NYC FREE-SAILING GUIDELINES/ADVICE

Nelson Yacht Club recognises that Club members also regularly sail from the club launching ramp to 'free-sail' for pleasure or training purposes.

The Club's Health & Safety Management Plan does not cover such activity, and the responsibility for the health and safety of any member participating in free-sailing lies entirely with the individual. However, here are some useful guidelines/principles to follow.

The information below will be condensed into a poster format for ramp signage and newsletter communications: NYC _Before You Launch_ Signage - Tall.pdf

- ☐ **Tell someone where you are going, when you expect to be back, and importantly… what to do if you're not.**

  For example, "I'm going for a sail, planning to go up past the lighthouse on the outside of the boulderbank. I expect to be back by 4.30pm. I'll take my phone with me. If you haven't heard from me by then, give me a ring. If you can't get hold of me, call 111 and ask for Police - who can mobilise Search & Rescue"

- ☐ **Have a plan and stick to it as closely as possible**

  It can be tempting to change plans on the water. However, don't just freestyle it when you're out there. The useful information you've told someone about where to search for you if you haven't returned becomes less useful!

- ☐ **Have a plan b for how to get back if you get into difficulty**

  Injury, equipment failure, change in conditions… There can be many ways to end up in a difficult situation on the water. However, you can consider some of these things before heading out. For example, in light and variable wind conditions - avoid strong tides, and sail up-tide first so you're more likely to be able to make it back if the wind drops out, take a paddle, etc…

- ☐ **Carry two forms of waterproof communication**

  This is a requirement of the NCC Navigation Safety Bylaw. Eg. mobile phone in a waterproof bag, whistle, VHF radio / Personal Locator Beacon for emergencies.

- ☐ **Sail with others where possible**

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It's always more fun to be on the water with others. Training opportunities, two-boat tuning, someone to see your big jump / wave. However, it is important to communicate with each other. Eg. "Happy to keep an eye on each other?" and make sure you both know when the other is heading in.

☐ Check your equipment & gear before you launch

Making sure your equipment is in good seaworthy condition before going out is vital. Look for frayed ropes, tighten shackles and fittings, etc etc… it can be something very small that compounds with other factors to cause a major issue.

☐ Check the weather, tides and shipping

Harbour Conditions https://www.portnelson.co.nz/community/harbour-conditions/
Shipping Schedule https://www.portnelson.co.nz/port-users/shipping-schedule/
Harbour Webcams https://harbours.nelson.govt.nz/cams/
Weather & tide https://www.windfinder.com/forecast/nelson
Weather forecast https://www.windy.com/-41.271/173.284?-41.419,173.628,10
Weather forecast https://www.metservice.com/marine/regions/nelson
Information will also rotate on the screen in the Lower Lounge window.

☐ Are you and your equipment capable of handling the prevailing and forecast conditions?

Have you been out in similar conditions before? Is it at the edge of your comfort zone, or a bit beyond? What happens if it gets stronger?

☐ Consider other water users

The harbour is a busy place. Sailors can be confusing to other water users, turning this way and that… others may not know the IRPCS (International Rules for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea) or Rules of the Road.

Leave nothing to doubt. It is often easier to consider ourselves as the "Give Way Vessel". If you are going to, make an early and obvious change in direction so your intentions are clear.

Be aware of the NCC Navigation Safety Bylaw:

http://www.nelson.govt.nz/council/bylaws/bylaw-218-navigation-safety/

☐ Trust your gut - if in doubt, don't go out!