

FYCA member clubs should note that the Construction Standards section of the **FYCA Safety Regulations for Yachts** becomes effective on 1st April 2005 and **must be called up in the Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions for all open events for yachts**, particularly **Forth Inshore Group** races & **Open Regattas**. The Safety Regulations were formally adopted by club representatives at the 2004 Delegates Meeting, after a lengthy period of consultation & revision, but with a one year delay on the construction requirements to give owners & clubs time to comply or seek dispensation. The rationale is given in the document introduction:

*The FYCA and its constituent clubs have a 'duty of care' to ensure that appropriate standards of yacht construction and equipment are established for the guidance of sailors and the clubs that organise yacht racing events on the Firth of Forth. The Forth Estuary is relatively sheltered but conditions can change quickly and, particularly in the outer Forth, the distance to harbours of refuge can be considerable and access may not be possible in all tidal conditions. The FYCA also has a responsibility to Forth Ports plc, HM Coastguard and the RNLI, to ensure that competitors are aware of the standards and equipment levels necessary to be self-sufficient, capable of clearing the restricted shipping channels and able to communicate in the event of emergency.*

*These Safety Regulations are based on the Offshore Racing Council (ORC) category requirements appropriate for racing on the Forth and the FYCA acknowledges their kind permission to reproduce them. The regulations also bring the FYCA into line with the approach taken by both the Clyde Yacht Clubs Association (CYCA) and the North East Cruiser Racing Association (NECRA).*

All of us want to minimise the possibility of a 'mini-Fastnet' disaster on the Firth of Forth and the Safety Regulations are necessary to define & communicate appropriate standards. It is essential that clubs state these requirements by reference to the FYCA document & that competitors sign up as compliant, otherwise any organising club will have failed a 'Duty of Care' test. In general, clubs are advised against inspection of yachts since that implies inspection competence and might be assumed to reduce the absolute responsibility of the owner/person in charge. Ultimately, **FYCA will not recognise any open yacht event that does not specify the agreed Safety Regulations.**

Provision is also made for granting exemptions where justified:

*The FYCA recognises that the class rules of some one-design yachts or construction features of some designs, particularly older ones, may not comply fully with ORC requirements. Modification may conflict with one-design class rules or may be impossible or too expensive to implement. In adopting these regulations to improve safety, it is not the intention of the FYCA to unnecessarily bar non-compliant yachts from all events. Individual owners, class representatives or FYCA clubs may apply for an exemption from specific regulations using the form in appendix B. Applications should be sent, preferably by E-mail, to the FYCA Honorary Secretary at the address below for review by the FYCA Safety Committee. Exemptions for specific cases, including any conditional restrictions, may be granted and will be published in appendix A to these regulations. Owners should allow a minimum of one month for this process.*

To date only one exemption request, for the Hunter 707 class, has been lodged. Before the 2005 season, clubs should remind yacht owners of the Safety Regulations & urge them to check for compliance if they intend participating in open events. If seeking exemption, please get the request in early since the Safety Committee needs time to review & adjudicate.

Regards,  
Jim Scott - FYCA Development Officer