

HSC: guidance for dinghies on weather & sea state for sail training and club racing

All water activities are subject to suitable weather conditions, sea state & tide. Local weather forecasts need to be considered in conjunction with prevailing conditions. Prior to sail training the weather forecast for The Solent & Christchurch Bay, should be obtained from either http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast_and_sea/coastal/11 or (http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/surface_pressure.html).

Suggested wind speed guide (This is mean wind speed, there may be occasional stronger gusts)

Wind strength	Sail training	Racing	Power-boating
Force 3 or less: 7 -10 Knots/3 mph	Generally all activities OK in all wind directions		
Force 4: 11 -16 Knots/13 – 18 mph	Top end for sail training and learning spinnaker use	Generally all activities OK in all wind directions for experienced helms and crew. Decision required at time of launching for junior members in the race.	OK in all wind directions
	Note: ENE, E & SE wind will give choppy conditions blowing onshore at slipway and pontoons, this will make launching and sailing clear of the slipway difficult		
Force 5: 17 -21 Knots/19 – 25 mph Gusting 6	No training activity	Experienced crews well reefed to reflect experience and Discussion required by safety boat helm and OOD to take account of experience of crews racing.	Care required for planning manoeuvres
	Note: ENE, East and SE wind will give rough conditions blowing onshore at slipway. Launching will be dangerous and no club sponsored activity is allowed		
Force 6: 22 - 27 Knots/25 - 31 mph	No training activity	No club sponsored racing allowed	Particular consideration required depending on the experience of the crew for advanced courses
Force 7: or above 28 knots plus	No water activities afloat		Possibly advanced PB or Instructor courses in local area depending on wind directions and sea conditions

Other factors that may influence the decision as to whether the session runs include:

- Conditions on the beach, jetty or slipway - can we safely launch / recover boats in a safe manner?
- Conditions in the sailing area - wave height, wind against tide, likely change / trends in next hour or so
- Age and ability of sail training group/members
- Water temperature and air temperature-wind chill
- Visibility - Poor visibility poses significant risk and careful consideration needs to be given before going afloat. Decisions need to be based on both forecast and observed conditions. Present conditions and those forecast need to be considered along with observations of changing visibility
- Lightning - Check forecast for potential of lightning, watch for clouds, listen for thunder, return to shore if lightning occurs