

**Provincetown Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla, September 8, 2018**

**INCIDENT ACTION PLAN**

**September 3, 2018**

**EVENT NAME:** 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Provincetown Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla

**OPERATIONAL PERIOD:** September 8, 2018, 9:00am to 2:00pm

**MISSION:** To ensure the safety of approximately 420 swimmers participating in the Swim For Life across Provincetown Harbor from Long Point to the Boatslip Resort & Beach Club, 161 Commercial St. This is a recreational swim, not a race.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETERS:** Specific environment-related criteria for cancellation include but are not limited to:

1. Fog or visibility less than 1500 yards
2. Sustained on-scene winds in excess of 12 knots
3. Sustained wave height in excess of 20 inches
4. Approaching thunder squall or lightning
5. White shark sighting in the vicinity of the swim

The go/no-go decision rests with the Provincetown Harbormaster (Rex McKinsey) in consultation with the Director of the event (Jay Critchley) after consultation with the Officer-In-Charge, Coast Guard Station Provincetown.

**FORECASTED WEATHER AND TIDES:**

1. Weather: Sunny, 72 degrees
2. Tides: Low tide – 4:17am; High tide – 10:31am

Note: A 30-40 minute delay may be held in the event of passing inclement weather (e.g., fog/fast-moving thunder/lightening storm).

**SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:**

1. One month before the EVENT:
  - a. Notify Harbormaster and Coast Guard Station Provincetown.
2. One week before the EVENT:
  - a. Review weather forecast.
  - b. Issue Local Notice to Mariners through the Coast Guard.
  - c. Issue a Marine Safety Information Bulletin through the Provincetown Harbormaster.
  - d. Issue final press release/media advisory to all local media outlets regarding the swim event.

- e. Finalize the list of all safety vessels supporting the event, including vessel name and contact (phone/radio) information; see attached list.
3. On the Day of the Swim (September 8, 2018):
- a. 7:00 a.m:
    - i. Review current weather and weather forecast.
    - ii. Review latest information on local shark monitoring buoys.
- NOTE: The go/no-go decision rests with the Provincetown Harbormaster with consultation with the Director of the event and the Officer-In-Charge, Coast Guard Station Provincetown.
- b. 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.: All swimmers will register on the Boatslip (161 Commercial Street, Provincetown) deck and be given a cap with an assigned swimmer number, which will also be written on the swimmer's arm. Each swimmer (as well as safety boater and kayaker) must sign a liability release form.
  - c. 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m: All safety vessels and kayaks will register at Boatslip Beach, and will receive written instructions and safety briefing.
  - d. 9:30-11:00 am - Swimmers will be transported to Long Point and their number will be recorded.
  - e. 10:30 a.m. - Safety vessels in place.
  - f. 9:00 a.m. – Provincetown Harbormaster and Center for Coastal Studies conduct sweep of Swim course for sharks.
    - i. If any sharks are sighted east of a line extending from Long Point Light to Provincetown Harbor Breakwater East End Light No. 5, the Swim will be delayed an hour, based on protocols established by the consortium of Cape Cod towns and the Cape Cod National Seashore, created to monitor seals and white sharks
    - ii. If any sharks are sighted west of a line extending from Long Point Light to Provincetown Harbor Breakwater East End Light No. 5, the swim will be (see above).
  - g. 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m: For the duration of the Swim, both Provincetown Harbormaster vessels and other safety boats will maintain a continuous watch for sharks. If sharks are sighted, an immediate evacuation of all swimmers will be directed by Provincetown Harbormaster. See below for mass evacuation procedures.

- h. 11:15 a.m. - Check-in captain will report to the finish line captain the final count of swimmers who started at Long Point .
- i. When last swimmer has arrived safely on the Boatslip beach, the finish line captain will take final count of swimmers

**SAFETY ZONE:** Five, 5-foot tall orange tetrahedron buoys mark the swim lane. Swimmers should remain within 100 yards of either side of the buoys. Kayakers, paddle boarders and lifeguards will stay close to the swimmers (within 10 yards), with safety vessels on the outer edge (between 50 and 100 yards from swimmers).

**PERCEIVED THREATS:**

1. There are no known deliberate threats to participants in this event from any persons.
2. Sharks have been reported in the vicinity of Cape Cod. The Center for Coastal Studies and the Provincetown Harbormaster will do a sweep of the harbor and Long Point area for sharks on the morning of the event, and will maintain a continuous watch for sharks during the Swim, centered on a line extending from Long Point to Provincetown Harbor Breakwater East End Light No. 5. If sharks are sighted, the swim will be delayed (see 3.f, i)
3. Inherent risks include swimmer fatigue, cramping or illness, heart attack, hypothermia, vessel swimmer collisions, and cuts and abrasions from sharp shells and rocks on the bottom toward the finish. Kayaks may possibly capsize.

**ON-WATER SUPPORT**

1. Provincetown Harbormaster vessel
2. U.S. Coast Guard vessel
3. Coast Guard Auxilliary vessels
4. Center for Coastal Studies vessel
5. Cape Cod National Seashore vessel
6. 75 kayaks
7. Total motorized vessels: 25
8. Total non-motorized vessels: 75
9. Total vessels: 102
10. Vessels on Swim management (Provincetown Harbormaster): 1
11. Number of expected swimmers: 420
12. Ratio of swim safety boats to swimmers: 1-4 swimmers per safety vessel.

## **SHORESIDE SUPPORT**

1. Provincetown rescue vehicle at Boatslip
2. Swim medical team at Boatslip Beach:
  - a. 2 MDs
  - b. 2 Nurse Practitioners
  - c. 2 nurses
  - d. 10 support personnel
3. Provincetown Rescue Squad

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

1. See attached Safety Boat Fact Sheet
2. Provincetown Harbormaster will monitor VHF channels 12 and 16
3. U.S. Coast Guard vessels will monitor VHF channels 12, 16 and 72
4. Safety vessel communications circuit (between safety vessels) is 72
5. Provincetown rescue squad will monitor VHF channel 12

## **CONTINGENCIES AND PROTOCOLS:**

1. All participants will receive a safety information packet and a briefing at the start. All kayaks and safety vessels will have a whistle and a cell phone or VHF radio. If a swimmer needs help, he/she is advised to wave and get the attention of the nearest vessel. Kayakers are instructed not to try to bring swimmers aboard, but to stabilize swimmers with a PFD (personal flotation device) and alert an authorized safety vessel.
2. Authorized safety vessels have swim ladders and extra crew capable of lifting a swimmer aboard. Removed swimmers are reported to the finish line and are not allowed to re-enter the water for the remainder of the event. Unregistered swimmers should be removed from the water immediately and can be recognized by the lack of swim cap and numbering.
3. **In the event of a mass evacuation:** If a mass evacuation is directed, there will be five continuous blasts from the Harbormaster and other safety vessels to alert swimmers. Swimmers will be directed (by voice or megaphone) to the nearest evacuation vessel, moored boat in the harbor or the beach.
4. **In the event of a Medical Emergency** the closest vessel will respond and alert the Harbormaster to the situation who will coordinate the swimmer's rescue, removal from the water, and transport to EMS standing by at the dock at the Coast Guard station
5. The Provincetown Rescue Squad vehicle will be at the Boatslip. In the event of a water rescue, vessel drop off to medical personnel will be at the dock at the Coast Guard.
6. If, at any time during or after the event, a swimmer is deemed to be missing, safety vessels will conduct a search of the area at the direction of the on-scene Coast Guard vessel.

7. If a kayak capsizes, Swim For Life safety vessels will rescue the paddlers and may attempt to secure, right, or tow the kayak to safety. However, priority will go to rescuing persons in the water; kayaks may be moored or strung together until a later opportunity to retrieve them after all persons are safe and secure.
8. A tired swimmer should signal one of the kayakers and hold on to the kayak's bow (not the side). The swimmer should not attempt to climb into the kayak. The kayaker signals for assistance if needed by blowing their whistle and raising their paddle over their head.
9. A medical emergency: a safety vessel will coordinate with the Provincetown Rescue Squad via VHF channel 12 for stabilization and transport of a swimmer in distress.
10. A kayaker in distress will be treated like a medical emergency described in paragraph 8 above.
11. Event officials will have the final say on when a slow swimmer should be removed from the water.
12. Once all swimmers are officially accounted for, the Swim director will announce the end of the event and safety vessels will be released.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION:**

All requests for public information or official information about the event should be directed to Jay Critchley at 774 840-0458

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. List of Support Vessels

Jay Critchley, Director  
Provincetown Community Compact, Inc.  
Sponsor of the Provincetown Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla  
P.O. Box 819  
Provincetown, MA 02657  
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thecompact@comcast.net  
www.swim4life.org