

A dragon boat capsized during a race training session - one man was drowned

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Issue

A number of the adult participants were not wearing buoyancy aids. The relevant NGB, the British Dragon Boating Association, concentrates primarily on competition where, it seems, buoyancy aids are not seen as compulsory for many competitors.

Outcome

Operators of recreational and/or commercial dragon boating should consider the implications of not wearing buoyancy aids compared to the marginal or even negligible loss of performance or comfort. Sudden immersion, unexpectedly, in cold water whilst hot, excited and possibly exhausted has taken the lives of many recreational water users, even those who were good swimmers, because they weren't wearing buoyancy aids. The Licensing Authority is very unlikely to grant a licence to a provider of Dragon Boating who does not insist that at least all under-18-year-olds wear buoyancy aids.