

Appendix 3: USING THE PERSONNEL HOIST

Only fully trained Volunteers should supervise the use of the Hoist.

Volunteers should read through this document and discuss its contents with a club official (OOD, Safety Helm). Queries and training required will be addressed so that Volunteers may be 'signed off' in the club's training log as competent to supervise Personnel Hoist Operations.

Good Practice.

You must be sure that all people assisting you are briefed, understand their roles and are competent to assist.

Fitting the sling

The wheelchair user may already have their own sling in place. If not, ask then whether they need to be hoisted in as they may be able to walk or lift themselves into the boat.

If they do need a hoist, and they arrive without a sling, then you will need to fit a sling underneath them. We have four sling sizes available:

- Orange: extra small (young children)
- Yellow: older child or small adult
- Green: average adult
- Blue: large adult

The sling is fitted with the bones (two back supports) at the top, and a grab handle on the outside. Selecting the most appropriate size sling is important- if in doubt ask. Visually inspect the hoist and sling to make sure they are in good working condition. They are load tested every 6 months, with a colour-coded tag. The current tag colour is shown on the clubhouse notice board.

Ask the participant how they usually fit the sling- many are able to stand up with a grab rail for support. The swing gate by the corner of the clubhouse compound, and the railings at the top of the pontoon ramp both work well. If not, lean them forward and work the sling downwards and under their bottom- asking permission before lifting. Two sling lifting points should end up by the participant's shoulders, with arms inside. The two lower lifting points should be under the leg on that side and crossed over up between the legs in the middle. Ask them to hold the lower lifting points while you go down the ramp.

Manoeuvring on the pontoon

Go down the ramp backwards, and up the ramp forwards.

For motorised wheelchairs, the participant can drive, but find out how to drive the wheelchair before hoisting in- including the slow speed setting.

If the gaps between pontoon floats are not level, try standing on the higher side. There are boards in the boat shed for bridging the gap if necessary.

Hoisting in and out

The Dinghy must be in the correct position in relation to the hoist, such that when the hoist is lowered, the participant is lowered directly into his/her seat.

The Hoist may need 2 pontoon based Volunteers, depending on the weight and familiarity of the participant. If they are sailing accompanied, it is usually better to put the Volunteer in the dinghy first.

The wheelchair should be positioned, and braked, such that the Hoist's connecting frame is dangling right above the participant's wheelchair.

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If possible, cross over the sling's leg supports, i.e. right leg support to go on left side of Hoist frame, so as to avoid the participant's legs being pulled apart when lifted. Attach all the slings, usually 4 x connectors to the Hoist's connecting frame, ensuring that the back is fully supported.

The sling lifting points are colour coded:

- Green- shortest
- Blue- medium
- Grey- longest.

Using the green or blue is usually better, as otherwise the hoist may not lift high enough in relation to the wheelchair if the grey lifting points are used. Usually it is better to use all the same colour, to keep the participant level. Shorter at the front is ok, but can be uncomfortable. Shorter at the back may tip them forward.

Check that the participant is comfortable. Working as a team, and involving the participant as much as possible, take it steadily and do not rush the hoisting process- the participant will usually know this better than you do.

Try raising the hoist slightly, and again check that the disabled sailor is reasonable comfortable. If not, lower the hoist and reconnect the sling's arms more comfortably, as they often get twisted.

Raise the hoist slowly, ensuring the sling's arms have not got tangled into the wheelchair. Make sure that the participant's face is not touching the hoist frame; if close, one of the volunteers should hold the frame away from the disabled sailor's face whilst the loading operation continues.

Fully raise the hoist (there is a rubber stop to prevent over-tightening). Advise the participant that you are going to push the hoist out into position over the Dinghy. The volunteer in the Dinghy should then help accept the hoist. When in position, start slowly lowering the hoist. Watch that legs are clear of obstructions.

Make sure the participant is comfortable and then disconnect the sling's arms. Slowly raise the hoist slightly, and pull back to the pontoon, when it can be turned free of obstructions in the Dinghy. Fully raise the hoist and reposition for safety of flow around the pontoon, and for ease of next use. Take wheelchair from the pontoon to avoid it becoming an obstruction/risk to other pontoon users.

Weight limit

The weight limit of the hoist is 120kg (just under 19 stone), and is marked on the hoist. This limit must not be exceeded.

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