

UKWA Advice for Cruisers 2018



The safety of a vessel and those aboard is the responsibility of the Helm

“It is better to be ashore wishing you were at sea, than to be at sea wishing you were ashore”

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Introduction

Dinghy Cruising is a surprisingly safe activity. It is one of the last remaining ways we can easily access an experience of wildness and the natural elements, and a successful voyage in the Wayfarer always brings enormous satisfaction (and quite frequently pleasure too!)

That said, it takes only a little imagination to see that risks exist – indeed having the ability to appreciate risks and take appropriate steps to avoid them is an essential competence for sailors, and this is particularly the case for when cruising. Where serious incidents have occurred, it appears that these have tended to involve significant lack of experience, suitable equipment and sea-sense, sometimes combined with insufficient physical health. Common themes in near-misses are kit or rig failure, a mismatch between conditions and the skills of those aboard, and lack of clear communication and planning within a group of boats.

The role of the Association, and this document, is not to fill you with trepidation, or burden you with regulations or rules, but to provide you with as many opportunities as possible to benefit from the seamanship and experiences of others so that you can **enjoy** Wayfarer cruising without placing yourself or others in avoidable danger. The log libraries, *Wayfarer Book*, *Wayfarer News*, wayfarer.org.uk website, the Cruising Conference, Tidal Training events and Rallies all exist to help you do this.

This Advice is not intended to be an exclusive or complete guide to Wayfarer Cruising and many important areas are simply mentioned in passing. They are intended to prompt you to make **suitable preparations** for your sailing. This document is not a set of regulations or rules (though they refer to some). **The Association has no powers of enforcement over members.**

This principle is a fundamental law of the sea:

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF A VESSEL AND ALL THOSE ABOARD RESTS WITH THE SKIPPER

Advice for Cruisers

Learning and Practicing

Practical experience is a crucial resource for cruisers. Give yourself lots of opportunities to learn.

The actual sailing may be the easiest part of a cruise. Elements such as launching, avoiding moored and other vessels in harbours, coming alongside, anchoring and weighing anchor, tying up at quays and pontoons, manoeuvring in small spaces with variable and strange wind effects behind buildings, trees and walls, recovering the boat may prove more challenging. The temptation when you are inexperienced is to keep sailing and avoid these situations but in the long run you will have more fun and feel more relaxed if you deliberately spend time gaining confidence in these aspects of cruising.

The easiest way for most of us to gain general **sailing** and boat handling experience is (paradoxically!) to participate in regular club sailing, especially racing. Here **safety cover means you can sail in windier conditions that you could safely cruise in. This extends your skills, your knowledge of the limits of the boat, and yourself.** Specifically racing will help you develop good boat handling skills, awareness of other boats around you, familiarity with capsize drills, and how to avoid capsizing. A good club will encourage and support participation. Remember that keen racers mean nothing personal when hailing for “water” or calling “starboard”.

Always practice capsize drills with new crew members before setting out.

The 4 levels:

These “levels” were originally drafted to grade Rallies but they form a good basis for planning for all cruisers. Within each level a wide variety of conditions and other factors apply.

Inland

Inland waters include small lakes, large reservoirs, rivers and the upper reaches of marine estuaries. Obviously in the latter two types of waters currents and tides can be significant factors. Mid force 4 is a sensible upper limit for any boat without reefing systems, and for novice cruisers in any setting. Bear in mind that some inland waters can be very busy and call for good boat handling skills.

Estuary

Larger bodies of water with land within easy reach on almost all sides. Plymouth and Falmouth are excellent examples. Small deep bays are very similar to these as are the larger lakes in Ireland, Scotland and mainland Europe. Tides are significant in true estuaries. The larger the body of water and the more exposed it is to the open sea the more you have to consider the sea-state along with wind strength in your decision to sail.

Sea

This is self-explanatory. Distances between sheltered waters and stopping places tend to increase, numbers of small craft fall. Winds tend to be steadier in direction and strength the further you are from land. Sea-states become more pronounced, particularly if combined with strong tides. A base wind forecast of mid Force 5 is a reasonable maximum to consider for safely completing a passage, but sea-state is just as important. Most sea passages should only be attempted once you have sufficient estuary and general sailing experience.

Open Sea

Long passages out of sight of land, or along stretches of coast with hours of sailing time between shelter options. Examples include the south-west side of the Isle of Wight, Ilfracombe to Lundy, or the passage from Canna to Loch Boisdale. These should only be attempted by experienced sailors, with sound navigation skills and equipment, after carefully weighing the wind and sea state. Considerable general Sea experience should be acquired before undertaking these passages.

Helm, Crew, Boat and Equipment Advice by Level

This information is provided as a checklist to enable you to think through your preparations and equipment. Your seamanship and ability to use the equipment appropriately are the key.

Each level includes the elements recommended for the level/s before and covers the full range of possibilities at that level. As such these lists may contain elements that are not relevant to specific conditions, routes or situations, and this will particularly be the case for day-sailing.

You will notice that often we ask you to “consider” things at the level before we advise them.

Rally Organisers will clearly **stipulate** the requirements for their specific event.

Inland	
<p>HELM should be able to manoeuvre the boat in the forecast conditions (usually up to Force 4) without risk of colliding with other vessels be aware of collision avoidance rules and understand motor vessels often do not or cannot give way understand currents/tides and their effects on boat handling, where these are present.</p> <p>CREW Competent to aid the helm in carrying out all activities aboard and support the helm in avoiding collisions</p> <p>HELM AND CREW can promptly right the boat in case of capsize. personal buoyancy of 50N or more must be worn APPROPRIATELY CLOTHED (see: Clothing) Understand that the safety of the vessel and those aboard is the responsibility of the helm</p> <p>BOAT Well maintained. All fittings, rigging and lines should be checked regularly for signs of wear and repaired before the next cruise. (Defects are best checked for soon after you recover the boat each time) Motors also require care!</p> <p>Buoyant Don't set out unless you know the boat can pass a buoyancy test and that it doesn't leak.</p> <p>Rig Controls which operate efficiently and smoothly.</p> <p>Secure stowage: Everything aboard should be secured to avoid loss overboard, damage and wet, including during a capsize.</p> <p>Insurance with a reputable marine/boat insurer</p> <p>Strong points of attachment for fenders, mooring lines and anchor warps,</p> <p>Bow fairleads for anchor warps</p> <p>Road trailer if travelling must be properly constructed & maintained. <i>For some cruises – notably on the Broads – the boat needs to be rigged to allow the mast to be dropped for bridge shooting</i></p> <p>consider fitting the boat for mainsail reefing afloat consider roller/spar reefing genoa, or smaller jib</p>	<p>EQUIPMENT:</p> <p>Either Paddles or Oars and Rowlocks (latter attached by lanyards) or Outboard Motor</p> <p>Fenders (eg 2x or 3x Majoni size 2 or 3)</p> <p>Warps/lines suitable for tying up and anchoring. (none shorter than 8m, one at least 10m)</p> <p>Rond anchor or Grapple anchor (one tine of a grapnel can act as a rond anchor) (NB If it is anticipated that boats will be left at anchor for longer periods at anchor see anchoring recommendations for Estuary)</p> <p>Mobile phone (In a fully waterproof case allowing use within the case) consider Waterproof document pouch, (some cruisers use laminated plans or china pencil on plastic for passage planning information)</p> <p>Waterproof storage for keys and wallet</p> <p>Bailer or bilge pump, Consider bucket</p> <p>Sponge or “magic cloth”</p> <p>First Aid Kit</p> <p>Fire extinguisher unless you do not use a stove aboard, or carry fuel.</p> <p>“Accommodation” (Unless you are fully confident of formal accommodation ashore throughout) Land camping equipment, and/or boat tent with boom crutch. Suitable sleeping gear and other necessities.</p> <p>Change of clothes for each sailor, stored in drybags</p> <p>Spares and tools (see appendix A)</p> <p>Note on stowing arrangements. Every item that may be needed whilst under way should be easily accessible. Make sure helm and crew know where all these items are before getting under way.</p>

Estuary – everything for “inland” plus:

<p>HELM Should be able to sail in a fresh breeze (up to F 5) and be practiced at reefing drills, understand it is better to reef early rather than once the boat is overpowered, and be confident to anchor the boat. Understand the SOLAS Collision Regulations relevant to the sailing area</p> <p>CREW should be competent to participate in all manoeuvres, including reefing and anchoring. Should understand how to call for help if required.</p> <p>BOAT, Rigged for mainsail slab reefing afloat Either roller/spar reefing genoa, or smaller jib arranged for quick deployment Oars or Motor with appropriate bracket (Paddles can also be carried for use in small spaces and fending off). Consider sailhead buoyancy or buoyancy attached to mast-head. (sufficient to prevent inversion)</p>	<p>EQUIPMENT Marine Chart or detailed map (such as OS Explorer) for the area. Consider carrying a Compass.</p> <p>2kg – 5kg Anchor* (A folding grapnel can also be carried, but for Estuary sailing and above a folding grapnel type device is not considered an anchor.)</p> <p>Chain* (3m recommended, 1m minimum. 6mm chain weighing 1kg/m or above)</p> <p>Anchor warp* (30m recommended). <i>*This anchoring equipment will be needed in deep estuaries or when you leave the boat at anchor or sleep aboard. It may not be needed in shallow estuaries and/or when day sailing in estuaries)</i></p> <p>Bucket consider carrying a VHF radio (operating a VHF requires training – valuable in itself - and a licence) Consider carrying a waterproof torch Consider signal mirror and whistle</p> <p>Spares and tools (see appendix A)</p>
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Sea – everything for “inland” and “estuary” plus:

<p>HELM AND CREW should have experience in handling their boat in a strong breeze (Force 5+) and moderate seas be well practiced at reefing afloat, and anchoring. They should have a clear understanding of the tides, and able to use their own chart of the area for a passage plan should be confident they can navigate by means other than line of sight should the need arise. Consider Day Skipper Course or learning those aspects of Day Skipper Course that apply to open boats.</p> <p>BOAT Sailhead buoyancy and/or masthead buoyancy (sufficient to prevent the boat from inverting) Consider registering your boat with RYA SafeTRX</p> <p>Insurance. Your intended sailing plans need to be discussed with your boat insurers to determine if your policy covers them, and if not whether additional cover can be included. Your plans may also be relevant to your personal insurance policies of various kinds.</p>	<p>EQUIPMENT Steering Compass VHF radio (consideration should be given to the pros and cons of carrying a DSC model) Flares (minimum 2 red flares, 2 orange smokes) Fog Horn Waterproof Torches x2 Marine Chart for area Signal mirror and whistle Accurate Tide information/Tide Tables Bilge pump China pencil or similar to take down new information. Consider purchasing chart-plotting software for your mobile phone or tablet. (waterproof case and daylight readability essential!) Consider hand bearing compass Consider second anchor, chain and warp. Consider Binoculars Consider addition of Life jackets to personal buoyancy. Consider harnesses and/or life-lines</p> <p>Spares and tools (see appendix A).</p>
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Open Sea – everything “inland”, “estuary”, and “sea” plus:	
<p>HELMS Considerable Sea experience and competency at Navigation. It is best practice for both sailors to be fully competent to helm the boat. Day Skipper Course – or mastery of those parts of Day Skipper curriculum that apply to open boats.</p> <p>BOAT Registered with Coastguard (CG 66) Consider radar deflector (see and high vis spot or red panels on sails</p>	<p>EQUIPMENT</p> <p>Hand Bearing Compass Binoculars (some models include bearing compasses) Chart plotting software for phone or tablet Second Anchor, Warp and Chain Life Jackets for each crew member Harness and/or Lifeline available for upper end conditions Consider dedicated Chart-plotter Consider carrying an PLB (personal locator beacon) Consider kayak helmets or hats suitable to prevent head injury from accidental gybes. These are vital for single-handers at Sea. Spares and tools (see appendix A)</p>

Personal factors leading to declining ability to sail and make decisions

Certain conditions need to be met in order for your brain and body function properly. When cruising you may be asking quite a lot of them. The most intelligent and capable sailor can be rendered considerably less able by simple factors, particularly in combination. These are:

- Hypothermia**
- Seasickness**
- Hunger**
- Physical Fatigue**
- Lack of Sleep**
- Alcohol.**

Consider your own physical fitness and the impact of any medication conditions on your ability to sail well and think clearly at all times.

Adequate clothing, ready availability of food and drink, adequate sleeping gear, sufficient rest time, and sensible use of alcohol are all important, and become progressively more important the longer the trip and the more challenging the conditions.

Clothing

It is vital to stay warm – neither too hot nor too cold. In UK waters hypothermia is a significant risk. As a rule clothing adequate for the open water should be uncomfortably hot to wear as you are launching.

- Wet suits are very rarely worn for cruising in UK waters, so the two main approaches used are
- 1) a combination of waterproof waders (or long waterproof trousers and waterproof boots) and a long waterproof jacket which seals at the wrists and keeps water out at the neck, worn over sufficient insulating and wicking layers; and
 - 2) a breathable dry suit worn over sufficient insulating and wicking layers.

Wide brimmed hats are very useful for keeping off rain, and sun.

Sunscreens are essential on sunny days.

A FULL change of clothes should always be available and stored in dry bags, and this is most obviously important if you adopt the first of these two clothing strategies!

Food and Drink

Hunger will impair your capacity to sail safely. It is particularly important to have quick access to hot drinks (in thermos flasks) and high energy snacks if there is the slightest possibility of getting cold and/or tired. It is self-evident that you need to ensure that you have sufficient food, water and other drink aboard for your passage, and a margin to spare and work out what cooking and eating gear you will need for your cruise.

Weather Forecasts

Weather is one of the few aspects of a cruise that cannot be assessed well in advance of setting out. The availability of increasingly reliable fine-grain forecasts has been a game-changer for dinghy cruising, making it possible to minimise a major source of uncertainty and risk.

We recommend you have access to multiple sources of forecast during your cruise. For example a combination of XC weather, Windguru and the Met Office forecasts will be helpful. Sailing/surfboarding forecasts will often describe the anticipated sea-state in terms of wave-height and direction whereas the Met office and shipping forecast do not. Older services such as the shipping forecast are invaluable but are really designed for larger vessels and omit details relevant to dinghy cruisers – though they do give vital information on visibility which web-based forecasts do not. Remember that local topography can have a very marked effect, particularly close to shore.

A high degree of agreement between different services suggests the computer models are all pointing to the same conclusion. If the forecast conditions for your cruise over the preceding days is consistent, with few significant changes, this suggests that the weather set up is relatively predictable. Consider subscribing to a service, because many free services (like Windguru) make their forecast available for free only after a 12 hour delay.

It is safest to assume the weather forecast is NOT stable, and we suggest you do not rely on any forecast more than 36 hours ahead, or any forecast more than 24 hours ahead where the setup is obviously unstable. It is remarkably easy to regularly update your forecast on a mobile phone when within sight of most coasts. Such forecasts can be “stored” by taking screenshots.

The Coastguard

For Sea and Open Sea cruising it is considered good practice, especially for groups, to report your intended passage to the coastguard before setting out and to inform them when you arrive. The advantage of this is that should you be reported missing or in distress then the Coastguard will already know how many people are aboard, and some details about your boat/s. It is important to realise that the Coastguard is very busy, and will not be pro-actively looking for you if you fail to report in at the end of the passage as this so often fails to happen, VHF and mobile signals being what they are. It is important to realise that the Coastguard is not acting as dedicated shore support for your passage and in some remote locations it may be impossible to contact them.

RYA SafeTRX

The old CG66 system of registering vessels is being phased out by the Coastguard and this “off the peg” mobile phone app is being promoted in its place. A link is provided in the links section below. **The reviews on the App Store make interesting reading.** The app, like all mobile phone apps, relies on having contact with the mobile phone network. The key point to consider is that dinghy cruising creates the strong possibility that there will be no mobile coverage AT THE END of the passage. In some remote locations there may not be coverage to enable you to log a trip at the start either. Hence the statement that this system does NOT replace other systems. You will need to ensure that your battery life is sufficient for tracking en route.

DSC-enabled VHF radios and PLBs represent more reliable systems for calling for help. PLBs do not suffer from the line-of-sight and range limitations of handheld DSCs. VHF Mayday calls and PLB activation are only for use in genuine emergencies.

Sailing in Company

Sailing in company provides a degree of reassurance and obviously it is important that this reassurance stems from a genuinely safer situation, rather than a general feeling of safety.

Sailing in company is not only more sociable and interesting, but it allows you to do things of which you are capable, but which you were less likely to do sailing as a single boat. The other boats in the fleet could assist you if you got into difficulties and the advice on hand may also prevent you getting into difficulties in the first place.

On the other hand poor communication or advice could lead to your operating significantly outside your range of competence or going along with poor decisions made by others. This is to be very carefully avoided.

A group's decision to undertake a certain passage will only be safe if every boat and crew is capable of making the passage independently, if communication between boats is good, and if the plan itself is sound. It is important to avoid any situation where a boat can only leave the group by undertaking something for which they are underequipped or insufficiently experienced. The principle that **RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF A VESSEL AND ALL THOSE ABOARD RESTS WITH THE HELM** always applies.

We advise that one helm actually "leading" a group of boats should only occur within a formal UKWA Rally, or event organised by another sailing organisation.

It is best to agree in advance how **decisions** on the water and passage planning are to be made.

Arrangements for **communication** whilst sailing should to be clear, and once agreed need to be adhered to by all boats to avoid undue anxiety or frustration.

The UKWA Rally Organisers Handbook may help you think through the potential issues that may arise on a group cruise.

The Association enables members to publicise their plans in the Newsletter and Forum but it is important to note that these are not UKWA Rallies, but rather private arrangements to cruise in company.

Abroad

It is well beyond the scope of this Advice to do more than to point out that other jurisdictions do take a more prescriptive approach to dinghy cruising that is the case in the UK. Be sure to do everything you can not to fall foul of Marine Authorities abroad by familiarising yourself with their requirements and regulations.

Links

RYA SafeTRX

<https://www.rya.org.uk/knowledge-advice/safe-boating/keep-in-touch/Pages/safetrx.aspx>

SOLAS: The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea is a large, complex, legal document covering many issues outside the scope of dinghy cruising activity. The full text can be found [here](#).

<http://www.imo.org/About/Conventions/StatusOfConventions/Documents/Status - 2013.pdf>

The sections relevant to 'pleasure craft' are summarised by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency

MCA: [The Maritime and Coastguard Agency provides Information on the Regulations Applicable to Pleasure Vessels.](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency>

Appendix A - an **example** of a Spares/Repair kit list.

PLEASE DO NOT COPY THIS LIST, WHICH IS GIVEN HERE FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY

The **process** of creating your own list is valuable in its own right.

Inboat tool/part box

4x insulating tape
whipping twine
stanley knife
screw drivers, phillips and flat
Junior hack saw
2x jr hack saw blades
boat trailer pin

quick links
winchard hook
2x caribina

17 10 8 mm spanners
Small adjustable spanner (0-20mm)
2xEngine spanner
screwdriver
Spare kill-cord
Starter cord
Gripper (super-simple monkey wrench)

5x bungs
Spare universal tiller extension joint
Pot of: split pins spit rings screws
Clam cleat
Turbo lighter
2 - 3 assorted Shackles
Assorted single blocks
pair of double blocks
long nosed pliers
jib hanks
mast threading weight

extended cruise repair and kit box

allen keys
guy line clam cleats
drill bits wood and metal
hand drill
Riveter and rivets (all sizes used)
metal needle files
pencils
paint brushes
nuts (and bolts) – all sizes used on boat
screws - all sizes used on boat
epoxy resin and hardener
filler, fibres, glass fabric, sawdust,
syringes, pots, gloves

mixing pots and sticks,
2 mm ply
varnish, thinners
tape measure
nylon/rubber lube,
maclube
lighter fuel
spare aquapack
hammer
monkey wrench

high performance impact adhesive tape.

Sail/fabric Repair

Spinny tape
spare sailcloth cloth
large needles cotton and polyester thread
basting tape.
Tent repair tape
Stormsure
Dry suit repair kit.

Boat Checks

It is always best to spot potential problems with the boat before they cause actual problems on the water. Rig failures usually happen in more extreme conditions when you least want them to occur. To give yourself the maximum time to plan and carry out repairs or replace worn parts, the best time for checking the boat is when you take it OFF the water. Obviously the most important times to do this with complete thoroughness are after long cruises and at the end of the season. If recovery and get-away-home time is limited on such occasions, then accept you will need to go over the boat as soon as possible on reaching your home or club. Even after a short sail or simple passage it is a good habit to pay attention to everything that you are packing up.

- 1) Buoyancy (annual check, and after hull or any fittings to buoyancy tanks have been significantly stressed)
- 2) Hull soundness (as above)
Check under floorboards (in applicable boats)
Look for cracking, soft spots, and any frank leaks
- 3) Standing rigging:
Bow fitting,
mast step,
shroud plates,
shroud wires
forestay
all rigging pins
- 4) Mast
Foot
Spreaders
Sheave boxes and fixings
Any other fittings
- 5) Rudder: hull and stock fittings
- 6) Rudder blade and downhaul/tightening nut
- 7) Centreboard
- 8) Running rigging
Genoa halyard wire
Main halyard line
(spinnaker halyard line)
Kicking strap and associated fittings
Outhaul and Cunningham
Reefing lines and associated fittings
Sheets for wear/fraying
- 9) Toe Straps
- 10) Cleats
- 11) Strong points/deck eyes
- 12) Stowage bags/compartments
- 13) Warp/s, chain/s and anchor/s
- 14) Mooring lines (for wear)
- 15) Sails
check for "cracking" sail cloth and windows
check for fraying and stitching coming loose.
Ensure battens are not under tension for long storage
- 16) Motor