

Chesil Sailability Standard Operating Procedures

Part 2 SOP- Specific Operational and Safety Procedures – for Volunteers by Activity

Link Standard Operating Procedures

Updates

March 2025	Link SOP 2025 v2	Original (after amendments)
January 2026	2-4 Link SOP 2026 v1	Annual update incorporating learning from 2025 season

Introduction

- The Link team welcome the sailors and carers/support workers, help them with slings, life jackets, waterproof clothing if needed, and escort them to and from the pontoons. They also play a significant part in the social aspect for sailors and carers.
- The Link Team do much to reassure sailors, and their carers, before they go on the water, and have an important role in checking that sailors felt safe during and after their flight.
- Reception and Link are the welcoming faces of Chesil Sailability, first impressions count, the Team rely on you to give all of our sailors the best start to their sailing.
- Link ensures that Sailors have suitable clothing for going on the water, have a correctly fitted Buoyancy Aid or Lifejacket, and when needed a properly sized and positioned sling.
- Link accompanies Sailors as they transit to the pontoon team, and back after their flight.
- Reception and Link keep the DO informed of arrivals and Sailor readiness to help the session flow and the planning of flights.
- Reception and Link alert the DO to anything unusual, for example extra needs on the day, so that a timely response can be planned.
- Reception and Link do their best to make sure our Sailors feel safe before and after sailing and that they can go home knowing their views are welcomed and will always be heard.

Qualifications

Link Leads must confirm that they have read and understood their standard operating procedures, and this must be recorded on the training record.

Preparation

Checklist – what you need

- Rota for sailors, Sailor: individual requirements list
- Cabin: chairs, table, wheelchairs
- Container: clothing, lifejackets, slings, cushions

Setting up

- Cabin: bring out chairs, a table and 2 wheelchairs. Set up in front of the cabin (note PGL use the area to the side of the cabin/ramp).
- Container: most kit stays in the container & is brought out as needed.
- Volunteers requiring kit must only use items from the rack labelled for volunteer use.
- Portable metal ramp available for step into the container
- Clothing: range of sizes of waterproof jackets and trousers, some gloves
- Lifejackets: one size for adults; junior size available
- Buoyancy aids for juniors (yellow, with collars to support head)
- Slings: bags of different sized slings (L, M, S), standing sling
- Named bags set up for regular individual sailors, with their cushions/kit
- Cushions: range of cushions for extra support
- Anti-slip matting: can be useful for sailors with limited core stability, to sit on

- Frame to enable wheelchair user to pull themselves up (e.g. to enable sling to be fitted more easily)
- Sailor rota for the session: check who is coming and list of individual preferences (e.g. own bag of cushions etc).
- VHF Radio. Possible use of VHF radio, depending on availability of base radio volunteer for liaison with Reception and Pontoon for when to take sailors down/back from pontoon.

Be aware

Lifejackets: anyone going to the pontoons or on the water must wear a lifejacket (or buoyancy aid).

Wheelchair users: must undo lap belts before accessing the ramp leading to and whilst on the pontoons.

During the Session

- Communication: **sailors need to be ready in good time to get to the pontoon for their sailing slot, to make the most of the time available. This relies on good communication between DO, Base Radio, Reception, Link and Pontoon, mostly via the VHF radios.**
- Kitting up: fit all kit before going to pontoon (sailors and carers going on the water).
- Link can help to put on over-trousers, jackets and buoyancy aids/lifejackets and fitting slings. Use the carers' expertise to help with this. Any other changing should take place in the Academy changing rooms/accessible wet room. Volunteers should not accompany sailors to the changing rooms individually. Remind less experienced sailors that it will be cooler on the water and offer appropriate clothing.
- Personal care: we do not offer personal care and sailors should have their own carer/support worker with them if this is needed (& can use the accessible changing/wet room which also has an Oxford hoist and will have a changing bed).
- Academy First Aid/accessible changing/wet room. Key in cabin draw.
- First Aid kit & Accident Report log are kept in the cabin.
- Potential use of room for waiting sailors & carers in Andrew Simpson Centre on wet/cold days. Key in cabin draw.
- Socialising: the social side of our sessions can be just as important as sailing for the sailors, using the area outside the cabin (not in Reception where there is limited space and the need to hear radio communication). All members are asked to bring along their own snacks and drinks as the Academy café is usually closed just before 5pm.

Kitting up & escorting to/from the pontoon

- **Clothing:** check what sailors and carers are wearing and offer waterproof jackets and/or trousers as appropriate to individual and weather conditions.
- **Lifejackets:**
 - fitted properly, back straps tightened to be comfortable but not loose, strap underneath crotch
 - sailor/carer shown how to inflate
 - over other clothing (not under jackets)
 - Buoyancy aids in junior sizes, or junior lifejacket (to be agreed with DO/carer)
 - Sling: properly set up with straps between legs one crossed in the other. (Note: sailor preference. Straps crossed between legs as standard but some sailors may prefer not to have straps crossed.) Sling sizes (by weight) are on the label: Large - green, Medium - yellow, Small - red. Some sailors may come with their own sling. Use expertise of carers where possible. Frame can be used if sailor is able to pull themselves up. See separate guidance sheet in Part 3 on fitting a sling.
- Escort all sailors to and from the pontoon
 - - Individual bag of cushions etc as needed

- - CS wheelchair may be needed by some sailors (e.g. instead of motorised scooter or if too tiring to walk)
- - Wheelchair user body straps must be off
 - Care down ramp, & get extra help if needed (if ramp steep can go down backwards)
 - Hazards/wheels stuck in grooves on pontoons (cross gaps with wheels at 45 degrees to gap/groove)

End of session

- Return all the kit back to the correct place in the container or cabin. Wet kit: hang out as much as possible.
- Please give any feedback to improve how we run our sessions and our processes, for sailors and volunteers.