

# OFFICIAL

## THE SAILING CLUB, INC.

### FIRST MATE QUALIFICATION PROCESS (As of 11/24/2003)

#### Summary

The Sailing Club, Inc. strives to maintain a safe environment for its members when participating on Club trips. As such, it is a Club requirement that all boats chartered by the Club have a Club Qualified First Mate on board in addition to the Club Qualified Skipper. In addition, no one may serve as a First Mate on a club trip who has not been approved as a Club Qualified First Mate, Provisional First Mate or a Club Qualified Skipper.

This document has been developed to provide a definitive method for the qualification of new Sailing Club qualified First Mates and the identification of the information and skills necessary for such qualification. It is divided into three main sections:

- The Qualification Process and Procedures
  - The Process
  - Evaluation Categories
  - Maintaining Eligibility
  - Exception to the Process
  - Provisional First Mate
  - Removal for Cause
- Duties and Responsibilities of the First Mate
  - Purpose
  - General Duties and Responsibilities
  - Pre-trip
  - Trip and Post-trip
- Skill and Knowledge Requirements for Qualification as a First Mate
  - The basic knowledge, training, and skill requirements for qualification as a Club First Mate. They are also meant to be the basis for continuous improvement over time and a guideline for Skippers who might be writing an evaluation for a potential First Mate.

## **The Qualification Process and Procedures**

Becoming a qualified First Mate for the Sailing Club requires obtaining evaluations from at least two (2) Club Skippers. These evaluations are to be based on joint sailing experience where the prospective First Mate has sailed with the Club Skipper for sufficient time to do an accurate evaluation. This joint experience shall be spent only on Club trips. In addition, the prospective First Mate should attempt to sail with as many different Skippers as possible for the broadest exposure to different styles, experiences, and techniques. This provides the best opportunity for learning to take place. This is true before and after attaining First Mate qualification.

During the entire evaluation process, the prospective candidate should be given continuous feedback as to overall performance, strengths and areas where additional study or experience is warranted, so that the final evaluation is not a surprise. The candidate should be given as many of the normal responsibilities as feasible, from pre-trip planning, crew management and boat checkout to actual handling of the boat and ensuring that it is done safely and in good order. In particular, time and attention should be spent on evaluating critical skills, such as docking and other maneuvers under power, as these are the times of highest risk to boat and crew. This should be done with as much positive reinforcement and encouragement as possible from the Skipper.

### **The Process**

The process is initiated when a prospective candidate requests evaluation as Club designated First Mate. This request is made only to the Training Coordinator. A candidate for First Mate may be self-nominated or identified by a current Club Skipper or First Mate. However it is the candidate that has the sole responsibility for contacting the Training Coordinator to enter the process

The Training Coordinator then advises all Trip Leaders of this request. For a trip where the candidate is enrolled, that Trip Leader informs confirmed Skippers of the request, and seeks Skipper(s) to perform the evaluation. However, interested Skippers must have had Club Qualified Skipper Status for at least one year before being able to conduct an evaluation.

The Trip Leader and Training Coordinator will collaborate on a final choice of Skipper. *Arranging a check ride is subordinate to the ensuring overall safety during a trip and normal crew selection rules.* The Trip Leader will inform the selected Skipper, who will then notify the candidate, at which point the evaluation period begins.

The evaluating Skipper will also perform an on-water evaluation and provide the Training Coordinator and candidate with a written assessment according to the categories listed and described in the 'Evaluation Categories' section of this document. The report shall describe the overall performance of the prospective First Mate, and must state whether the knowledge, skills and emphasis on safety (as listed in the 'Requirements' section of this document) have been clearly demonstrated. The report should also discuss the candidate's strengths and recommend any areas for additional study and/or experience. The evaluating Skipper must forward this document, preferably electronically, to the Training Coordinator within two weeks of the end of the trip.

A candidate achieving two 'Qualified' evaluations shall, on approval of the Board, be granted Club First Mate Status. The time period for achieving First Mate status is 24 months from the date of the first trip sailed for evaluation. Upon said approval, The Training Coordinator will update the list of First Mates and distribute to all Trip Leaders, Board Members and Skippers.

## **Evaluation Categories**

The written evaluation shall provide a summary of performance from one of the following categories:

### **Qualified for Sailing Club First Mate**

### **Not Yet Ready for Qualification as First Mate**

### **Not Evaluated**

The guidelines for these categories are as follows:

#### **Qualified for Sailing Club First Mate**

In the opinion of the Skipper evaluating performance on the trip in question, the candidate performed all of his/her duties in an acceptable manner, clearly demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and concern for safety required to be a Club First Mate.

#### **Not Yet Ready for Qualification as First Mate**

In the opinion of the evaluating Skipper, the knowledge, skills and/or experience of the candidate as demonstrated on the trip are not sufficient to warrant further consideration as a First Mate until improvement can be demonstrated.

#### **Not Evaluated**

Due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, there was no opportunity to evaluate the candidate. Situations such as the candidate becoming incapacitated during the trip, prematurely ended trip (such as breakdowns, weather) and the like usually do not provide for sufficient evaluation time. This is a null category and is ***not*** to be used against a candidate because not all skills were demonstrated on a given trip. It is why more than one evaluation trip is required.

## **Maintaining Eligibility**

Each qualified First Mate must sail on at least one Club sponsored trip every three years to maintain First Mate qualification status in the Club. On-The-Water Training does not count as a Club sponsored trip, and therefore cannot be used as such. A Club qualified First Mate who has not sailed on a Club sponsored trip in the previous three (3) years shall be required to make one "check-ride" with an eligible Club Skipper prior to reinstatement. Exceptions to this requirement can be made, however, if the Club qualified First Mate can document that he or she has spent some amount of time on the water sailing in similarly outfitted boats to those The Sailing Club charters. A copy of the charter contract(s) or agreement(s) for example, can be used as documentation, or a document detailing his or her experience, must be forwarded to the Training Coordinator, who, along with the Commodore and Vice Commodore can consider waiving the requirement for a check-ride.

### **Exception to the Process**

In very rare cases, it may be appropriate to override the requirement for two evaluations to qualify an individual. The Training Coordinator must base this on the needs of the Club, and only after a sufficient investigation of the skills and experience of the individual. This is to be the exception rather than the rule. The Training Coordinator shall document the justification for a waiver of evaluation(s) in a written submission to the Board, which shall also be signed by the Commodore and Vice Commodore. The Board may waive one or both evaluations based on the unanimous recommendation of the Commodore, Vice Commodore and Training Coordinator.

### **Provisional First Mate**

This status is created to ensure that there will be an adequate number of skilled First Mates to staff a trip, and can only be implemented if there are insufficient Club qualified First Mates enrolled. The Trip Leader, based on this, potentially identifies a candidate for Provisional First Mate (PFM) designation. This individual may or may not be in the First Mate qualification process.

The Trip Leader then asks the enrolled Skippers if there is any interest in having a PFM aboard and notifies the Training Coordinator at the same time. Once a PFM candidate and consenting Skipper(s) are identified, the Trip Leader shall obtain approval from Training Coordinator for PFM status with identified candidate and Skipper(s). Prior to granting this approval, the Training Coordinator may seek additional input, if needed, from other Club-Qualified Skippers. The Training Coordinator shall also obtain the consent of either the Commodore or Vice-Commodore.

The Training Coordinator will then advise the Trip Leader of the decision, who will advise all the enrolled Skippers. If PFM status has been granted, the consenting Skipper shall notify the Provisional First Mate. The status is provisional in that it is granted *only* for the specific trip identified, and only with the consenting Skipper, unless additional approvals are obtained.

### **Removal for Cause**

If a specific formal written complaint (not necessarily a comment on a trip evaluation form) regarding the performance or behavior of a club First Mate is received, a Board of Inquiry may be convened at the discretion of the Commodore. Said board is to consist of the Vice Commodore, a Trustee of the Member-At-Large Class, and a Senior Skipper who is not also a Trustee. If at all possible, there should be at least two Skippers on the board of inquiry. The Training Coordinator will represent the interests of the Club and present the complaint to the board of inquiry.

The Board of Inquiry is then empowered to investigate the allegations by whatever means it deems appropriate, including hearing direct testimony. The Board of Inquiry is required to act to protect the safety and well being of the Club members. In order to provide a fair hearing, that First Mate shall be afforded an opportunity to testify and present witnesses on his/her behalf.

The board must vote on the proposed resolution, which may range from taking no action to removal of the individual from the list of Club-qualified First Mates. A recommendation for removal should also include a recommendation of how the former First Mate may be re-instated, if ever. Reasons for convening a board of inquiry include but are not limited to physical or medical limitations affecting safety, unsafe practices aboard ship, and unexplained failure to follow club procedures.

The recommendation of the board of inquiry is not final until the Board of Trustees approves it.



## **Duties and Responsibilities of the First Mate**

### **1. Purpose**

- a. Define the position of First Mate, as it exists within the Sailing Club, Inc.
- b. Refer to First Mate Qualification Requirements and First Mate Qualification Process.

### **2. General Duties and Responsibilities**

- a. Provide support for the Skipper of record.
- b. Act as the interface between Skipper and crew (i.e., Executive Officer).
- c. Be able to take full command of the boat and crew when directed or when necessary.
- d. Use each trip as a learning and development opportunity, whether or not serving as a First Mate.

### **3. Pre-trip**

- a. Discuss expectations with assigned Skipper.
- b. Participate in pre-trip meeting.
- c. Assist crew in menu planning, logistics, and expectations.

### **4. Trip and Post-trip**

- a. Participate in initial inspection of boat or at least review check-in/check-out form with Skipper.
- b. Assist Skipper by monitoring and supervising crew
- c. Take initiative in placing lines, crew, etc. as necessary.
- d. Execute Skipper's requests promptly and in a seamanlike manner.
- e. Navigate, pilot, and maneuver vessel under sail and/or power as needed.
- f. Take command when necessary or when directed by the Skipper
- g. Attend Skippers' meetings during trips if possible.
- h. Provide advice and suggestions to Skipper when warranted.
- i. Assist Skipper with decommissioning of vessel from charter.

# **FIRST MATE QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The following knowledge and skill areas are **requirements** for qualification as a First Mate with the Sailing Club, Inc. Optional skills and objectives that are developmental goals are indicated explicitly or parenthetically:

## **Formal Training**

On-Water Training (OWT) sponsored by The Sailing Club

First Mates must attend OWT at least once every 3 years. OWT is not a prerequisite to evaluation unless specified in a written evaluation.

CPR (Acquire by beginning of next sailing season)

Basic First Aid (Acquire by beginning of next sailing season)

## **Optional Formal Training (not provided by the Club)**

Successful completion of one commercially available sailing certification such as:

Preparation for Bareboat Chartering

Preparation for Handling a Cruising Auxiliary

Introduction to Cruising

The Training Coordinator may place a high value on candidates who independently pursue this training/certification. It demonstrates his/her commitment to developing appropriate skills for the role of First Mate.

## **Prerequisite Knowledge Areas:**

"Skipper/Crew Responsibilities" document

Club policies

Club procedures (before, during, and after trips)

Rules of the road - Inland/International

Lights and shapes

Sound and light signals - Inland/International

Basic navigation - piloting/coastal navigation

Tides and currents (tables/calculations)

Essential and Common Knots

Bowline

Square knot

Figure eight

Cleat hitch

Clove hitch

Double half hitch

Sheet bend

Rafting "theory" (*optional but highly desirable*)

Radio procedures

Reefing

Boat systems

## **Demonstrated "On-Water" Skills:**

Complete familiarity with purpose, content, and use of Charter Boat check in/checkout form.

Crew Briefing

Underway

Maneuvering under power

Docking

Emergency Tiller Use (*verbal discussion acceptable*)

Man overboard Procedures

Anchoring

Mooring

Sail Handling including reefing and heaving-to

Navigation-practical underway

Rafting (*optional but highly desirable*)

Recovery from grounding (*verbal discussion acceptable*)

## **Suggested Reading**

The following reading is recommended to familiarize the prospective First Mates with knowledge and skill areas required for Club Skippers:

### **U.S.C.G. Navigation Rules International/Inland** **(COMDTINST M16672.2B)**

Navigation Rules and Regulations

Part C - Lights and Shapes

Part A - General

Part D - Sound and Light Signals

Part B - Steering and Sailing Rules

### **Chapman Piloting, Seamanship & Small Boat Handling**

#### ***The Vessel and Nautical Terminology***

Basic Terms and Parts of the Vessel

Rigging, Halyards, Winches, Sheets

Sails, Sailing Terms

Engine Systems

Instrumentation

Dock Lines and their Uses

Ground Tackle

#### ***Navigation***

The Nautical Chart

Chart 1, Symbols and Abbreviations

Aids to Navigation-Buoys

Use of the Compass, Compass Error

Basic Piloting-Distance, Speed, Time

Dead Reckoning

GPS

Current Sailing and Piloting

#### ***The Vessel Underway***

Helmsmanship

Right and Left Hand Propellers

Docking, Undocking, Use of Lines

Anchoring, Single, Two, Stern

Rafting, Setup

Man Overboard, Sail, Power

Sailing Maneuvers, Tack, Jibe, Points

Sailing Theory

#### ***Radio Procedures***

Standard

Emergency

#### ***Marlinespike Seamanship***

Rope, Line, Tools

Knots

The Training Coordinator may be consulted for additional resources and references.