

## Dressed for action

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The crew of a dinghy must stay dry and warm, whatever the weather. All crew members should have access to suitable clothing that is fully functional and will protect against hypothermia.

- The effects of wind chill and cold water mean there are few days when you can sail in Britain without protective clothing. It is never as warm on the water as on the land and it may rapidly become much colder.
- Protective clothing should always be taken on the boat as a precaution, even when you set out on the hottest day of the year.

- A neoprene wetsuit protects against cold water and wind. To be effective it must be a virtually perfect fit and have zips and seams that are as near waterproof as possible to stop cold water flushing through. The wetsuit can be worn with a loose fitting, windproof dry top to aid heat retention in colder weather.

- An alternative to a wetsuit is to wear waterproof trousers and jacket which are purpose-designed for dinghy sailing and will provide a barrier against spray, rain and wind. They should be worn over fleece mid and base layers. The disadvantage is that you risk getting wet through if you capsize, with the extra weight of sodden clothing impeding your ability for self-help.



- A second alternative is to wear a drysuit made from waterproof material with latex neck, wrists and ankles to keep all the water out. Drysuits are highly effective but are expensive and may be uncomfortable in warmer weather. Breathable fabrics which transmit sweat to the outside are likely to provide the best performance. Bright colours and retro-reflective strips are good safety features.

- Sailing boots are strongly recommended. They will provide grip when moving around a dinghy, protect your feet and ankles from injury while launching and sailing and help to keep your feet warm.

- Sailing gloves are necessary to protect against rope burn and other possible injuries and are very useful when setting off flares.

- Thermal headgear can play a major role in helping to conserve body heat.