

# Use of branch and private boats on BSAC courses

The success of many events often depends on branches and members providing boats. Members of regional coaching teams should be aware of the following points and it may be necessary to advise the owner of them when negotiating to use the vessel.

1. **Fitness for purpose** .....2
2. **Insurance and damage** .....2
3. **Expenses for use of boats**.....2



## 1. Fitness for purpose

It is the responsibility of the boat owner to ensure that it is equipped with appropriate ancillary and safety equipment and is in a safe and seaworthy condition according to SOLAS V regulations.

## 2. Insurance and damage

Boats used on BSAC events must be insured by the owner for third party risks at least. Owners should be asked to confirm that the boat's insurance allows it to be used for the event and whilst being driven by event participants, albeit in almost every case under the direct supervision of an experienced boat handling instructor with the BSAC Diver Cox'n Certificate.

Major damage or loss should also be covered by the owner's insurance. The limit of any sum paid by BSAC to repair damage which might be incurred to the boat, engine or trailer whilst it is in use on an official BSAC event, will be limited to the policy excess normally paid by the owner. However, damage must be reported to the event organiser at the earliest opportunity and certainly before the end of the event. BSAC reserves the right to decline claims for damage discovered and submitted once the event has dispersed.

Lead instructors are responsible for checking all craft for fitness, equipment and any signs of existing damage before use. Existing damage should be itemised to the owner before use of the vessel on the event to prevent it becoming the subject of a subsequent claim.

## 3. Expenses for use of boats

BSAC cannot hire boats from branches or members, since to do so would infringe the Merchant Shipping (Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure) Regulations 1993. It is also likely that hiring a boat would breach the terms of the vessel's marine insurance policy.

All BSAC can do is to reward those who provide boats with spaces to spare, on a sliding scale according to the number of empty places, which can be occupied by other students. BSAC cannot reimburse expenses to a branch which provides a boat for use on a course if all places in the boat are taken by members of that branch.

The matter is left largely in the hands of lead instructors to negotiate with branches and members, with the offer of payment of expenses for bringing a boat to the course as something approaching a last resort. Negotiate on the basis of boat spaces available and offer expenses pro-rata accordingly. Taken to the extreme, if a branch or member were to provide an empty boat, BSAC would be prepared to meet in full the costs of getting the boat to and from the site. Such payments would be made in accordance with the terms of an agreement between BSAC and the Inland Revenue authority which allows BSAC to pay:

- An agreed mileage rate for towing the boat to / from the site.
- Road fuel used in towing the boat to / from the site, at cost.
- Any road tolls paid on the journey, at cost.

Since the fees for events which use boats are calculated to meet the cost of boat fuel and lubricants used on the course, these costs may be claimed by



all who provide boats, irrespective of the availability of places for other candidates in those boats.

Expenses within either category must be listed on the relevant expense claim form which the lead instructor should provide to the branch member responsible for the boat at the event, or the owner. The completed claim should be returned to the lead instructor.

VAT receipts for fuel purchased in respect of road fuel, boat fuel and tolls must be obtained and given to the lead instructor with the claim.

BSAC cannot afford to pay more for use of boats without increasing course fees. Branches and members who are asked to provide boats should realise that the skills learned and the qualifications achieved are themselves distinct benefits gained by the branch or the member, in return for allowing BSAC to use the boat.