Event Safety Management System (ESMS)
Sailing Safety Management Code – Draft 0.1

Purpose

To inform the Commission of the feedback received from the Board on the Event Safety Management System (ESMS), and to seek the agreement of the Commission on the approach and timetable for the further development of the Sailing Safety Management Code (SSMC), Draft 0.1.

Background

The risk assessment template initiated in 2025 was developed into the ESMS, a framework intended to be applicable from club events to the Olympic and Paralympic Games. A consultation draft was circulated to the Commission in August 2026, followed in September 2026 by a summary of stakeholder requirements by level.

The feedback received from Commission members indicated that the full set of manuals was too extensive for club use. To address this, the core requirements have been drafted as a short normative text, the SSMC, while the ESMS manuals become a library of guidance, templates and checklists.

Following an initial presentation of the ESMS, the Board indicated that the Commission may continue its work on the development of a safety management system starting at club level, with each higher level of event adding a further layer of requirements.

The SSMC – Draft 0.1 (19 October 2026)

The SSMC follows the structure of the IMO International Safety Management (ISM) Code, adapted to sailing events and to organisations that rely largely on volunteers:

- Preamble – purpose, commitment from the top, and the principle that the person in charge of a boat remains responsible for her safety;
- Part A – Implementation – general provisions, safety policy, responsibilities of the Organising Authority, Event Safety Officer and PRO/Race Director, resources, event operations, emergency preparedness, incident reporting and analysis, safety boats, documentation, review, and safeguarding and welfare;
- Part B – Application levels and verification – four levels, each including all requirements of the levels below it: Level 1 Club & Regional, Level 2 National, Level 3 World Sailing Events, Level 4 Olympic & Paralympic;
- Appendices – minimum requirements by level, incident reporting to World Sailing, and an ISM cross-reference with an approval register.

Verification is proportionate: self-declaration by the Organising Authority at Levels 1 and 2, review of the Event Safety Plan before World Sailing Events at Level 3, and independent audit at Level 4. No certificate is issued. The cumulative level structure is consistent with the direction indicated by the Board.

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Points for consideration

- The reference to the World Sailing regulation on safety reporting is defined once in the Code and must be confirmed against the edition of the Regulations in force before circulation outside the Commission.
- The Code is designed to be approved clause by clause, using the approval register in Appendix 3, so that each point can be discussed and agreed by the Commission.
- Committees and Commissions whose remit is affected (events, race management, offshore, equipment, coaching, medical) should be consulted as each level is developed.
- The draft is a consultation document of the Commission and does not represent World Sailing policy or regulation.

Decision requested

The Commission is invited to:

(a) note the feedback received from the Board;

(b) agree that the SSMC, Draft 0.1, is the basis for the further development of the ESMS, starting with Level 1 (Club & Regional);

(c) agree to review the Code clause by clause, in line with the timetable proposed in the 2027 Work Plan; and

(d) agree that relevant Committees and Commissions are consulted as each level is developed.

Eurico Teodoro
Safety Commission Chair

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WORLD SAILING REGULATIONS

REGULATION 16 — SAFETY

Draft 3 – November 2026 – Safety Commission

Item	Detail
Regulations in force	World Sailing Regulations 2025 (November 2024 edition) – Regulation 16 Safety Reporting
Purpose	To replace the current Regulation 16 with a Safety Regulation setting out objectives, functional requirements and obligations only. How the requirements are met, and the levels of events, are set out in the Safety Policy
Incident reporting and investigation	Current Regulation 16 retained; principles of the IMO Casualty Investigation Code (resolution MSC.255(84)) added
Current Regulation 16	Retained in 16.9.1 (with (a) aligned with the definition of event), 16.10.1 and 16.10.5, and integrated in the new structure
Binding (“shall”)	Risk assessment and emergency arrangements at every event, in a form proportionate to its level (levels defined in the Safety Policy); equipment and communication; incident reporting and review of fatal incidents
Recommended (“should”)	The other elements of safety management, for all Organising Authorities
Companion document	Safety Policy (P1) – principles, guidance and procedures
Route	Proposal (Regulations 7.1(b), (d) and 7.3(e)). Regulations made by the Board and approved by Council as they implement policy (Constitution 22.3(h)(ii), 29.1(b))

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1. CURRENT TEXT

World Sailing Regulations 2025 (November 2024 edition), Section III:

16. Safety Reporting

16.1 Member National Authorities, World Sailing Class Associations, Rating Systems and Organising Authorities shall report to World Sailing, using the incident reporting portal, any incident of which they become aware and which:

a) occurs at, or while training/preparing for or otherwise associated with, an event using the RRS or otherwise;

b) falls within their jurisdiction; and

c) falls within the scope of the incident reporting system and Safety Policy as approved by Council from time to time.

16.2 The bodies listed in Regulation 16.1 shall conduct a review of all incidents resulting in fatality and submit an incident report to World Sailing.

World Sailing may request further investigation into any incident which results in a fatality or serious injury, as defined in the Safety Policy, of which it becomes aware. All Participants stakeholders shall give all reasonable assistance to World Sailing if it conducts such an investigation into an incident.

2. PROPOSED TEXT

Delete the current Regulation 16 and replace with:

16. SAFETY

16.1 General

16.1.1 **Definitions.** In this Regulation:

(a) Event means:
(i) a regatta, race or series using the RRS, including the training and other activities associated with it at the venue; and
(ii) a training session, camp, programme or other sailing activity, whether or not it uses the RRS, organised by a club, class association or other body affiliated to a Member National Authority.

(b) Organising Authority means the body that organises an event, including the body that organises an activity under (a)(ii).

(c) Incident means an occurrence, or a sequence of occurrences, in connection with an event or the operation of a boat, that has resulted in death or injury to a person, loss of or damage to a boat or property, or damage to the environment, or that is hazardous and has the potential to cause such harm.

(d) Very serious incident means an incident involving a death, a person lost from a boat and not recovered, the total loss of a boat with persons on board, or severe damage to the environment.

(e) Near miss means an occurrence, or a sequence of occurrences or conditions, that could have resulted in an incident but did not.

(f) Safety investigation means an investigation into an incident conducted with the objective of preventing incidents in the future. It does not apportion blame or determine liability.

16.1.2 **Objectives.** The objectives of this Regulation are to ensure safety on the water and ashore at sailing events, to prevent injury and loss of life, to avoid damage to the environment, including marine wildlife, and to property, and to learn from incidents.

16.1.3 **Application.** This Regulation applies to Member National Authorities, World Sailing Class Associations, Rating Systems and Organising Authorities, at all events as defined in 16.1.1(a), including training and other sailing activities organised by bodies affiliated to a Member National Authority. Provisions expressed with "shall" are mandatory; provisions expressed with "should" are recommended practice. The levels of events, and the extent to which the requirements of this Regulation apply at each level, are defined in the Safety Policy. Where national law or a national authority requires a higher standard, that standard prevails. Nothing in this Regulation changes the RRS, the Equipment Rules of Sailing, the Offshore Special Regulations or class rules, or relieves the person in charge of a boat of the responsibility for the safety of the boat and her crew.

16.1.4 **Functional requirements.** Every Organising Authority should establish, implement and maintain safety arrangements for its events, proportionate to their nature and scale, which include:

(a) a safety policy;

(b) defined levels of authority and lines of communication;

(c) procedures for safe event operations afloat and ashore;

(d) procedures to prepare for and respond to emergencies;

(e) procedures for reporting and analysing incidents, near misses and non-conformities; and

(f) procedures for review of the arrangements after the event.

16.2 Safety policy

16.2.1 The Organising Authority should establish a safety policy describing how the objectives in 16.1.2 will be achieved, and ensure that it is implemented at all levels of the event organisation, afloat and ashore.

16.3 Responsibilities and authority of the Organising Authority

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16.3.1 The Organising Authority is responsible for the safety of the event, including where it delegates its conduct, and should define and document the responsibility and authority of all personnel who manage and perform safety-related work.

16.4 Event Safety Officer

16.4.1 The Organising Authority should designate an Event Safety Officer, with direct access to the highest level of the Organising Authority, to monitor the safety aspects of the event and to advise the race committee on safety.

16.5 Authority of the race committee

16.5.1 The race committee has the authority to make decisions with respect to the safety of Participants on the water. The Organising Authority should state this authority clearly.

16.6 Resources and personnel

16.6.1 The Organising Authority should ensure that race officials, safety boat crews and other personnel are competent for their duties and briefed before going afloat.

16.7 Event operations

16.7.1 Before any activities begin, the risks to Participants shall be assessed and identified risks mitigated to the extent possible. The form and extent of the risk assessment depend on the level of the event, as defined in the Safety Policy. At lower levels it may be informal, but the risks shall always be taken into consideration. The Safety Policy may define the levels of events at which a documented risk assessment is required.

16.7.2 The Organising Authority should establish procedures for key operations concerning the safety of Participants afloat and ashore.

16.7.3 Clear communication channels shall be established, and safety-critical information, including weather updates and emergency alerts, shall be promptly communicated to Participants and race officials.

16.8 Emergency preparedness

16.8.1 Every event shall have arrangements to respond to emergencies, covering medical emergencies, search and rescue and other contingencies, and the Organising Authority shall ensure that all Participants are aware of them. The form and extent of these arrangements depend on the level of the event, as defined in the Safety Policy. At lower levels they may be simple and informal, but emergencies shall always be considered. The Safety Policy may define the levels of events at which a written emergency response plan is required.

16.8.2 The Organising Authority should identify potential emergency situations and carry out drills proportionate to the event.

16.9 Reports and analysis of incidents

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16.9.1 Member National Authorities, World Sailing Class Associations, Rating Systems and Organising Authorities shall report to World Sailing, using the incident reporting portal, any incident of which they become aware and which:

(a) occurs at, or while training/preparing for or otherwise associated with, an event as defined in 16.1.1(a);

(b) falls within their jurisdiction; and

(c) falls within the scope of the incident reporting system and Safety Policy as approved by Council from time to time.

Note: *16.9.1 is the current Regulation 16.1. Only (a) is adapted: "an event using the RRS or otherwise" becomes "an event as defined in 16.1.1(a)", which covers events using the RRS and the training and other sailing activities of bodies affiliated to an MNA.*

16.9.2 A very serious incident shall be notified to World Sailing without delay, and in any case within 48 hours of becoming aware of it. Notification shall not be delayed due to the lack of complete information.

16.9.3 The Organising Authority should ensure that incidents, near misses and non-conformities are reported to it, recorded and analysed, and that corrective action is taken.

16.9.4 Reporting to World Sailing does not replace any obligation to report to national authorities.

16.10 Safety investigation

16.10.1 The bodies listed in Regulation 16.9.1 shall conduct a review of all incidents resulting in fatality and submit an incident report to World Sailing. The review shall be conducted as a safety investigation, and a safety investigation shall also be conducted into every other very serious incident.

Note: *The first sentence of 16.10.1 is the current Regulation 16.2, unchanged.*

16.10.2 A safety investigation should be conducted into any other incident or near miss where it is likely to provide information that can prevent future incidents.

16.10.3 A safety investigation shall be impartial and independent of those involved, shall establish the facts and causal factors, and shall not apportion blame or liability. It does not preclude any other proceedings.

16.10.4 Persons giving evidence shall be informed of their rights, including privacy and the privilege against self-incrimination. Safety records shall be used only for the purposes of the safety investigation, except where disclosure is required by law.

16.10.5 World Sailing may request further investigation into any incident which results in a fatality or serious injury, as defined in the Safety Policy, of which it becomes aware. All Participants and stakeholders shall give all reasonable assistance to World Sailing if it conducts such an investigation into an incident.

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Note: 16.10.5 is the second paragraph of the current Regulation 16.2, unchanged except "Participants and stakeholders".

16.10.6 World Sailing shall make the lessons learned and safety recommendations available to the sailing community.

16.11 Safety boats and equipment

16.11.1 Equipment used at events or by World Sailing Classes shall meet the safety standards relevant for the event and location, and shall be regularly inspected and maintained.

16.11.2 The Organising Authority should identify equipment whose sudden failure may result in hazardous situations and take specific measures to promote its reliability.

16.12 Documentation

16.12.1 The Organising Authority should document its safety arrangements in a form proportionate to the event and make them available to those who need them.

16.13 Review

16.13.1 The Organising Authority should review its safety arrangements after each event, including all incidents, near misses and non-conformities.

16.13.2 The Safety Commission shall review this Regulation at least every four years.

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APPENDIX — CORRESPONDENCE AND APPROVAL REGISTER

For information. Not part of the Regulation. A = Approve · AA = Approve with amendment · NA = Not approved.

Regulation	Current source	Binding?	Decision
16.1.1 Definitions	RRS; Reg 16.1(a); CIC 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.22	—	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.1.2 Objectives	P1 Introduction	—	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.1.3 Application	P1 3.1	—	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.1.4 Functional requirements	—	should	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.2 Safety policy	—	should	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.3 OA responsibilities	—	should	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.4 Event Safety Officer	—	should	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.5 Race committee authority	RRS	should	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.6 Resources and personnel	P1 3.1	should	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.7 Event operations	P1 1, 5	16.7.1 (by level), 16.7.3 shall	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.8 Emergency preparedness	P1 4	16.8.1 (by level) shall	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.9 Reports and analysis	Reg 16.1; P1 6.4 and table; CIC 5	16.9.1–2, 16.9.4 shall	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.10 Safety investigation	Reg 16.2; CIC 6, 11, 12, 16, 17, 23, 24	16.10.1, 3–6 shall	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.11 Safety boats and equipment	P1 2	16.11.1 shall	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA

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Regulation	Current source	Binding?	Decision
16.12 Documentation	—	should	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA
16.13 Review	P1 6.2	16.13.2 shall	☐ A ☐ AA ☐ NA

CIC = IMO Casualty Investigation Code, resolution MSC.255(84). Every "shall" corresponds to an obligation that exists today in Regulation 16 or the Safety Policy, except 16.9.2 (notification without delay), 16.10.3–16.10.4 (principles of investigation) and 16.10.6 (sharing of lessons), which come from the Casualty Investigation Code, and the extension of 16.7.1 and 16.8.1 to all events in a form proportionate to their level.

3. CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

- Safety Policy (P1): to contain the principles, the scope of incident reporting (table), the procedures for notification, investigation and reports, and guidance on how to meet this Regulation, including the Event Safety Management System as recommended practice (companion document).

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