

Vessel Safety Brief

Ocean racing is a dramatic and thrilling way to experience our planet and our sport. But it is also dangerous, and like most good adventures, highly changeable and uncertain in its outcome. Racing on waters open to uninterrupted oceanic winds and sea states requires a significant increase in crew performance, skill sets, safety equipment, and awareness that are hard to develop elsewhere in the sport. Being safe is about adapting appropriately to the conditions in a timely manner, such as recognizing when you have insufficient skill or too much power in the sails before it develops into an emergency.

*This 'safety brief' is intended to be a collection of relevant event and boat safety topics to prompt discussion and promote a culture of safety onboard. **Bold topics** are intended to highlight specific safety issues, boat maneuvers, and course information. Questions and discussions during and after the briefing are desired to reinforce understanding and good decision-making to enable informed, prudent safety practices. Remember your life could be in anyone's hands and that **Safe Boating Is No Accident!***

Decision To Race

- **Goal for race:** expected performance of crew & boat, limitations, or thresholds
- **Authority structure:** chain of command, suggestions, concerns, dissent, personal status report
- **Crew positions:** areas of responsibility, competencies, authority, steering
- **Roll call numbers:** boat gear, emergency situations
- **Watch schedule:** rotation, call for all hands, exceptions
- **Provisions:** meals, schedule, hydration, snacks
- **Personal:** gear storage, gear brought, how to use
- **Boat systems:** electrical, fire suppression, bilge, sanitation, propulsion, communications

Race Course

- **Sailing Instructions review:** course description, marks, waypoints, gates, start and finish
- **Areas of potential concern:** restricted zones, islands, sea mounts, kelp, vessel traffic
- **Race communications:** required sched/channels, RC & competitor contacts, shore contacts
- **Boat Tracking:** AIS, radar, boat- or event-supplied, interval, delay
- **Weather:** Forecast/expected sustained winds, gusts, sea conditions, expected route

Radio Monitoring And Traffic:

- **VHF 16/Race Ops:** Off-watch watch-captain responsible for monitoring radio traffic. Any crew who sees or hears anything of note report to off-watch watch-captain.
- **Emergency broadcast protocol:** review info to send, equipment and process, post in Nav. Station
- **Incoming Request for assistance:** DSC/MMSI #, location &/or lat/lon, vessel & crew status, nature of distress, relay to CG, RC, other vessels in vicinity, ETA, range/bearing to assistance, comm schedule

Sail Plan:

- **Sail changes and notable maneuvers:** Ex: J1=>J3 start to midchannel, Peel <J1 at Gate 1, Main reef 1 @ 20 knots, A5=>Jib at dusk if wind/sea require, Gybe in dark @ NOAA Buoy
- **Sail handling:** stacking, packing, changing, peeling, trimming, reefing, recovery, repair
- **Severe weather:** sails to set, whom/how, secure rig, crew roll call, personal status, radio comms
- **Severe sea state:** sails to set, whom/how, secure rig, vessel inspection, radio comms, sickness

Emergency Situations:

- **Sail Failure:** Crew roll call, personal status for injury/safety, review rig stability, sail condition and control lines. Diagnose recovery/removal solution. Execute w/ oversight.
- **Steering Failure:** Crew roll call, personal status for injury/safety, confirm watertight integrity of hull surrounding upper and lower rudder bearings, diagnose steering failure and discuss possible solutions, location and operation of emergency tiller, rudder, steering with drogues, steering with sails and weight, etc. Execute w/ oversight.
- **Dismasting:** Crew roll call, personal status for injury/safety, steering assessment, stability of rig in water, monitor hull, decision to recover or cut away part or all of the rig, radio communication to nearby competitors, Race Committee and USCG. Execute w/ oversight.
- **Man overboard:** Roles and responsibilities, MOB button operation, MOM and Danbuoy operation, PLB/PAISI initiation, initial reaction possibilities, eyes on/approach to person in water, MOB recovery options (ladder/hoist/stern), medical and first aid considerations.
- **Capsize/Abandon ship:** Crew roll call, personal status for injury/safety, raft deployment, leaving the yacht, crew roll call @ abandon + entering the raft, ditch bag responsibility, EPIRB activation, 406MHz PLB Activation, VHF DSC Distress Activation (masthead and handheld)
- **In all scenarios, be cognizant of big picture situation while paying attention to detail.** Execute high risk maneuvers w/ observer-oversight. Appoint a safety officer, notify RC and / or USCG.

Safety Protocol:

- **PFD/Harness requirements:** OA and Boat rules. When, Where, How, Repacking, Rearming, and Backup gear (e.g.: spare PDF, bottles of compressed gas)
- **Review any crew gear issued:** AIS/PLB beacons, helmets, harnesses, PFDs, outerwear
- **Emergency boat equipment:** knife, EPIRB, life raft(s), ditch kit(s), deck lights, spotlights, de-rig tools, rudder, tiller, all hands radio, topside MOB nav, medical kit, drogue, anchor, etc.
- **Danger zones:** no-hold/no-stand areas [ex: lines @ high load blocks, high load sweeps (traveler, runners, jib clew)], pinch points, entanglement, open hatches, deck awash, line management @ rope clutches/cleats/jams/blocks, hydraulics, panic release, etc.

Medical Emergency:

- **First Aid Training:** Identify crew certified in First Aid and CPR
- **Known:** Crewmember medical conditions and meds, location of same
- **Location and contents:** Boat medical supplies, who is trained medical crew on board/other boats
- **Key Steps:**
 - First assess environment and your safety, remain calm, work as team, ABCs
 - Stabilize injury, control bleeding, evaluate environment, consult all sources of help
- **Comms:** other boats & trained crew, USCG, Race Committee, shore contacts, periodic sched

Open Cockpit For Questions And Concerns:

- **Check for understanding.** No bad questions, Prepare for the worst/Do your best, **Work as a team.** Be alert, Be honest, Be fair. Share experience. Learn.