A windsurfer is shown from a low angle, riding a wave. The windsurfer is wearing a black wetsuit and is holding onto the boom of a large, red and white sail. The sail is partially inflated and is catching the wind. The windsurfer's board is white with a red and orange stripe along the bottom edge. The water is white with foam, and the sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is dynamic and energetic.

## Chapter 6 Windsurfing and Stand-Up Paddle Boards

## 6.1 Training

It is recommended that persons participating in windsurfing and stand-up paddle boarding activities undertake appropriate training. There are a number of windsurfer training schemes and approved courses available. Information can be obtained directly from course providers (see Appendix 9 for details of course providers).

## 6.2 Windsurfing Safety

### 6.2.1 Prior to entering the water

- Examine your rigging for worn ropes or loose fittings. Ensure all are correctly cleated and tied off.
  - Check the condition of the board. Ensure there is a safety leash (where fitted) between the board and rig.
  - Check all foot straps and fins are suitably attached. Examine the mast foot. Ensure the universal joint and mast track are in good condition.
  - Advise someone ashore where you are going and when you will be back.
  - Carry essential spares, spare rigging lines, a 4 metre towing line, a dayglo flag or miniflare and a whistle to attract attention. These items can be carried in a harness pocket or bum bag.
  - Check the local weather and sea area forecast for the area you propose to sail in.
- Avoid sailing in offshore winds, and be aware of the influence of tidal streams, both of which may carry you offshore or away from your start point.
  - Ensure that your name and contact number are marked on your board. Where possible, apply retro reflective tape to the board hull.



- Avoid sailing alone – there is safety in numbers.
- Choose a recognised boardsailing venue where you can learn from other sailors. Beginners should stick to enclosed waters.
- Be aware of local bye-laws. Never sail in designated restricted areas or areas crowded by swimmers.
- Avoid offshore winds until proficient, as sailing back upwind once tired or overpowered becomes much more difficult.
- Be sure of your self-rescue capabilities with any rig you may be using. If in doubt, do a practice drill.
- Dress correctly – a wetsuit is advised (unless the weather is very warm) plus hat, sunscreen and long sleeves to protect from the sun.
- It is recommended that persons participating in windsurfing activities should always wear a PFD/lifejacket.
- Be aware of your limitations. If in doubt, don't go out.
- Avoid dehydration. Drink plenty of water.

### 6.2.2 On the water

- Sail cautiously when leaving and returning to shore to avoid running aground or colliding with others.
- Never sail further from the shore than is necessary.



- Avoid collisions.
- Remain with your board no matter what happens, it is your largest buoyancy aid. Use the International hand distress signals if necessary (slowly and repeatedly raising and lowering arms outstretched to each side).
- Be aware of hypothermia and leave the water if symptoms occur (shivering, numb extremities and poor coordination).

### 6.3 National Association

The Irish Windsurfing Association (IWA) is an affiliated club of the Irish Sailing Association and as such is the governing body for competitive windsurfing. Windsurfing events are run in accordance with the safety guidelines of the IWA (see Appendix 10 for contact details).



## 6.4 Stand-Up Paddle Boards (SUPs)

A recent development of the traditional surfing long board has seen them equipped with paddles to navigate across the flat water of lakes, estuaries and coastal areas.

When used for the purposes of navigation (i.e. outside the activities of surfing and swimming), SUPs are regarded as a craft and are subject to the requirements of recreational craft.

If using a SUP for navigation on the flat waters of lakes, estuaries or

coastal areas, the following safety precautions should be taken:

### 6.4.1 Prior to entering the water

- Wear appropriate clothing, e.g. a wetsuit.
- Wear a suitable PFD with a whistle to attract attention.
- Undertake training with an approved course provider.
- Know how to tow another board.
- Be aware of any local bye-laws and rules of navigation.
- Carry a handheld VHF radio or mobile phone in a waterproof cover.

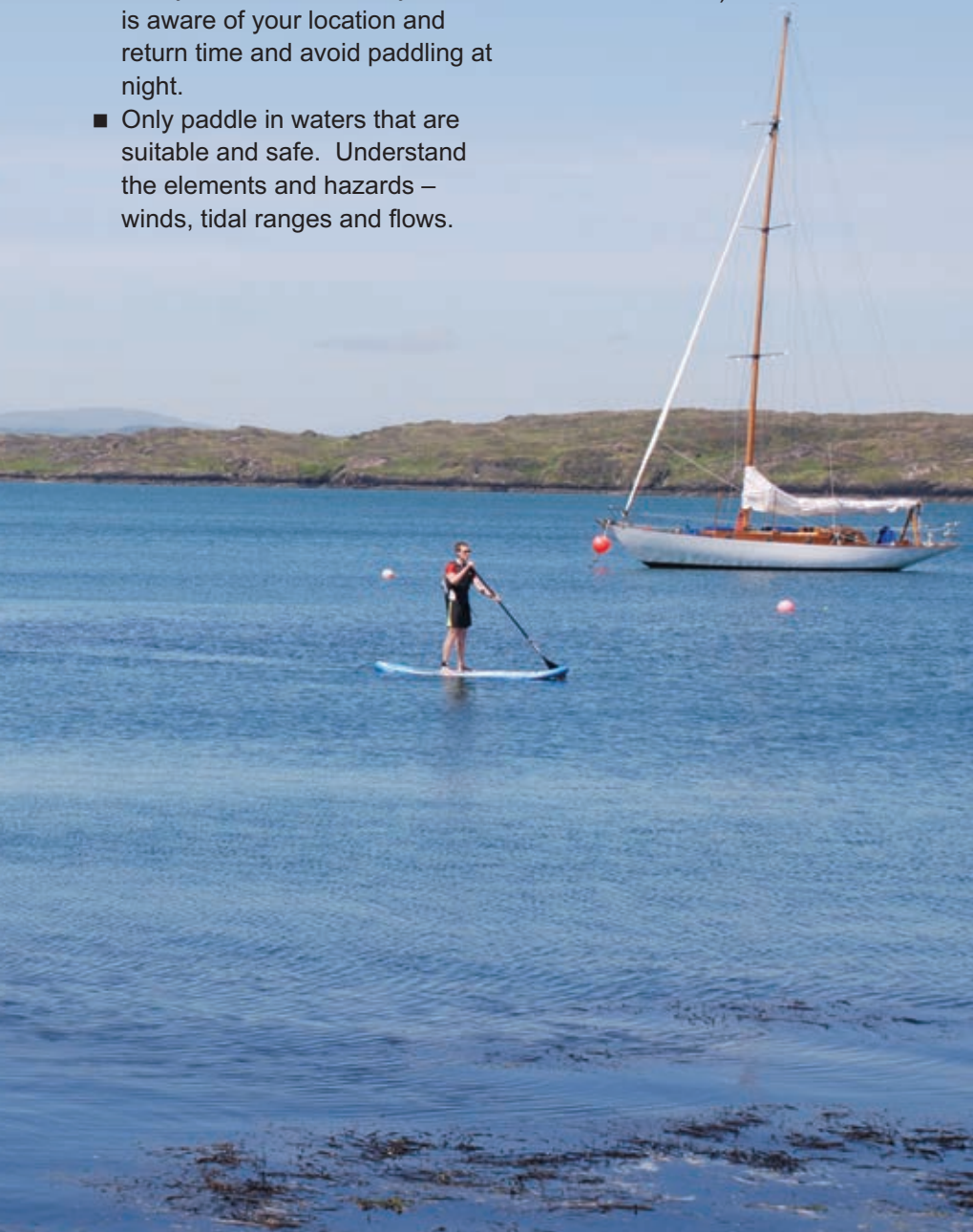


### 6.4.2 On the water

- Be a competent swimmer.
- Ensure the board is provided with a suitable leash, and use it.
- Do not paddle alone.
- Always ensure somebody ashore is aware of your location and return time and avoid paddling at night.
- Only paddle in waters that are suitable and safe. Understand the elements and hazards – winds, tidal ranges and flows.

### 6.5 National Association

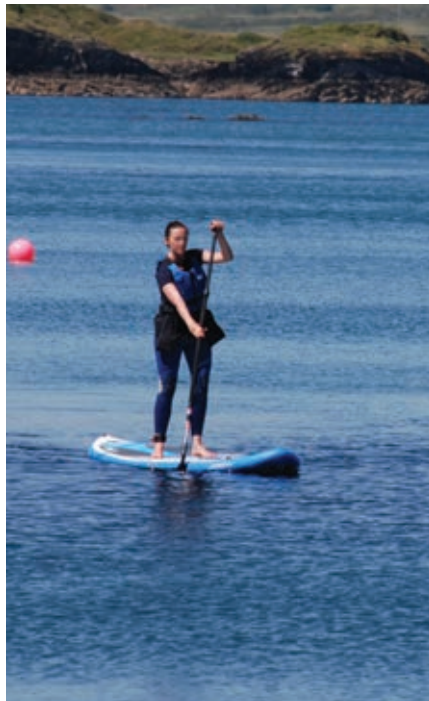
The Irish Surfing Association is the national governing body for Stand-Up Paddle Boarding activities in Ireland (see Appendix 10 for contact details).





## 6.6 Other water-based activities

While this Code of Practice is focused primarily on the safe operation of certain navigable recreational craft, there are many other water-based activities where appropriate training, knowledge and safety awareness are of similar importance.



With the increased popularity of activities such as surfing and kite surfing, attention is drawn to a range of safety information leaflets and guidelines that are available to view or download on the [www.safetyonthewater.ie](http://www.safetyonthewater.ie) website and from bodies such as Irish Water Safety at [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie) and the Irish Surfing Association at [www.irishsurfing.ie](http://www.irishsurfing.ie).