

Skipper Responsibilities

SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY

Above all else, the skipper is responsible for the safety of his crew and vessel. The Sailing Club has a very good record in this area. This can continue only if we, as skippers, continue to make safety our primary concern. Remember, you are the captain of record on your boat. You are responsible for the safety of your crew and the safe operation of your boat.

Some things that will help insure safe operation:

- Pre-trip preparation (review charts, tide tables, itinerary, etc.)
- A well prepared "Skipper's Bag"
- Thorough pre-trip boat checkout
- Practice your man-overboard drills

Make sure your crew knows where to find and how to use:

- Life vests
- Fire Extinguishers
- VHF Radio
- First Aid Kit
- Life Ring

Report any safety issues in the Skipper Checkout Form.

PROPER VESSEL OPERATION

A sailboat of the type the club typically charters can cost from \$100,000 to \$500,000. As a skipper, your name is on the contract. Normally insurance deductible charges are covered by the club. Beyond the issue of safety, treat your boat as if it were your own. Some points for you and your crew to observe:

- Know the "Rules of the Road."
- Come slowly into a raft or dock so as not to damage the hull.
- Wear only light soled shoes on board so as not to mark up the deck.
- Put a towel under the ice chest so it won't scratch the varnish on the galley floor.
- Keep the winch handles in the storage shelves so they won't get thrown overboard.

REPORT DAMAGES

Be sure to report any damages or lost items on your Skipper's Checkout Form and to the Trip Leader. Our club has a good reputation with the charter firms we use. When we make mistakes (and some mistakes are inevitable), we tell them. This makes them much more reasonable when assessing charges.

MAINTENANCE OF SYSTEMS

Sailing the boat is the fun part. Fixing a clogged head isn't, but it is part of your responsibility as skipper. A significant part of making the boat run smoothly is making sure the systems in the boat run smoothly.

Make sure your crew knows:

- How to use the head
- The value of water on a boat
- How to take a shower on the boat
- How to change batteries
- Electric power consumption

TALK TO YOUR CREW

Keep your crew informed. One of the more common complaints in the trip evaluation forms is that people don't know what's happening. For most new members, there's a lot of confusion. They don't know how to sail, they are just learning the etiquette, or they don't really know what their role should be. Part of your job is to help these people feel more comfortable. If this is the first trip for some of your crew, it will make them more comfortable if you call them before the pre-trip meeting and introduce yourself.

PLANNING

The pre-trip meeting is key to a successful trip. For many of your crew, it will be their first exposure to our club. Use this as an opportunity to help them understand how they fit into the group. By planning out the trip and sharing the workload and supplies responsibilities, you will accomplish two things: First, it makes everybody part of the team. Second, it will ease your workload.

Pre-trip Meeting Topics:

- Menus - Meals, drinks, snacks
- Provisions - Who brings what
- Trip itinerary
- Summary of what to bring and what to expect

SHIPBOARD HARMONY

You as the skipper have a thin line to tread. You are responsible for the safe operation of your boat, but you don't want to be an autocratic ruler. The rule of thumb is if an issue affects the safe operation of the boat, the skipper makes the decision. Otherwise, the decision should be made by consensus.

Autocratic vs. Consensus decisions:

- Autocratic: "Uh oh, there's a rock. Tack"
- Consensus: "Where shall we eat? Let's vote."

Organizational Behavior: Theory Z

On a boat, the whole group's camaraderie can be ruined by one individual. If there's a personality conflict on your boat, it's your responsibility to handle it. Often the problem is caused by someone who doesn't understand the responsibilities of a crew member. Discussion of the problem can often go a long way towards solving it. If the situation starts to get out of hand, talk to one of the other skippers, preferably the trip leader or co-leader. An impartial third party can usually get the situation resolved.

FIRST MATE

Use him or her. Usually, the first mate wants to be a first mate because of the opportunity to learn. It's difficult to define the first mate's responsibilities since there is a wide variation in skill levels. You should use your judgment, but be aware. **You** are responsible for the boat. We all have experienced problems caused by well-meaning individuals who thought they knew more than they did (perhaps even ourselves at times?).

HAVE FUN

Don't forget this part! It's why we all do this after all! Happy Sailing.

Crew Responsibility

WELCOME ABOARD!

The Sailing Club would like to take this opportunity to extend a hearty welcome to you. We are a group of people bound together by a common love of sailing. It's always great to have new members on our trips that can share in our enthusiasm and enhance our experience. To help you get acquainted with our *modus operandi*, we've prepared this short flyer. We hope it will make your trips with our group even more fun and interesting.

As you've no doubt heard, our trips are lot of fun. Whether rafting at Luce Creek on the Chesapeake or handling 6 foot seas off Newport, a trip with the Sailing Club is sure to be interesting. (Good, and good for you!)

A sailboat is a closed environment which tends to limit personal privacy. This may be a little unusual for you, particularly if there are people on your boat that you don't know. (Don't worry, you'll get over it by the end of the first day.) Understanding some of the etiquette and responsibilities for you as a crew member will help the trip go more smoothly.

SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY

There are four very important things to remember on a sailboat. We are proud of the fact that we have had VERY few accidents on our trips. In fact, your skipper's main responsibility is the *SAFE* operation of the vessel. Use common sense.

- Make sure you know where all safety equipment is and how to use it. This includes: *Personal Floatation Devices (PFD)*, *Fire Extinguishers*, *Marine Radio*, *First Aid Kit*, and *Life Ring*.
- If your skipper doesn't explain all this to you, just ask.
- If you can't swim, make sure you tell your skipper. No one will laugh. We have non-swimmers all the time.
- Make sure your skipper discusses and *demonstrates* man-overboard (MOB) procedures (just in case).

ASK THE SKIPPER

If you have any questions about anything (sailing, safety, the meaning of life, who is John Gault?), ask your skipper. He or she is a veritable repository of useful (and not-so-useful) information. Moreover, he will be glad to answer your questions or direct you to the proper authority. One of the criteria we use in selecting our skippers is their willingness to share knowledge. (Use a little discretion regarding timing. Reefing the sail in a 35 knot wind is probably not the right moment to ask how the GPS works.)

REMEMBER: The *ONLY* stupid question is the one that wasn't asked.

The skipper is responsible for the safe operation of a boat that may cost from \$100,000 to \$500,000, and is also responsible (to a lesser degree) for the smooth interaction of the crew. Most non-safety decisions should be made with input from all crew members. For these decisions, the skipper should act more as a mediator or facilitator.

PLANNING

This is very important part of the trip. Before each cruise, there will be a pre-trip meeting. The trip leader will go over the itinerary and answer questions. Then the meeting will break up into crews for planning menus, provisions, etc. Each member will usually be designated to bring various items (chocolate chip cookies, paper goods, chocolate chip cookies, etc.). Keep your receipts as all the expenses are usually divvied up at the end of the trip.

SHARE 'DA WORK

This ain't a four-star hotel. Your crew is a team where all members share equally. Part of the fun of our trips is that we all work together. Everybody likes to share the sailing work. Tacking, jibing, anchoring...it's all fun. However, the other stuff needs to be done also (i.e., cooking and meal preparation, cleaning dishes, swabbing the deck, etc.) **Attention Guys:** *Nothing will tick off the women n your crew more than your assumption that they are going to handle all the galley chores. Likewise, don't assume that the women can't handle their share of deckwork.*

CONTROL YOUR SPACE

The space on a sailboat is limited. It will help if you keep your personal stuff organized. Always use duffel bags or other soft luggage in which to pack. There's no place to store suitcases. On board, either unpack into the storage spaces shown you by the skipper or live out of your luggage. When you get ready for the day, try to plan what clothes you'll need. Keep these packed on top. Your crew mates will appreciate it if you try to keep your stuff organized, and you'll have an easier time also.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted at any time while aboard the vessel, either on deck or below. Smoking is only permitted ashore.

GIVE US FEEDBACK

This is a big one. *You are responsible for your having a good time.* If you want to take the helm, tell the skipper-he'll be happy to let you. If you want to learn, ask. If you feel uncomfortable about something (sleeping arrangements, food, whatever), tell the skipper. Usually something can be done. Sometimes not. Either way, an explanation of the reasons may make things easier to handle.

Finally, please fill out the trip evaluation forms. We really do read them in an effort to improve our trips. Tell your skipper what you did and didn't like about the trip so we can make it even better!

ANCHORS AWEIGH!! *We look forward to seeing you on our next trip.*

PLEASE NOTE: Sailing conditions are dynamic. Your safety, and that of your crewmates, depends on your good physical health and agility.