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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Residential Voyages

COVID-19

To be used in conjunction with wider RSP SMS

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1. Introduction

The successful COVID-19 vaccination programme has had a major effect on the incidence of COVID-19 in the UK. As it is still in circulation, special measures to reduce the risk of transmission on Rona Sailing Project Voyages are required and they are set out below.

A review of these SOPs will be carried out as new Government and relevant National Governing Body guidance is issued.

Failure to comply with the procedures described in this document may result in someone not being permitted to join the voyage or being asked to leave the vessel.

2. Pre-voyage Procedures

We aim to create as COVID secure an environment on the vessel as possible. We will therefore implement a testing system using government-issued lateral flow (LF) tests. Everyone regardless of vaccination status, will be required to take a test the day before a voyage and should only travel to the Marina if the result is negative. Furthermore, everyone will be required to take a test on arrival, before being allowed to board the vessel. Once someone has boarded the vessel they are not to come ashore at the Marina.

A further test shall be administered on day 4 of a voyage, as relevant.

2.1 Testing:

- The Rona Sailing Project does not provide LF tests.
- Everyone is required to bring three Government-issued Lateral Flow tests, which can be ordered free of charge via the NHS [here](#); One is to be used on arrival, one during the voyage and one as a spare (or to be used if symptoms develop).
- All LF tests are to be self-administered.
- It is the responsibility of the individual to log each of their own test results with the NHS as per the instructions within the pack.
- All results of tests taken on arrival, must be viewed by a member of staff, or designate, to be cleared to join the vessel.
- Under 18s and vulnerable crew members are to be accompanied by a responsible adult until a negative test is returned and they are permitted to join the vessel.
- Failure to confirm either a full vaccination or a negative test result 24 in advance will exclude someone from taking a LF test on arrival and therefore they will not be cleared to join the vessel. Once they have boarded the vessel, persons should not disembark in Universal Marina again, unless given specific instructions to do so by the Skipper/PD.
- In the event of a Skipper returning a positive test, the voyage will have to be cancelled unless a designated standby skipper can step in.

2.1 Who cannot join a voyage?

- Those classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) (as they are considered to be at risk of getting seriously ill if they contract COVID). We reserve the right to seek written clearance for individuals from a Doctor before joining a voyage.
- Anyone who, prior to the voyage, has been living or working in an area that is subject to stay at home, or similar restrictions due to infection rates in their area.
- Those who, due to contact with known or suspected cases, or recent international travel are subject to any restrictions or quarantine advice at the time of the voyage.
- Those who fail to comply with the testing regime procedures as set out in section 2.1

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- Those who do not have a dedicated person ashore who can collect them from the vessel in the event they or someone on the vessel develops symptoms or returns a positive COVID test during the voyage.

2.3 Travel and arrival:

- All persons will be allocated an arrival time for their LF test.
- Unless additional mitigation measures are put in place, we would advise that, where possible, people do not share transport with others intending to join a voyage, as anyone who travels with someone who returns a positive test will be considered a close contact and therefore will not be able to board a vessel.
- No visitors will be permitted onto the vessels.
- Under 18s and vulnerable crew members to be accompanied by a responsible adult until they are directed to join the vessel.
- No persons can join a voyage after it has started unless under circumstances deemed necessary by the RSP (for example a change of Afterguard)

2.4 The morning of a voyage

- Where possible and necessary Skippers/AG briefings will take place remotely at least one day before the voyage.
- All persons joining a voyage will be given a specific time slot to arrive, depending on the vessel they are joining.
- AG will be asked to arrive the morning of a voyage.
 - The customary practice of AG joining a vessel the evening before is prohibited until deemed safe to do so, except with the express consent of the Project Director.
- Staff will be at Universal Marina from 8am, but upon request can attend earlier for testing to facilitate access to the vessel.
- Once on board, one AG member should contact the staff by phone/email if they require stores.
- All non-perishable food stores, cleaning products and other equipment will be on board prior to the arrival of the crew (see section 6, End of Voyage procedures)
- Perishable food stuff to be collected by appointed AG.
- Access to the office and shed is limited to one AG member per vessel and relevant social distancing / face covering guidelines to be followed.
- Lifejackets and oilskins will be issued to each person once a negative test is returned.
- Staff will transfer crew to the vessels.
- There shall be no access to the crew room.

3. During a voyage

While COVID does pose a risk, it is a risk that can be managed, and every effort must be made to not let it overshadow everything we do. COVID will have had an impact on everyone who sails with the RSP. People's health, wellbeing and welfare should be central to every action and decision made.

Living onboard presents additional challenges, it is therefore essential to set good routines and positive outlook from the outset. Following any relevant social distancing and hygiene protocols will greatly help to reduce risk of contamination. Guidance on enhanced cleaning and food handling routines is set out here and is supplemented in our wider SMS documents.

3.1 Testing

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- Everyone must bring a LF test on their voyage to be self-administered on day 4. In the event of a positive test, please see addendum.

3.2 Social Distancing / Face Coverings

Social distancing is not always possible on a vessel. However, there are some things to be considered:

- There is no specific guidance on face coverings while on the vessel, however there may be situations when the Skipper directs face covering must be used.
- Avoid all unnecessary close physical and face to face contact.
- When ashore or moored alongside, NHS, Government, or local guidelines on face coverings/ social distancing / maximum occupancy in a premises etc are to be complied with. This applies before, during and after the voyage. All persons to make themselves aware of these guidelines.

3.3 Hygiene protocols:

Highest standards of hygiene should always be maintained on the vessel, in particular meticulous hand hygiene.

- Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues to catch coughs or sneezes.
- Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of tissue responsibly and as soon as possible.
- Hand sanitiser will be placed in suitable locations around the vessel and will be easily accessible.
- Hand sanitiser should be used before and after equipment or machinery is handled. Examples of this are, but not limited to, galley and handling food, door handles, lockers, helm, handling lines and associated winches, cleats and jammers, sail handling, navigation equipment, engine, safety equipment, any other equipment onboard, as is reasonably possible
- The heads are to be cleaned before and after every use, and regular inspection is to be undertaken. The heads on board are to be deep cleaned at least once a day.

3.4 Health and welfare checks:

Health and welfare checks should be undertaken on a regular basis, to provide security, support, and reassurance to everyone. Individual crew members should be checked regularly, and excellent communication should be maintained during the voyage. Furthermore:

- Everyone on board must take an LF test on the day of arrival. This is important so that we can, with as much confidence as possible, know that when going ashore and coming into contact with others we are not spreading infection.
- Joining instructions will provide information on [how to order free tests via the NHS](#) to comply with our testing protocols and everyone will be required to bring a test with them, to take a further test on day four of a voyage.
- Everyone on board will be required to log their results with the relevant NHS service, including track and trace.
- The Project Director is to be notified when testing is complete and must be alerted to any positive tests.
- In the event of a positive test the vessel is required to divert to Universal (see addendum).

3.4 Going ashore:

With the knowledge that everyone allowed on board has either been vaccinated and/or tested, normal sailing and living may be adopted. The biggest threats are when going ashore for shopping, shore leave or to use marina facilities. This will be managed per standard Government guidance and understanding that there is a potential risk of infection.

- As the vessel is in effect its own 'bubble' going ashore should be the exception rather than the rule.

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- Anchorages and mooring buoys are safer from a COVID infection point of view.
- Skippers are advised to plan and book their marinas well in advance, as there are likely to be higher levels of traffic than normal, given fewer people are likely to go abroad this summer.
- Using all available means, the skipper should assess the COVID infection levels in any port before entry.
- We must be cognisant that the arrival of a large vessel with so many people on board might not be a welcome sight in port. It is important that the behaviour of crew and trainees is exemplary and does not give rise to concern regarding gatherings, disposal of rubbish, and using facilities for example.
- RSP vessels should, unless unavoidable, not attend marinas at the same time as this encourages mixing.
- All relevant local and national guidance and protocols should be understood and followed by all, in relation to social distancing and the wearing of face coverings etc.
- Beyond government advice, the RSP does not determine what constitutes a safe or risk-free environment for crew and trainees once ashore. Common sense should be applied, and skippers should give clear guidance on the parameters of the shore leave and activities ashore.
- No visitors are permitted on the vessel unless for essential or emergency purposes, which is to be logged.

4. Cruising grounds:

Due to the unknowns around the impact of the pandemic, all vessels are to remain in the waters of the South Coast of England this summer. There are too many variables with regard to UK and international laws and guidelines affecting travel, healthcare, and quarantine.

5. End of voyage procedures:

Following robust cleaning hygiene protocols from the outset of a voyage will greatly help to reduce risk of contamination and the end of voyage cleaning requirements. In the current climate however, a more thorough approach is required.

5.1 If the voyage is not curtailed:

- Please ensure fuel and water have been topped up for the next crew.
- The vessel may be required to return at a specific time to manage and stagger crews' departures and the skipper will be notified accordingly before the start of the voyage to facilitate passage planning.
- Crew are to disembark the vessel as soon as is practical once their personal effects are packed, and the vessel is tidy. The RSP staff will transfer them to the shore.
- Afterguard will be required to finalise the deep clean.
- Please advise staff of what additional cleaning products are needed to finalise the deep clean and what is required for the oncoming crew.
- Staff will deliver any specialist cleaning equipment or supplies that are not stored on board.
- Staff will assist with disposing of rubbish *from our pontoon* to the bins at pontoon gate head. AG are to ensure that all rubbish is either left on the pontoon or disposed of before leaving. Staff will not take rubbish from the vessel. No rubbish is to be brought back to the office/shed.
- All non-perishable food items should be laid out in the saloon/galley or as instructed by the staff.

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- Staff will bring non-perishable food items, cleaning products tea towels and any other equipment to the vessel for the oncoming crew for the current AG to either lay out or store as appropriate.
- The vessel, including bunk cushions should be left in a manner that allows maximum ventilation.
- Staff will tend to defects between voyages.

5.2 If a voyage is curtailed:

- In consultation with the skipper the Project Director will determine what end of voyage procedures as above can be undertaken.
- If appropriate, once the crew disembark, the AG will be required to remain on board to clean/decontaminate the vessel. If it is safe for them to do so, staff will be available to assist.

6. Lost property:

Any lost property deemed to be a contamination risk or having little value will be disposed of.

7. Post Voyage

If within 10 days of leaving a vessel AG or crew develop symptoms, then they should take a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test for COVID and alert the RSP office immediately. The RSP will advise all crew and AG as necessary.

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Addendum

When an individual develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or has a positive test

Adherence to the testing, hygiene and vessel protocols significantly reduces the likelihood of someone developing symptoms during a voyage. However due to the nature of COVID, it is still possible that someone may develop symptoms or test positive whilst on board. Health and welfare checks should be conducted every day on the vessel, which includes temperature checks. People should familiarise themselves with the symptoms [here. \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

As per the joining instructions, everyone joining the vessel must have an emergency contact person who can collect them from the vessel in case they or others on the vessel become symptomatic, a positive test is returned or if the entire voyage must be curtailed/cancelled.

If someone develops symptoms the **RSP strategy** is as follows:

- Symptomatic person is to be isolated and should restrict their movements around the vessel.
- Lateral Flow Test to be administered on board, and the individual's parent, guardian or next of kin (NOK) is to be notified.
- If at sea, the vessel is to be diverted to Universal Marina, and the Project Director is to be notified immediately.
- Arrangements should be made for the symptomatic person to be collected whether the LF test is positive or not.
- If the test is positive, arrangements should be made, in consultation with them and their parent/guardian/NOK, for the person to have a PCR test.
- The rest of those onboard are to be sent home with advice to self-isolate (Unless Public Health England (PHE) advise otherwise)
- If test is negative, still send person home for PCR and rest of those onboard stay for rest of voyage.
- The symptomatic person should contact the Project with the test result as soon as it is known so that the vessel's crew can be notified.
- The entire crew are to be kept up to date, reassured and supported. Crew should be given correct information to avoid speculation and misunderstandings.

A positive test is an emergency and all relevant RSP procedures as per the SMS to be adopted.

Detailed Protocol:

1. Isolation and management of suspected case or confirmed infection:

A symptomatic person or suspected case should be moved, if possible, to a cabin where they can be isolated behind a closed door. Depending on the age and needs of the crew member appropriate AG supervision may be required. They should wear a face covering/mask if this does not impede their breathing. Their belongings should be brought to this cabin.

- Advise others not to go into this cabin/area.
- Ensure best possible and safe ventilation.
- If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people (this could be a suitable area on deck if conditions allow).
- Separate heads should be allocated to them - the heads must be deep cleaned and disinfected after every use and again before being used by anyone else.

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- Designate one AG member, preferably who is fully vaccinated, to care for the person if possible.
- Personal protective equipment should be used by an AG member assigned to look after this person.

Situation	PPE
Affected person cannot be isolated or 2m distance cannot be maintained	Face coverings should be worn by all down below
Contact is necessary	Gloves, apron, a face mask, and goggles should be worn
Risk of fluids entering the eye (e.g., from coughing, spitting, or vomiting)	Eye protection should also be worn

Refer to [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)

2. Care and welfare of the suspected case:

- Monitor temperature, respiration etc.
- Phone 911 /999 /radio for medical advice if necessary.
- Avoid physical examination unless necessary.
- See any relevant protocol arranged with group/parent if necessary.
- If person tests positive adopt enhanced COVID protocols. Consider whether everyone on board to use face coverings, increase cleaning regime onboard, no shore leave etc.
- Test others onboard.
- Crew and AG instructed not to post anything on social media.
- Contact Director or a Trustee to formalise plan for:
 - Contacting next of kin of suspected infected person
 - Getting advice from PHE
 - Contacting next of kin of all onboard and any referring agency as necessary
 - Travel home of the infected person(s)
 - Any media response
 - Plan for the others onboard

3. Travel Home arrangements:

All crew and AG should have a way of travelling home avoiding public transport See [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer transport guidance for operators - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Symptomatic person/Positive case to be sent home and advised to:

- self-isolate - the isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days.
- follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection.](#)
- [arrange to have a PCR test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

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- follow NHS Track & Trace [NHS Test and Trace: what to do if you are contacted - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/nhs-test-and-trace).
- notify us as soon as possible with their result.
- RSP to notify everyone on board that a positive result has been returned.

Asymptomatic people to be sent home if symptomatic person tests positive or later notifies us of a positive PCR. Our advice is that they:

- self-isolate - the isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days.
- follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).
- arrange a test [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): getting tested - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested).
- notify the RSP office as soon as possible with their result.
- RSP to notify everyone on board if all tests return negative.

4. Decontamination of isolation cabin and vessel

- All remaining perishable food is to be disposed of, bins emptied, vessel secured and to remain closed and ventilated for a minimum of 24 hours.
- Volunteers/Staff will deep clean and decontaminate the vessel wearing PPE after a period of at least 24 hours.
- The Project Director will determine when the vessel can next be used.
- AG to follow guidance on disposal of equipment /masks etc when person leaves the vessel See [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings outside the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/covid-19-cleaning-of-non-healthcare-settings-outside-the-home).
- At a minimum, all AG should wear disposable gloves, mask, and an apron.
- If a voyage is curtailed due to a symptomatic person or confirmed case, the vessel, once decontaminated is not to be accessed for at least 24 hours.

5. Disposal of waste

To dispose of waste such as disposable cleaning cloths, face coverings, tissues, and PPE from people with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Put it in plastic rubbish bags, tie securely and place in a second bag and tie securely.
- Put it in a suitable and secure place marked for storage for at least 24 hours.
- This waste should be stored safely (e.g., lazarette) and securely kept away from crew. Do not put waste into main bins until the waste has been stored for at least 24 hours.
- Storing for 24 hours saves unnecessary waste movements and minimises the risk to waste operatives. This waste does not require a dedicated clinical waste collection in the above circumstances.
- Please advise staff if at the end of a voyage rubbish has been left onboard undisturbed to complete its 24-hour quarantine.

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