



**PRSC Hazardous weather race cancellation procedure rev0 (2 pages)**

This document summarises the club’s hazardous weather race cancellation procedure. The procedure has been compiled so that club races are conducted with due regard to safety and risk to members. This document augments the other six safety guides on the club website including Handbook and Sailing Instructions, Incident Management Plan and Emergency Safety Card. This document does not infer any responsibility for consequent liabilities on the club or the club starter. In particular, the Sailing Australia racing rules dictum must be followed by all skippers – “The responsibility for a boat’s decision to participate in a race or continue is hers alone”.

Weather warnings are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM);  
<http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/about/six-things-about-wind-warnings.shtml>  
Some background to such forecasts includes: (from the BOM website)

**1. When will the wind warning conditions start?**

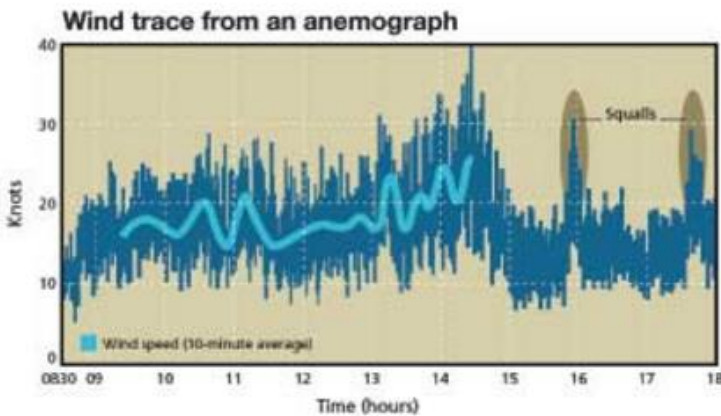
Skippers should assess whether they have enough time to get back to port before the wind picks up, or do you need to take precautions and seek shelter.

**2. What speed will the wind reach?**

A Strong Wind Warning starts at 26 knots, and a Gale Warning starts at 34 knots. As a skipper, you need to be aware of what wind conditions your vessel can handle, and take steps to avoid times with stronger winds.

<b>Strong wind warning</b>	Winds averaging from <b>26 knots and up to 33 knots.</b>
<b>Gale warning</b>	Winds averaging from <b>34 knots and up to 47 knots.</b>
<b>Storm force wind warning</b>	Winds averaging from <b>48 knots and up to 63 knots.</b>
<b>Hurricane force wind warning</b>	Winds averaging <b>64 knots or more.</b>

It must be realised that average wind strengths (which are averaged over a time period of 10 minutes) can result in wind gusts of 40% or more above that level – see below a typical wind chart (Afloat Magazine 2009).



For race days when a gale warning (or above) has been issued by the BOM, which is current within 2 hours of the race scheduled start, the race shall be cancelled.

For race days when a strong wind warning has been issued and is current within 2 hours of the scheduled race start, the race may be cancelled.

The cancellation decision will be made by the club starter and will advisedly follow the below process, based on the wind gust speeds expected over the course for the likely duration of the race. If a significant time period of wind gusts above the strong wind minimum of 26knots is likely to occur, then the race shall be cancelled. (Continued overleaf)

- The strong wind warning complete context will be assessed as regards arrival and duration over the intended club course to be sailed. For example see <http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/observations/sydney.shtml> for a 10 minute trend, 1/2hour record.
- Alternative course area predictions from [www.seabreeze.com.au](http://www.seabreeze.com.au) and [www.willyweather.com.au](http://www.willyweather.com.au) and other relevant agency's sources will be assessed.
- The club wind and weather monitoring system will be tracked as much as reasonably possible, to assess the local area wind trends. The intended race course area will also be monitored at suitable sites – eg BOM and Willy Weather – these having periodic updates and trends.
- Note that the club weather system wind speed updates every 1minute and is the average wind speed recorded by the system over that time duration. To convert from km/hr to knots multiply by 0.54. So 10km/hr=5.4knots.
- The BOM data as per the above link updates every 10minutes and gives the average and gust wind speeds over that 10minute time period. The highest wind gust since midnight of that day is also indicated Eg see;

#### SYDNEY AREA

	Date/Time EDT	Temp °C	App Temp °C	Dew Point °C	Rel Hum %	Delta-T °C	Wind					Press hPa	Rain since 9am mm	Low Temp °C time	High Temp °C time	Highest Wind Gust		
							Dir	Spd km/h	Gust km/h	Spd kts	Gust kts					Dir	km/h time	kts time
<a href="#">Sydney - Observatory Hill</a>	15/04:50pm	24.5	23.1	18.9	71	3.6	E	24	-	13	-	1017.9	0.2	19.8 11:43pm	25.9 02:46pm	-	-	-
<a href="#">Sydney Airport</a>	15/04:50pm	24.8	22.4	20.3	76	2.9	ENE	33	39	18	21	1017.9	0.6	19.9 04:42am	27.1 01:30pm	E	50 03:18pm	27 03:18pm
<a href="#">Sydney Harbour</a>	15/04:50pm	23.6	-	-	-	-	E	24	28	13	15	-	-	19.3 11:27pm	24.3 01:06pm	ENE	52 10:20am	28 10:20am

Drilling down into specific monitoring stations as below confirms the gust and highest readings.

**Station Details** ID: 066037 Name: SYDNEY AIRPORT AMO Lat: -33.95 Lon: 151.17 Height: 6.0 m

Data from the previous 72 hours. | See also: [Recent months at Sydney Airport](#)

Date/Time EDT	Temp °C	App Temp °C	Dew Point °C	Rel Hum %	Delta-T °C	Wind					Press QNH hPa	Press MSL hPa	Rain since 9am mm
						Dir	Spd km/h	Gust km/h	Spd kts	Gust kts			
15/04:30pm	25.0	22.6	20.0	74	3.2	ENE	32	41	17	22	1018.1	1018.1	0.6
15/04:00pm	25.1	22.7	19.9	73	3.4	ENE	32	39	17	21	1018.2	1018.2	0.6
15/03:30pm	25.4	22.5	20.0	72	3.5	ENE	35	48	19	26	1018.5	1018.5	0.6
15/03:00pm	25.7	22.4	20.0	71	3.7	ENE	37	48	20	26	1018.8	1018.8	0.6
15/02:30pm	25.8	22.1	19.9	70	3.8	ENE	39	50	21	27	1019.0	1019.0	0.6

- If the strong wind warning prediction for the normal race time over the intended course area appears to be valid, based on relevant information from the above sources, then the race may be cancelled. If the wind strength average reading is 26knots or greater for more than 50% of the time, based on the club weather system or BOM Sydney Harbour last 4 readings (these are every ½ hour hence a 2 hour time period) or wind gusts are consistently around 30knots or greater, then the race shall be cancelled.
- If the criteria as in 6. above occur during the actual race, due to increased wind strengths since the race start, then the race shall be abandoned by the raising of Code Flag N and sounding 3 horn blasts.
- If the strong wind warning prediction for the normal race time over the intended course area is for wind strengths to be abating within the 2 hours before the race starting time decision point, with winds falling below the strong wind warning wind strength, then the race may be continued as scheduled depending on the starter's discretion. Alternatively, the scheduled race course area may be altered so as to potentially fall within the nominal guidelines of this document. For example, a long or mid-course harbour series race could be re-scheduled to a local area race.

#### Other race cancellation issues which the starter will assess;

- If other issues are present which may require race cancellation decisions by the starter, they will be considered as relevant.
- These could include potential race course area thunderstorms, lightning and hail, excessive heat conditions and other environmental issues during the expected race duration.
- Other possible considerations could be river pollution from such sources as current or recent floods (debris and large floating objects) or vessel-related issues such as oil spills or sunken boats.

#### Communications to club members.

Advice of hazardous weather race cancellation will be via Code Flag N. In addition, for the case of such a cancellation being imminent as evidence by the weather, all skippers must phone the club by 1pm (Saturday races) and 5pm (Wednesday twilight races) to gain confirmation of the situation.

PRSC Committee March 2017.