

Broads Authority Code of Conduct for the use of Coaching Vessels on the River Yare

Introduction

In view of the increased numbers and usage of coaching vessels and other traffic it has been necessary to introduce a code of conduct that outlines measures designed to facilitate their safe use whilst ensuring the safety of other vessels and river users, and in particular by reducing their wash in sensitive areas.

The Broads Authority and representatives of the rowing clubs have worked together to produce this code in order to promote the harmonious and safe use of the river and it will be subject to periodic review.

The Code

- **Byelaws.** Coaching vessels are governed by specific Broads Authority Byelaws which must be complied with together with the more general navigation byelaws relating to good and safe helming (see guide in Appendix 1).
- **Active Coaching.** Crews should be briefed before taking to the water about coaches' expectations of how the session will be run and what to do if the group becomes spread out. A coaching vessel should not attempt to coach two (or more) crews that have become spread out by resorting to speeding between them.
- **Low wash zones.** Coaching vessels must exercise care and caution whilst in the vicinity of any moorings but it has been agreed that low wash zones will exist in designated areas (see map in Appendix 2). In order to reduce wash in these areas the speed of coaching vessels should be reduced. Rowing craft can proceed at speed and then wait at a pre-agreed area, the main one being just downstream of the Postwick flyover, and the other when travelling upstream is at the Whitlingham Lane picnic site.
- **Visibility.** Coaching vessels sit relatively low in the water and can be difficult to identify from other vessels, therefore it is important that all measures are undertaken to improve their visibility including the display of appropriate white lights and side lights (between sunset and sunrise) (see Section 5 in Appendix 1). The helms of coaching vessels should wear high visibility tops at all times when visibility is likely to be reduced, though ideally these should be worn at all times.

- **Powerboat training and qualification.** Coaching vessel helms should possess the RYA Level 2 Powerboat qualification as recommended by British Rowing.
- **Personal buoyancy and kill cords.** It is essential that coaching vessel helms and crew adhere to RYA L2 and British Rowing's *Rowsafe* guidelines on the use of lifejackets and kill cords which must be used at all times. BA will informally speak to any helmsman not complying with lifejacket and kill cords guidance.

Appendix 1

Guide to interpret BA Byelaws.

Coaching vessels are given certain exemptions from the *Speed Limit Byelaws* (see Para. 2 below). This allows them to exceed the speed limit whilst coaching rowing within the designated rowing area between Trowse Eye (the confluence of the Rivers Yare and Wensum) and Brundall Church Fen moorings. The full byelaws can be found on the Broads Authority website (www.broads-authority.gov.uk/boating/navigating-the-broads/byelaws-and-speed-limits).

1. Care and caution

Helms of coaching vessels must familiarise themselves with the relevant Broads Authority byelaws. In the event of any accidents or incidents these provide the basis for any investigations that may follow. Whilst coaching vessels are exempt from the Speed Limit byelaws, it must be understood that the Para. 10 (Care and Caution) of the Navigation Byelaws apply at all times

2. Active coaching and duty of care for multiple crews

A "*Coaching Vessel*" is defined in the Speed Limit Byelaws as "*a motor vessel which is being used for the purpose of coaching one or more crews*" (see Para. 4 (1)). Para. 7 permits an exemption to the speed limits that allows coaching vessels to accompany rowing crews at a speed over the maximum provided that due care and caution is shown to other rivers users.

It must be noted that once a coaching vessel has ceased to be used for active coaching, or has become detached from its rowers, it is no longer defined as a coaching vessel and it must revert to the maximum speed limit in force for all other motor vessels. Within the defined coaching area this will be either 5 or 6 mph.

3. Identification of coaching vessels

As vessels permitted to exceed the speed limit all coaching boats must display

a set of large registration marks on each side so that they are clearly identifiable. Para. 10 (b) of the Speed Limit Byelaws, Registration Marks, states “*registration marks of a minimum height of nine inches ...shall be permanently displayed on each side of the bow ...on any coaching vessel.* This is in addition to the standard 90mm high numbers required at the bow and on the stern. BA will provide appropriate identification marks to registered coaching vessels.

4. **Wash** The amount of wash that a coaching vessel is allowed to create is limited to 300mm (12 inches), Para. 12 of Speed Limit Byelaws states, “*No person while navigating ...any coaching vessel in accordance with Byelaw 7 shall cause the vessel to make a sustained wave, against a bank, of more than 300mm in height from trough to crest*”. The Broads Authority may exercise its right to inspect the wash of coaching vessels by way of a wash test at a time and place determined by the Authority. Any vessels failing such a test will not be used as coaching vessels.

5. **Lights and visibility** when navigating after sunset and before sunrise coaching vessels must comply with the relevant “Exhibition of Lights” Byelaws, see Navigation Byelaws, Para. 33 (a), (b), and (c); Para. 35 (2)(b) states “*the master of a power driven vessel less than 7 metres (23 feet) in length may cause to be exhibited...an all-round white light and shall, if practicable, also cause to be exhibited sidelights*”. The times of sunrise and sunset are widely published, including by the Broads Authority in their Tide Tables.

It is important that correct lights are exhibited as the dangers of navigating in failing light and darkness could be very serious. Torches or bicycle lights strapped to the bows of boats or hand held to be waved around when another vessel is encountered are not sufficient. Purpose made battery powered all-round white lights with a short mast and fixing brackets must be used if vessels are likely to be navigating in poor visibility.

Appendix 2

Low Wash Zones A map is attached that clearly indicates all the areas and zones referred to in this document, including the designated coaching zone and the sensitive areas where wash needs to be kept to a minimum.

- Whitlingham Park 24 hour mooring,
- Norwich Frostbites Sailing area
- Commissioners Cut 24 hour moorings
- The area between Bungalow Lane moorings and Postwick viaduct
- Bramerton Woods End/Water's Edge pub
- Bramerton Common 24 hour moorings
- Postwick Wharf 24 hour and Surlingham Ferry moorings
- Brundall Gardens Marina

Appendix 3 Links

<http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/boating/navigating-the-broads/byelaws-and-speed-limits>

<http://www.britishrowing.org/taking-part/staying-safe/rowsafe>

<http://www.rya.org.uk/coursestraining/courses/powerboat/Pages/Level2.aspx>