



Entrapment

Some of you will be aware of the very sad a case of entrapment that occurred in 2009 at Kielder Sailing Club when a Laser Stratos capsized, then inverted and a father and daughter - Geoff and Victoria Wilkinson - tragically lost their lives. A full description of the accident can be read on the RYA website and on the Marine Accident Investigation Board website.

Such accidents are incredibly rare but sailing, like almost all sports, is not without risk and the SSC General Committee have carefully considered the recommendations of the RYA following the Kielder accident as well as existing guidance relating to the provision and use of safety boats.

A capsize followed by the boat inverting is more common with modern sailing dinghies which tend to be more buoyant and float higher than older designs. At SSC this category would include the Laser 2000, RS Feva, RS Vision and Laser Vago. However most classes of boat can invert and entrapment can occur whether or not you use a trapeze. We would therefore suggest that all members consider the following advice and how it might apply to their situation:

1. **Use masthead floatation whenever you feel there is a high risk of capsize** and especially when you are sailing with someone under the age of 18 or with an inexperienced crew. This can be a simple buoyancy bag or a masthead float (see picture below – Laser 2000).



2. **Practise capsize drill with your crew.** A good day to do this is a (sunny) Saturday when the safety boat crew can come and standby and the Saturday Duty officer may be able to give advice and guidance.
3. **Use a strop to prevent the centre board dropping in more than 3/4:** it is unusual to sail modern gennaker boats with the board fully up so this should not slow you down! It's just a bit of rope.
4. **Carrying a safety knife & a whistle on your buoyancy aid** and know how to use them (6 blasts on a whistle to indicate you need urgent help). A plastic whistle from Millets is about £4 while a safety knife from sailboats.co.uk (see below) is about £18.



5. **Go straight to the centre board or dagger board to prevent inversion** as that allows time and opportunity for any entrapment to be resolved by those involved or by the safety boat crew.