

Sussex Police Offshore Sailing Club

CREW BRIEFING & SAFETY ON BOARD- SKIPPERS & CREW AIDE MEMOIRE

**In any boat, it is imperative for all the crew to know how to avoid accidents and what to do if anything goes wrong.
Most may not be as experienced as you in what can go wrong on a boat.**

SAFETY GEAR

Lifejackets & Harnesses

Everyone will have a personal harness & lifejacket allocated. These may be one item together i.e. the harness may be integrated into the lifejacket. Adjust yours to fit now and stow it with your gear. These must ALWAYS be worn in the following circumstances:

- if the crew is a non-swimmer (Check if there are any non-swimmers on board)
- at night
- in heavy weather including sometimes just simple wind against tide
- in reduced visibility
- at the skipper's request

BUT they can be worn at ANY TIME that you feel comfortable wearing it - there is nothing soft in being safe - don't be embarrassed.

Safety/Life Lines

When unclipping to clip on a different point it is best to have a 3-way safety line (clip on before clipping off) but if not, always follow your safety/life line from your lifejacket to the clip on point and then unclip. This will prevent you from accidentally unclipping someone else's. When entering the cabin, unclip your safety/life line from your harness side only once you are safely inside, both feet on saloon floor. Remember always to clip on before leaving the cabin. When on deck, use the D clips, the jackstays or shrouds (point these out). NEVER use the guardrails or stanchions. Unclip when your centre of gravity is low and holding on.

In heavy weather, consider putting two lines on, especially if you have to go forward on deck.

Fire Extinguishers

Locate all fire extinguishers and read the instructions to all crew. There will be no time to read them if there is a fire. How do we get to them from deck?

Flares & EPIRB

Locate all flares. Ensure that the crew know what to use, when and how, even in the dark. Get them to feel for the shooting end and the holding end. Eyes closed?

- Red - used in an emergency situation for position indicating Orange Smoke - daylight emergency & pinpointing position
- White - used to prevent collision at sea e.g. in a fog

Ensure that the crew know how to operate the EPIRB and the location. How does it unclip? Eyes closed?

VHF Radio

The radio is used to keep in contact with other vessels, the shore and is the best way to get help. It must be used by a licensed radio operator or under the supervision of a licensed radio operator. It is imperative to adhere to the correct radio etiquette. Is there Digital Selective Calling, if yes what is the system for activating MAYDAY? Is the GPS connected and switched on?

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Ensure that all crew can locate the mayday instructions and remember to change to CH16, 25 watts full power. Keep on calling until reply or help.

First Aid kit

Ensure that the crew all know where the kit is. Who are the trained first-aiders on board?

Man overboard

Ensure that the crew all know where the MOB gear is located & how to use it, especially lifting strops and how to connect to halyards/boom etc Ensure the crew all know how to operate **the MOB button on the GPS and DSC Distress button**. It is important for all crew to be able to perform a MOB rescue. Have a bit of fun practising (with a fender and a bucket or line!) at a convenient time during the day under engine then progress to under sail.

Life raft

Know where it is stowed and how to launch it. Inform all crew if a grab bag has been prepared and stow within easy reach. Only abandon to the liferaft if the boat is sinking or on fire. **THE LIFERAFT IS A DANGEROUS PLACE TO BE.** Step up to the liferaft, not down into it!

The Stove

- Locate the gas bottle stowage and remember to turn off **AT THE BOTTLE** after each use
- Locate the fire blanket and use it for ANY stove fire
- Use matches to light the stove - do not use a gas lighter. Remember to light the match first, then place over hob and turn gas switch on.
- Even in calm weather, take care when pouring hot drinks. In bumpy weather, you must ensure your body is protected by wearing oilskins

Heads

Show all crew how to operate. Ensure everyone knows how to operate the seacocks, holding tanks, environmental laws of emptying tanks (usually 3M off shore) etc. Usage etiquette - when toilets are available on shore, use them. Use onboard heads overnight.

Only bodily waste to go down.

Vomit to go overboard or in a bucket. Any other items to be disposed of with the garbage.

Garbage

No garbage is to be disposed of in the sea. Waste food may be discarded usually 3M off shore but poorly degrading skins or peels must be retained for disposal on shore. Prevent any discharge of oil, fuel or any harmful substance into the sea.

Engine

Everyone needs to know how to start the engine. **BEFORE STARTING THE ENGINE** always

- check that the engine is in neutral
- check that there are no lines over the stern that may foul the propeller
- check cooling water discharge after the engine has started .

Bilge Pumps

The bilge pumps are not only used in an emergency. All crew need to know where they are positioned on board, how to operate and clear any blockages. Could we pump for hours on end?

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ON DECK - THE BOOM

Most accidents caused in boating are linked to the boom. Brief Crew fully on this.

How low is the boom? Watch this for accidental gybing during downwind sailing particularly, but watch out for it at ALL TIMES. Most times, it is the main sheet that catches you; beware of the 'arc' of travel of the mainsheet. Fingers can receive rope burns as a minimum grabbing for the sheet! Can you rig a boom preventer?

Sails

All crew must know how to operate the sails. Reefing is essential for comfortable sailing to help prevent excessive heeling but reefing may be essential for crew and boat safety if the wind and weather conditions deteriorate. Hove-to is sometimes a stable position to reef the main. Ensure that all crew know how to operate the roller furling jib and Mainsail furling, if you have them.

Winches

Keep fingers away from winch, 'feed the horse flat hand', and always pull away from the winch when taking turns on it.

Anchor

This is not often needed, but in a hurry can be a saviour if engine fails at the wrong moment in shallow water but everyone must know how to release it.

Feeling seasick

Try to get sick downwind to prevent it blowing back in your face or on to other crewmembers. Do not worry too much about getting to the guardrail particularly in bad weather or if the boat is heeling. Remember that the boat is made of material that is rather tough and it can be cleaned. A bucket of seawater will work wonders in washing down. Allocate a crewmember to look after them and if need be usually against their wishes get them below. Consider clipping them on. Get them helming.

Crew welfare

It is imperative that all crew have a good time and enjoy themselves. We are all here to have fun.

- Remember to eat and drink at regular intervals to prevent hunger and dehydration. They can be major contributors to seasickness. Wind and heat both dehydrate. By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrating.
- Remember to keep warm. Even on a hot day, a breeze at sea can be quite cooling. Being cold can also contribute to seasickness.
- The **THREE "WITCHES OF WANT"** are **cold (wet), tiredness and hunger**. One of the three is OK, but do not allow two to set in. Three could be a disaster

If you know that you suffer from seasickness, take preventative measures in plenty of time or inform the skipper. Seasick tablets e.g. Stugeron need to be taken at least 2 hours before departure to work effectively. If you do start to feel seasick, please inform someone and let the skipper know. Try to keep busy and try to stay on deck - fresh air and a view of the horizon can help and the boat motion often feels exaggerated below deck. If you are very seasick, you may need to go to your cabin. Remove your wet weather gear (someone may be helping you at this point!), dry off, lie down and keep warm. Remember to take a bucket. Do not try to be brave and try and be sick over the side by leaning out, just turn away. It is easier to clean up sick than MOB.

If you suffer from any medical condition, please inform the skipper.

Skippers, do not forget to inform one of your crew if you are on medication etc.

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DAILY CHORES

All crew will muck in and be prepared to assist with all daily chores, deck work, helming and watches. Chores should be rotated across the crew and may be allocated each night for the next day. If you are doubtful of anything, ASK. Do not put yourself or other members of the crew at risk because you THINK you know what to do. Remember, that there are no stupid questions only stupid answers.

- Ensign - hoist at 0800 summer, 0900 winter, lower at sunset or 2100 whichever is earlier, lower when racing or crew ashore
- Radio check
- Lead line / depth checks
- Check navigation lights
- Daily log entry, every 1/2 hour, 1 hour, 3 hours dependent on trip.
- Weather check and logged
- Tidal heights and times noted. Tidal tables prepared and double-checked.
- Prepared passage/pilotage plan checked for favourable winds, tides, weather conditions and adjusted if necessary. What are the alternative havens?
- Does someone else know the plan, if you are injured. Can they drive the boat back to harbour?
- Brief crew on passage/pilotage plan. Ensure suitable clothing.
- Sufficient food and water for passage.
- Refreshments for crew during passage. Pre-prepare if necessary.

Engine check

- Sufficient fuel for the day?
- Open Engine compartment - any oil, water leaks? Check all belts are sound and tight
- Is the seawater inlet valve/seacock open and are the strainers clear?
- Check oil level with dipstick. Do not overfill.
- Check freshwater level
- Check fuel pre-filter & drain any water
- Petrol engine: operate the engine space exhaust fan
- Start engine and run at medium revs to warm up
- Check cooling water discharge
- Check ahead and astern operation

Prepare the boat for sea:

- Hatches and ports tightly secured
- Loose gear below decks stowed away, lockers latched shut
- Galley gear stowed and checked
- Close seacocks (if required)
- Dinghy - check towing line or lash securely to deck. Ensure that oars, fenders, warps, outboard and all loose gear stowed on board
- Check life raft is lashed securely
- Check anchor is ready
- No lines overboard

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- Winch handles stowed on deck / in cockpit
- Remove sail covers and stow
- Brief crew on method of leaving mooring

Heads - empty holding tanks when appropriate

Prepare the boat for overnight mooring

- Brief crew on mooring
- Decide on length of anchor chain/rope and flaked if required
- Prepare lines and fenders. One line, one job.
- Secure boat with full complement of correct lines & springs, leftover line ends on board, not ashore,
- Lines tidied away
- Cockpit tidy, mainsheet tied & boom moved to the side of the boat where crew will not catch it when leaving and getting on.
- Deck equipment (winch handles, torches) stowed below
- Sail cover on
- Celebrate the end of the days sailing with a well-deserved tipple!

Initial Check List

Check radio is operating correctly, pre-planned with another yacht or harbour master. NOT CH 16. Are there weather messages on VHF? Are they in English? What times?

Check for charts and navigation equipment. Place charts likely to use in order in chart table.

Is there a deviation chart? Do I need to include in this passage.

Check working condition of any electronic equipment e.g. log, depth gauge, wind gauge, GPS

Check impellor (log) and how to clean/clear it

Check navigation lights are working and if there are spare bulbs

Check for safety equipment and ensure good working condition particularly EPIRB, liferaft, lifejackets, safety/life lines

Check accuracy of depth gauge with lead line. What is it reading? Water depth or below the keel!

Power on board i.e. batteries, shore power. Ensure operating instructions are available and understood.

Check gas bottle stowage and operation. Are the bottles full?

Check boat inventory and note any damage or missing items

Fridge / Cool box - How and when does it operate. Beware of draining power?

Engine

- How to start?
- Fuel cut-off switch location and operation?
- Fuel

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- Tank capacity?
- Consumption / distance on tank
- Economical cruising speed
- Seawater inlet valve / seacock and strainer. Does the system require priming if you remove filter cover?
- Freshwater header tank & check level
- Fuel pre-filter and how to drain
- Check for tools or any spares

Heads

- How to operate?
- Seacocks
- Holding tank
- How to pump?
- How far off shore?

Bilge Pumps

- How many?
- Position?
- How to operate?

Sails

- How to operate and reef the mainsail and genoa?
- Check the split pin that holds the pin that connects furling genoa foil (under furling drum) to the deck at bow
- Is there a boom preventer for down wind sailing?

Check rigging for wear

Check the connection of the jackstays to the bow and stern

Check the Dan buoy light by removing/ turning upside down (if this is the system used-**DO NOT REMOVE ON MPSC YACHTS AS LIGHTS ARE SECURED & ACTIVATED IF REMOVED**).

The above is not an exhaustive list, and does not cater for every boat or every situation.