of themselves, their crew and their boat to such inherent risk whilst taking part in the event.
(b)   They are responsible for the safety of themselves, their crew, their boat and their other property whether afloat or ashore.
(c)   They accept responsibility for any injury, damage or loss to the extent caused by their own actions.
(d)   Their boat is in good order, equipped to sail in the event and they are fit to participate.
(e)   The provision of a race management team, patrol boats, and other officials and volunteers by the event organiser does not relieve them of their own responsibilities.
(f)   The provision of patrol boat cover is limited to such assistance, particularly in extreme weather conditions, as can be practically provided in the circumstances.
(g)   It is their responsibility to familiarise themselves with any risks specific to this venue or this event drawn to their attention in any rules and information produced for the venue or event and to attend any safety briefing held for the event
(h)   They are responsible for ensuring that their boat is equipped and seaworthy so as to be able to face extremes of weather; that there is a crew sufficient in number, experience and fitness to withstand such weather; and that the safety equipment is properly maintained, stowed and in date and is familiar to the crew.
Participants, Crew details, Support persons and visitors with contact information, along with an ICE contact must be provided at registration (this can also be used for prizegiving). Also approval under GDPR for limited use of personal data to provide communication and support to the participants, support persons and visitors.