



Standard Operating Procedure – SOP 04-20

Use of Helmets & Seatbelts on RCMSAR Vessels

May 4th, 2020

All crew shall be familiar with the proper donning and use of seatbelts and helmets their FRC and station is equipped with. The purpose of helmet or seatbelt use is for improved crew safety and their use must be considered/used if the conditions present a potential for injury to the crew. In conjunction with these SOPs, the coxswain of the vessel shall determine if there is an additional need to wear helmets, and/or seatbelts.

Helmets

Any helmet worn must be RCMSAR approved for use in an FRC. A list of current approved helmets can be found on the Safety Management System (SMS) under approved equipment list. Helmets must have reflective tape affixed to the top and sides of helmet.

Open or Partially Enclosed FRCs: Helmets are to be worn by all crew when the vessel is in planning mode (over 15 knots). Further considerations by the coxswain for wearing of helmets, regardless of speed, should be considered when in rough weather. While rough weather is not easily defined a general guide would be if sea state exceeds 4*.

Closed Cabin FRCs: Helmets are to be worn in rough weather when head injury is possible due to operating conditions, with further considerations by the coxswain, regardless of speed, when sea state exceeds 5*. If anticipating rough weather during operations, helmets should be brought on board closed cabin vessels in case of need.

In Water Activities: Helmets must be worn by any persons entering the water for live MOB activities, self-recovery practice, PFD competency test, and other approved in water activities.



Seatbelts

Though not all RCMSAR vessels are equipped with seatbelts, those that are must adhere to the following guidelines. Furthermore, it is imperative that the release mechanism be properly situated (facing outward) so as not to have the release mechanism turned toward the body.

Open or Partially Enclosed FRCs: Seatbelts must be worn while seated and the vessel is operating in planning mode (over 15 knots), and when practicing emergency maneuvers. Further considerations by the coxswain for wearing of seatbelts, regardless of speed, should be considered when in rough weather or sea state exceeds 4*.

Closed Cabin FRCs: Seatbelts must be worn when practicing emergency maneuvers. Further considerations by the coxswain for wearing of seatbelts, regardless of speed, should be considered when in rough weather or sea state exceeds 5*.

***Sea State Guide**

Douglas sea and swell scale

Devised in the 1920s by Captain H.P. Douglas CMG, RN, Hydrographer of the Royal Navy, for estimating the roughness of the sea for navigation and recommended for international use in 1929, this scale consists of pairs of digits, each on a scale from 0 to 9, the first representing 'sea' and the second 'swell'.

State of the sea			Swell	
Code figure	Height (m)	Description	Code figure	Description
0	0	Calm (glassy)	0	No swell
1	0 – 0.1	Calm (rippled)	1	Very low (short and low wave)
2	0.1 – 0.5	Smooth (wavelets)	2	Low (long and low wave)
3	0.5 – 1.25	Slight	3	Light (short and moderate wave)
4	1.25 – 2.5	Moderate	4	Moderate (average and moderate wave)
5	2.5 – 4.0	Rough	5	Moderate rough (long and moderate wave)
6	4.0 – 6.0	Very rough	6	Rough (short and heavy wave)
7	6.0 – 9.0	High	7	High (average and heavy wave)
8	9.0 – 14.0	Very high	8	Very high (long and heavy wave)
9	Over 14.0	Phenomenal	9	Confused (wave length and height indefinable)