

Procedures for Flag System Operation

Closed River Events - Flag System NOT required

Closures are undertaken in accordance with the Marine Act 1988

During "Closed River" events, Parks Victoria Authorised Officers will be in attendance;

- patrolling exclusion zone boundaries
- ensuring compliance with exclusion zone and permit conditions
- educating river users about the event and reason for closure

Open River Events - Flag System Required

The Flag System was developed by Parks Victoria to help provide a system of communication that would allow the river to remain "Open" rather than "Closed" during events, such as rowing, canoeing & kayaking regattas held on the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers. The aim of the Flag System is to provide a simple but effective means of communication which allows Open River events to be conducted safely, whilst minimizing disruption to other recreational boat users and commercial operators.

It is very important that the Flag System is understood and implemented during your event, as it is one of the conditions under which your permit has been granted.

Flag System Procedure:

"Open River – Flag System" A Flag Marshall must be stationed at the start and finish of the course. Flag Marshalls must be on the "right" hand side of the River at all times.

Each Flag Marshall must have:

1 Red Flag

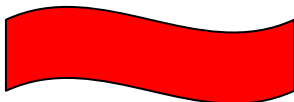
1 Green Flag

Communication System

Communications:

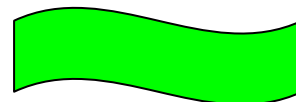
- Mobile phones or 2 way radios must be used to enable Flag Marshalls to communicate with one another.
- Marine band radio is preferred, as this will allow Flag Marshall to communicate with commercial vessels. Commercial Operators use #74.
- Loud hailers or whistles must be used to gain the attention of other river users.

Flags must be in the control of a Flag System Marshall throughout the entire event and not left unattended on the banks



STOP

When Red Flag is displayed all non competing vessels are required to "Stand Off"



GO

When Green Flag is displayed vessels can proceed directly through the race course.

Under NO circumstance is a vessel to enter the regatta course while a "Red Flag" is being displayed by Flag Marshalls.

The key to the success of the flag system is patience, courtesy and effective communication.

1. Parks Victoria defines a regatta race as having three heats that occur within a few minutes of each other.
2. Regattas tend to be conducted in groups of three races with three vessels in each race.
3. Event Organisers must ensure Flag System Marshals are aware of the Flag System procedures as it is a condition of your event permit.
4. Event Organisers must ensure that the Flag System Marshalls have a working communication system. Preferably marine band radios as this will allow for communication with commercial operators. Mobile phones, radios, loud hailer and whistles'.
5. On occasions when a "Red Flag" is displayed it may appear as though there is no event activity occurring, however event staff may be installing or removing, buoys or event infrastructure from the waterway, so please obey the "Red Flag"
6. Flag System Marshals must communicate between the upstream - *start point* and downstream - *finish point*, to ensure that the next race (a series of three heats) hasn't started before vessels "standing off" are allowed passage through the course.
7. Marshalls should keep all vessels waiting time to a minimum. Vessels that travel through the course are to reduce their speed to ensure minimal wake
8. "Red Flag" requests vessels to hold position at either end of the course until a "Green Flag" is displayed by Flag System Marshalls.
9. *Start point* - once a race has commenced vessels "standing off" may commence passage downstream once the race has got a reasonable distance down the river and the Flag System Marshall has deemed it safe to do so.
10. Once the "Green flag" is in effect, vessels will be able to enter the area and are to proceed directly through the course, at a reduced speed to ensure minimal wake.
11. Event Organisers are required to allow access through the event area at the first available opportunity. This is not necessarily at the completion of each race, but could be every two or three races depending on conditions or race schedules.
12. On some occasions i.e. race stragglers, the river will not be reopened until all competitors have crossed the finish line.
13. After completion of the race competitors must move to the right to allow for a clear passage of those vessels moving through the course and not sit in the middle of the river creating obstacles or delays.
14. In the majority of events, races are not started at the completion of the previous heat. The starts are usually staggered, so it is possible for up to three heats to be occupying the waterway at any one time. Although it may appear as if the current race has been completed, there could still be competitors actively using the area. As such, it would be unsafe to allow vessels access to the course until all activity has ceased.