



## **IRF SAFETY DOCUMENT - ADDENDUM TO INTERNATIONAL RAFTING FEDERATION RACE RULES**

Taking effect from 01 May 2024

This document is an aid for event organisers and also lays out the IRF minimum requirement for safety at A, B, and C Level events on natural rivers. Failure to comply with any of the following safety requirements can result in the cancellation of the event at the entire responsibility, including costs, of the organiser.

### **A. Minimum IRF Safety Standards for A Level events**

#### **Introduction:**

- a. The Race Organiser together with the Safety Director is responsible for developing the *Safety & Rescue Plan* including the *Risk Assessment*.
- b. A high-level draft *Safety & Rescue Plan* must be submitted as part of the event bidding process. Bids that fail to include a draft *Safety & Rescue Plan* will not be considered.
- c. A short version of the risk assessment must be published as a part of the pre-event information for teams.
- d. In development of the *Safety & Rescue Plan*, a currently certified IRF GTE Instructor and two (2) Trip Leaders (TL) (ideally the same who will be part of the Rescue Team) must be involved, and local emergency chain (ambulance / fire / evacuation) must be informed.
- e. It is important that the Rescue Team is kept up to date with the development of the event by the Race Director to ensure their understanding of all parts of race operations e.g.: number of participants, number and types of disciplines, downriver starting structures, start intervals, expected number of rafts on water at same time etc.
- f. A draft of the *Safety & Rescue Plan* including the *Risk Assessment* should be delivered to the IRF at least six (6) months before the event. The IRF will review and approve the draft plan by return email. The IRF can also suggest changes or reject the document, in which case, exact reasoning and action plans will be outlined and a new deadline for approval will be agreed.
- g. The *Safety & Rescue Plan* becomes final only after it is tested and rehearsed at the Rescue Workshop and after changes have been implemented according to the Workshops outcomes. The Safety Director and the IRF appointed Safety Representative on site will sign off the final plan and hand it over to Race Director to activate it. This must be done before the event starts. Any exceptions to this are to be approved by the IRF Safety Representative.
- h. The Safety Director is responsible for briefing the whole Rescue Team, including the on-site Medical Team, about the final *Safety & Rescue Plan* before the first actions on water.

#### **Safety & Rescue Plan - must include the following:**

1. Risk Assessment.
2. Chain of emergency procedures > clear workflow definitions.
3. Incident Management and Continuity Plan.
4. Chosen rescue techniques and ways of transport.
5. Locations / working positions of safety personnel and safety crafts, for race training sessions as well as races.
6. Communication plan (spotters, flags, signals, call signs, codes, radio protocol/s, channels, flow of communication, escalation plan).

7. Water level analysis (minimum and maximum water levels, procedures in case of change of water level)
8. List of equipment of the Rescue Team (team equipment and mandated minimum personal safety equipment for individuals).
9. Overview Map: racecourse overview plan including main organisational set ups, river sections defined on racecourse, marked working positions of all Safety Personnel by sections, position of Medical Team, emergency river access and egress, and evacuation points around race location.
10. Medical Team details e.g. name and experience of company.
11. Detail of Rescue Team Workshop: when, where, what to be covered, who is delivering the workshop.
12. List of Rescue Team members including roles, names, contact details, their level of training (held certificates). This must be sent to the IRF one (1) month before the event.

**Explanations:**

**1. Rescue Team:**

Rescue Team consists of Safety Personnel and Safety Crafters (Rafts and Kayaks) under the coordination of Section Leaders, local Medic Team - all under the supervision of the Safety Director. Definitions of exact functions of these roles must be detailed in the *Safety and Rescue Plan*.

**a. Safety Director (as defined by the IRF Race Rules):**

- i. They are in charge of safety during the competition.
- ii. They are able to call for an immediate stop to the competition if they consider any activity or situation to be dangerous or potentially dangerous.
- iii. They, together with the organising committee, are responsible for the delivery of the *Risk Assessment* and the *Safety & Rescue Plan* according to the *IRF Race Rules - Safety Addendum* (this document).
- iv. They have the right to check self-rescue abilities of any member of any participating team and exclude those not complying with minimum expectations that are defined and can be viewed in the *IRF Race Rules* document.
- v. They may invite any particular team to show their skills and expel from the race, those who are not capable of the minimum skills needed, as stated in the *IRF Race Rules*.  
If they are not sure of the skills shown, then a second attempt by that team is possible.
- vi. They together with the Race Director have the right to change the Start and Finish positions due to safety reasons.
- vii. The Safety Director reports to the Race Director.

**b. Section Leader:**

- i. They are responsible for coordinating Safety Personnel in their racecourse section.
- ii. They are responsible for maintaining communication with other Section Leader/s and Safety Director.
- iii. They must hold a current IRF GTE Raft Trip Leader or IRF GTE Event Safety certification or equivalent, at the minimum level of the racecourse section/s they are Section Leader for.
- iv. They must participate in the Rescue Workshop\*\* held prior to the race event.
- v. They have to have thorough knowledge of the overall *Safety and Rescue Plan*.

**c. Safety Personnel:**

- i. They function as a member of the Rescue Team.
- ii. They are certified and trained for whitewater rescue (IRF GTE Raft or Event Safety / Rescue 3).
- iii. They must participate in the Rescue Workshop\*\* held prior to the race event.

**d. Medical Team:**

- i. Medical Team is assigned by the Race Organiser and approved by the Safety Director.
- ii. Medical Team is on standby, being the first medical response team during all race operations, including training days.
- iii. Medical Team is not only to cover race participants, but the whole organising team as well as visitors

and crowd in case of need.

- iv. Medical Team consists of minimum three (3) emergency first responders with a mobile emergency unit / ambulance car. PHTLS trained (or equivalent) personnel are required if the local emergency response time is over 15 minutes.

**2. Sections:**

- a. The racecourse of Sprint, H2H and Slalom should be split in Sections.
- b. Sections need to be controlled by Section Leaders.
- c. Last section needs to be after the finish line for equipment and persons recovery.
- d. Section Leaders need to have communication with each other and the Safety Director.

**3. Downriver Race:**

- a. Downriver race should be covered at each key rapid (defined as Sections) with the Section Leaders and their teams.
- b. Each starting racing group must be followed by minimum of one (1) Safety Craft (the only exception to this rule is on artificial courses).
- c. Put-In, Start, Finish and Take-Out must be covered as well (defined also as Sections).

**4. Communication:**

- a. It is highly recommended to have radio communication among Section Leaders and the Safety Director. Codes, call signs and protocols need to be prescribed in the *Safety and Rescue Plan*.
- b. All Safety Team members must know, and be able to use, IRF River Signals as detailed on the IRF website.
- c. Safety Director must have constant communication with the Race Director and first response Medical Team.

**5. Safety Crafts:**

- a. Safety Crafters must be IRF GTE certified. This certification can be gained at the workshop prior to the event. Acceptable Safety Craft certifications are IRF GTE Safety Raft and IRF GTE Safety Kayak.
- b. Minimum of two (2) safety craft need to be used at each discipline.
- c. The exact number, type and location of Safety Craft need to be defined by the Safety Director in the *Safety & Rescue Plan*.

**6. Incident Management and Continuity Plan:**

- a. In case of a major incident all racing must be stopped until all of the Rescue Team are back in their designated position.
- b. The call to stop and / or continue racing will be made by the Safety Director.
- c. In the case of a serious incident: 30 minutes after the incident happened the Safety Director will make an announcement for the Media and all Teams at a designated area by the *Safety and Rescue Plan*. This timeframe may be extended if the
- d. Under no circumstances should the Race continue without a Basic Medical Team on the scene. The Organiser could consider having a larger Medical Team within the infrastructure to be able to fulfil two (2) concurrent treatments on site.

**7. \*\*Rescue Workshop:**

- a. The IRF Sports & Competition Committee, based on the assessment and recommendation of the Safety Plan by the Head of the GTE Committee, will decide what form the Rescue Team Workshop shall be. This can range from a one-day workshop prior to the event, to a three-day long IRF rescue workshop which must be run by an IRF GTE Instructor Trainer at the location of the racecourse. This workshop has two objectives:
  - i. to `test and rehearse` the overall functioning ability of the *Safety and Rescue Plan* - where communication, management of process, rescue techniques and emergency procedures are to be tested and adjusted. During the workshop, the Instructor Trainer reviews the Rescue Team through standard scenarios, unexpected actions, and worst-case scenarios.

- ii. to offer IRF GTE Event Safety, IRF GTE Safety Kayak, and IRF Safety Raft certifications.
- b. The decision for the length of the Rescue Workshop will be based on the experience and qualifications of the Rescue Team and their experience of running safety in general and of running safety at the specific racecourses during races.
- c. The Rescue Workshop must be complete before official race training commences. There are no exceptions to this rule.
- d. By the time of the event, all members of the Rescue Team must have successfully passed an IRF GTE assessment (Raft Guide, Safety Raft, Raft Trip Leader, Event Safety) or Rescue 3 certification at the appropriate river grade for the racecourse. Those who do not, must apply to the IRF for exception on the Rescue Team.
- e. IRF GTE Event Safety qualifications may be obtained during the Rescue Workshop (they can only be assessed by duly qualified IRF GTE Event Safety Instructors or Instructor Trainers).

## **B. Minimum IRF Safety Standards for B Level events**

- a. B Level events are Continental level events awarded by the IRF Board of Directors.
- b. B Level events should aspire to the same level of safety as required at an A Level event. Any deviation from the safety standards must be agreed in writing with the Head of the GTE Committee prior to the event.
- c. Events such as the Euro Cup and World Cup, which are known IRF promoted events, require a minimum of safety standards which is that the Safety is to be run by a currently certified IRF GTE Instructor, IRF GTE Instructor Trainer, IRF GTE Event Safety Instructor, or Rescue 3 instructor.
- d. Events that do not have the above minimum will be listed on the IRF Race Calendar but will not be able to receive the full support of the IRF.

## **C. Minimum IRF Safety Standards for C Level events**

- a. C Level events should aspire to the same level of safety as is required at A and B Level events.
- b. Events such as the Euro Cup and World Cup, which are approved and recognised IRF race events, require a minimum of safety standards which includes that safety is to be run by a currently certified IRF GTE Instructor, IRF GTE Instructor Trainer, IRF GTE Event Safety Instructor, or currently certified Rescue 3 instructor.
- c. Events that do not have the above minimum will be listed on the IRF Race Calendar but will not be able to receive the full support of the IRF.

## **D. Minimum IRF Safety Standards for artificial whitewater venues**

- a. A, B and C level events may be held on artificial whitewater at the discretion and prior approval of the IRF.
- b. A and B Level events on artificial whitewater venues should aspire to the same level of safety as is required at A and B Level events on natural rivers. Variations must be agreed by the Head of the GTE Committee prior to the event commencing.
- c. C Level events on artificial whitewater venues require the safety to be run by a currently certified IRF GTE Instructor, IRF GTE Instructor Trainer, IRF GTE Event Safety Instructor, or currently certified Rescue 3 instructor.

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### **Document History:**

*Created by: Gaspar Goncz, IRF Head of GTE Committee, June 2010 | Approved by S&C Com March 2011 | Reworded for clarity December 2015 | Rebranded February 2019 | Updated by GTE Administration and approved by Head of GTE Committee, May 2024*