

Singles on Sailboats



Skippers Handbook



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Appreciation and thanks go to all those who worked on the first and later revised versions. The 1996 revision was under the leadership of Brian Genez.

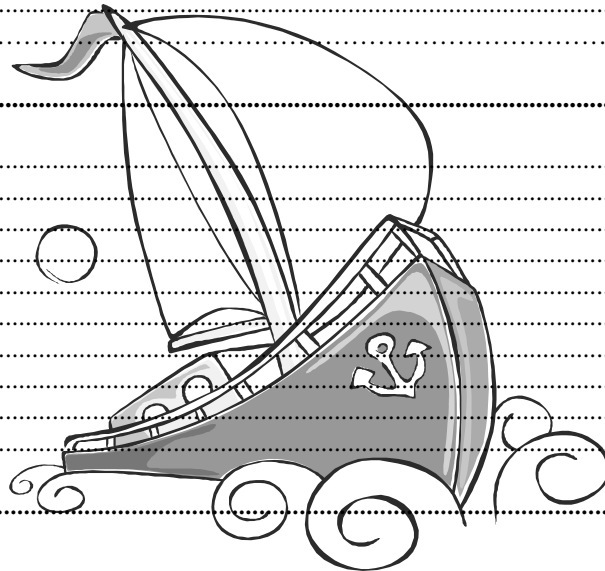
This Handbook is a complete revision and replaces all earlier versions.

The emphasis in SOS is on safe and enjoyable sailing on the Chesapeake Bay, giving skippers and crew opportunities to share in the experiences offered by this beautiful body of water. It is hoped that the Skippers Handbook helps in that process.

Lorraine Fassett, Chair
SOS Skippers Advisory Committee
February 2006

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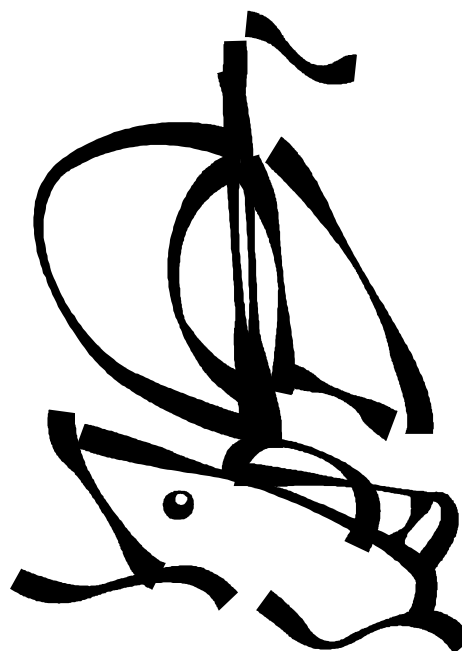
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1. SAFETY INCIDENT REPORT FORM
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Chapter 1

Sailing with Singles on Sailboats (SOS)

I. Introduction

The purpose of SOS is to bring together single adults who wish to sail. The organization, therefore, is dedicated to promoting sailing. While SOS draws its members from throughout the Mid-Atlantic area, our sailing program is mainly in the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Most of the sailing opportunities are in the form of day-sails, weekend sails that may be to a raft-up or marina, and extended cruises throughout the Bay. Additionally, there are opportunities for members to sail elsewhere. The Club arranges charters in other U. S. waters and around the world using well respected, established chartering companies.



The Skippers Handbook is intended to help skippers understand the characteristics of sailing within SOS. It is not a manual that teaches sailing, navigation or use of equipment. The Club assumes that all skippers have all the skills and knowledge to operate their vessels safely. If skippers do not, or if they feel the need for additional training, they should take advantage of the many training opportunities available in the Chesapeake Bay area. If assistance is needed, they should feel free to contact the Chair of the Safety Committee, the Education Committee or the Skippers Advisory Committee.



II. The Boat "Activation" Process

Prior to sailing with SOS, every boat must be "activated". There are two levels of activation: day-sails only or day-sails and weekend sails, which include extended cruises.

The completion of an application that includes information about one's boat and its equipment plus a waiver of liability start the activation process. This form is sent to the Chair of the Safety Committee and must be submitted annually. A representative of the Safety Committee may visit the boat or interview the skipper as a part of this process.

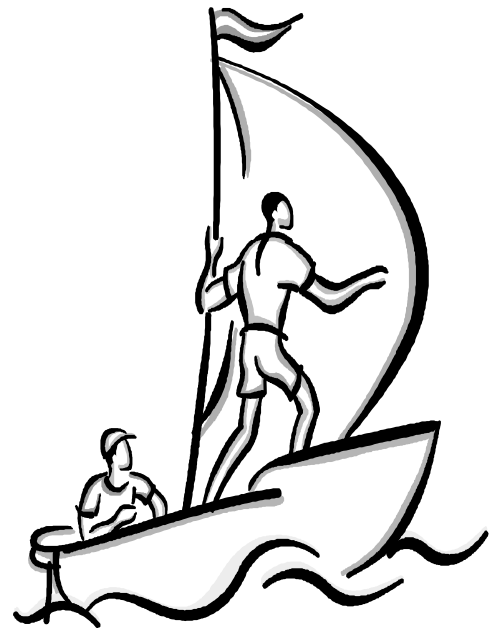
Questions regarding boat activation should be directed to the Chair of the Safety Committee.

A. Minimum requirements

1. For all club-sponsored sails, every boat in SOS must meet minimal Coast Guard safety equipment requirements for the size of the vessel as listed in the “Federal Requirements and Safety Tips for Recreational Boats” brochure. Skippers are urged to meet the Coast Guard recommended equipment guidelines as well.
2. Boats must meet additional SOS safety equipment guidelines that are stated on the Annual Boat Information Form that each skipper completes every year.
3. SOS supports the Federal Regulations for Recreational Boats as they pertain to Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs).

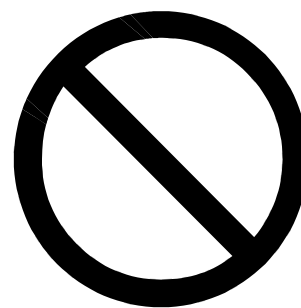
B. Optional but recommended

1. According to the Bylaws of SOS every boat owner is encouraged to obtain a Coast Guard Auxiliary Courtesy Marine Examination (CME). CMEs are valid for one year. If skippers would like to obtain a CME and do not know how, the Safety Chair or the Skippers’ Advisory Chair may be contacted for advice.
2. The nature of rafts tends to place higher than normal strains on mooring lines, deck hardware (cleats and chocks), anchors and anchor rode. Consequently, all skippers and particularly those with smaller boats, are encouraged to use oversized lines when in a raft, to ensure cleats are properly backed, to purchase and use oversized fenders, to have a dedicated cleat for the anchor rode, and to purchase and use ground tackle at least one size larger than that recommended for size boat. Bow, stern, and spring lines should have a loop in one end so that the receiving boat need only slip the loop over a cleat. While the loop may be knotted, an eye splice is stronger and is preferred.
3. A handheld Very High Frequency Radio (VHF) is recommended to allow the skipper to communicate with the raft captain while maneuvering in the vicinity of the raft.
4. A 150-foot or longer line (in addition to the primary anchor rode) that can be used as a passing line by anchor boats in a raft is recommended. This line should be 3/8 to 1/2 inch in diameter. Two shorter lines may be knotted together if necessary.



C. Prohibited practices and equipment

1. Use of illegal drugs.
2. Excessive consumption of alcohol is strongly discouraged.
3. Use of cockpit grills while in a circle raft; they may be allowed while in a linear raft with certain conditions.
See policies under Safety in the Membership Directory.
4. Sexual harassment.
5. Any other actions that could endanger the safety of boats and participants in SOS events.



D. Completing the Boat Information Form

The Annual Boat Information Form is very basic and simple, though skippers will need to know some specifics about their equipment. The form asks a few questions regarding the boat's description (length, beam, draft, freeboard and displacement), has a number of yes-or-no questions regarding the equipment carried and asks for specific information regarding some safety equipment (anchors/ground tackle, flares, and fire extinguishers). In addition, skippers are asked if they have any restrictions or limitations in their sailing ability and whether or not a first mate is desired routinely on the boat.



Once this form has been submitted, the Safety Committee will transfer the information to a SOS boat database. In subsequent years, the previous year's form may be sent out and need only verification that the information on the form is correct. If not, the skipper will make the appropriate changes.

E. The Waiver

The Waiver must be signed annually by the skipper before the boat can be activated for SOS sailing.

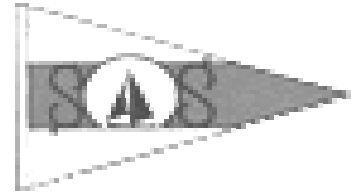
SOS Waiver

☐ _____

☐ _____

III. SOS Burgee

The SOS Burgee is presented to the skipper of each newly activated boat at his or her first raft or day-sail. There is no charge for the burgee. If one's burgee wears out, a new one may be requested from the Skippers Advisory Committee. It is hoped that skippers will fly their SOS Burgees proudly and, in particular, when sailing with SOS for easy recognition by other SOS boats.



IV. Need Help?

The club newsletter, *The Whisker Pole*, lists the name and home phone numbers of all members of the Board of Directors and the chairs of all committees. Please feel free to contact any of these members with questions. Additionally, SOS counts among its members several skippers with decades of cruising experience. Most are very willing to help new members needing assistance on sailing topics.



V. Skipper Mentoring

The Skippers Advisory Committee provides a Skipper Mentoring Program for all skippers new to SOS. The purpose is twofold: first, to welcome the skipper and acquaint him or her with details of the operation of the SOS cruising program and second, to assure that the boat has the minimum equipment to participate in an SOS raft. While this information is available in the Skippers Handbook, the mentoring program will present the skipper with the information in a more personal manner with a chance for questions and discussion.



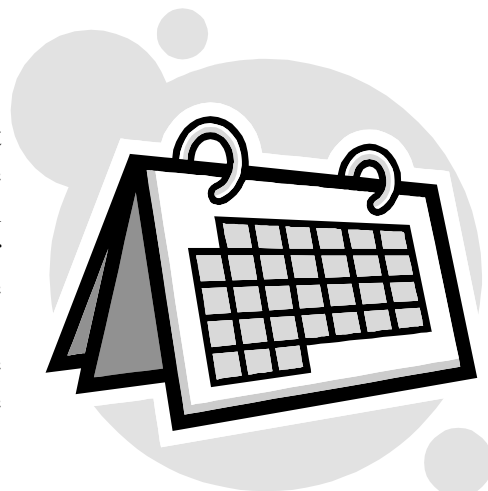
Various ways of accomplishing a mentoring program have been tried and no definitive method has been established. The response from skippers new to SOS has been positive and it is a worthwhile endeavor.

Chapter 2

Before the Sail

I. Signing up for Sailing

Skippers are asked if they want to be contacted about upcoming sails via email or by a skipper tender. The latter is a club member who will phone or email each skipper individually. A skipper not using a skipper tender who chooses to be contacted via email directly from the Cruising Committee must subscribe to the SOS Skippernet. This method is the preferred and usually the simplest to use. The Skippers Advisory Committee maintains the Skippernet and will assist in subscribing.



If email notification is chosen, Cruising will send out an invitation about 2 weeks before each sail, asking for a response by a specific date if the skipper wishes to sail. Other pertinent information will be requested also, such as number of crew wanted, any pre-invited crew or guests etc. The skipper needs to email the coordinator directly with this information.

If a skipper tender is used, the skipper tender will contact the skipper by phone approximately two weeks before the date of the sail to determine if the skipper intends to participate. If so, the skipper will be asked about any pre-invited crew or guests, the number of crew desired and any other special requests. The skipper tender then gives this information to the cruise coordinator for that particular cruise.

For either method chosen, skippers should be aware that the skipper tender and the cruise coordinator are volunteers who work very hard to make sure that every coordination runs smoothly. Skippers should make the volunteers' jobs as easy as possible by returning calls or emails promptly and giving the requested information freely. It really helps!

II. Getting Crew

The skipper may arrange for crew in any of the following ways:

- A. The skipper may invite one non-paying guest. Guests are responsible for any party or shore-event costs and are expected to participate in the boat provisioning and cleanup. The guest's name should be given to the cruise coordinator and the skipper should have the guest complete a waiver and send it to the coordinator before the sail. If that is not possible, the waiver must be completed by the guest prior to the boat's departure on the day of the sail.



For club sails when SOS pays for a slip, at least one berth must be made available for a paying member to be offered by the cruise coordinator. Otherwise, the skipper will have to pay for the slip.

- B. The skipper may invite crew suggested by the cruise coordinator. SOS encourages skippers to leave at least one berth available to the cruise coordinator for all cruises. This practice helps to allow more crew to sail and to integrate new members into SOS.
- C. The skipper may pre-arrange crew by inviting other members of SOS to sail on that specific cruise. The names of the prearranged crew should be given to the cruise coordinator or the skipper tender and the crew should be instructed to send their waivers and fees to the cruise coordinator. They should also note on their waiver that they have already been invited to sail with that particular skipper.

III. Cruise Coordination

A Cruise Coordination meeting is held about ten days prior to the cruise. The purpose of this meeting is to match boats needing crew with crew needing boats and to generate a cruise list of all boats and members participating in the cruise. The cruise coordinator is a volunteer who often must juggle dozens of boats and more than a hundred crew, and should be treated with courtesy and respect.

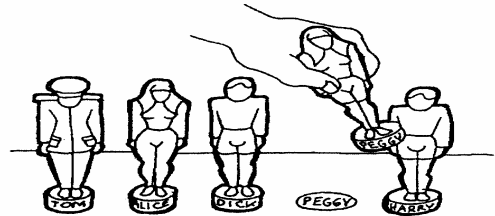


A. Crew selection

Based upon criteria such as the skipper's requirements, the skill level of the crew, and geographic location of the crew and boat, the cruise coordinator attempts to match up available crew to available boats. The coordinator may also apply several other criteria, such as personalities and past relationships. Assisting in cruise coordination is a good way to learn the process. Anyone wishing to do so should contact the Cruising Committee Chair.

B. First Mates

A goal of SOS is to offer a recognized first mate (FM) to each boat sailing on a club sponsored cruise. The primary role of the FM is to act competently as a skipper to return a boat and crew safely to shore if such a need arises. If there are not sufficient first mates for all the boats, they are placed where the cruise coordinator believes they will be most effective. Also, when there are not enough first mates available, the cruise coordinator will try to mix crew of varying skill levels so that the sail will be enjoyable and safe for all participating.



All skippers on their first sail should receive, if possible, a first mate or seasoned crewmember that will help familiarize them with SOS practices.

C. Declining crew

Skippers may decline to invite crew suggested by the cruise coordinator. Similarly, it is the right for crew to decline to sail with a specific skipper. If the provided crew is declined, the cruise coordinator will make every effort to find substitute crew. Likewise, if crew decline to sail with a skipper, Cruising will make every effort to find a boat for them.

As in many large organizations, personalities and past history may play a part in the decision of a skipper to accept crew and also for crew to accept a particular boat for a sail. Every effort should be made by each skipper to provide a safe, clean and well-prepared vessel and to be hospitable to all crew. The skipper has a right to expect that accepted crew will be on time with no last minute cancellations except for emergencies, and that they will respect the boat provided by the skipper.

D. Notifying crew

The skipper invites crew to sail and should do so in a timely manner, normally not later than Sunday evening prior to the weekend cruise or day sail. It is the skipper's responsibility to provide a means of contact at the time of the coordination. A telephone and/or cell phone number is the usual way. As soon as possible after receiving a suggested crew list from the cruise coordinator the skipper invites crew and provides pertinent information regarding directions to the boat, arrival time, instructions about meals, if appropriate, and whatever other information the skipper deems important.

If agreeable to both parties, the skipper may delegate the task of providing crew with the pertinent information to the first mate or another responsible crewmember. However, a personal invitation by phone from the skipper is suggested in order to set a welcoming tone for crew. Providing written directions to the boat makes it easier for the crew. It is also suggested that the skipper provides a cell phone number to be used by crew in case of unpreventable delays.



E. Crew responsibilities



By custom within SOS, the crew provides food for the cruise. Amounts and types must be coordinated with the skipper or the skipper's designated crew member. Each crew member, including the skipper, is responsible for his/her own beverages. Please remember to ask about food allergies.

Crew are expected to have appropriate clothing (jacket, pants, sweater, non-marking shoes and boots, etc.) including foul weather gear and bedding for the cruise. Crew are encouraged to pack carefully in soft-sided duffel bags so as to not take up more room than is necessary for a day sail, weekend cruise or extended cruise.

F. Skipper responsibilities

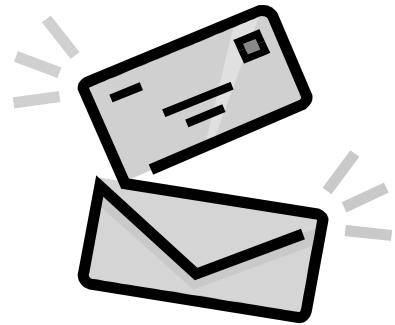


The skipper is expected to provide a boat that is clean, safe, and in all respects ready to sail at the appointed hour, and to operate that boat in a safe manner. Crew will assume that normal housekeeping materials and food preparation items (dishes, cooking and eating utensils, pots and pans, and paper products, such as toilet paper) are on board unless advised otherwise by the skipper. The skipper should provide an environment that is in keeping with the purpose of SOS: bringing together adults who wish to sail.

G. Information for SOS cruises

Skippers are asked to indicate whether they wish to receive the Cruise List by regular mail or email. Those electing regular mail may not have up-to-date information since changes frequently occur, many at the last minute.

Forms to be used are distributed via several means: the SOS website, hard copies mailed to the skipper at the beginning of the season and e-mailed as attachments to the electronic Cruise List. They are:



The Pre-Cruise Check-out Form - A checklist to be filled out with the crew before sailing to help familiarize the crew with the vessel and its operation. The location of all safety equipment is imperative. Included on this form is a space for all those sailing to complete regarding important medications being taken, the ability to swim and do CPR, and an emergency phone number.

The Cruise List - (also known as the “gossip sheet”) shows the name of the raft captain, the destination, the time and frequency used for the radio check-in, the boats signed up to sail and the crew aboard each boat.

Extra Cruise Waiver Forms - to be filled out by guests or crew who have not previously sent in their waivers to the coordinator for that cruise. These should be collected by the skipper and sent to the Cruising Chair with the Skipper Comment Forms.

The Crew Comment Forms - to be handed out by the skipper to all crew. Crew should be urged to complete the forms and send them to the Cruising Chair as soon as possible after the sail. They are not to be collected by the skipper.

The Skipper Comment Form - filled out by the skipper with comments about crew and mailed or faxed to the Cruising Chair as soon as possible after the sail. Skippers should be sure to send in the appropriate comment form and hand out and encourage their crew to do the same. The Cruising Committee works very hard to ensure a pleasant sailing season and a good sailing experience for all. The comment forms are used to determine potential first mate candidates, skippers who enjoy teaching and who provide a positive introduction to the club and its sailing programs, and the strengths and weaknesses in the skills of skippers or crew.



Chapter 3

Cruise Day

I. Before Departure

A. Preparing for the cruise

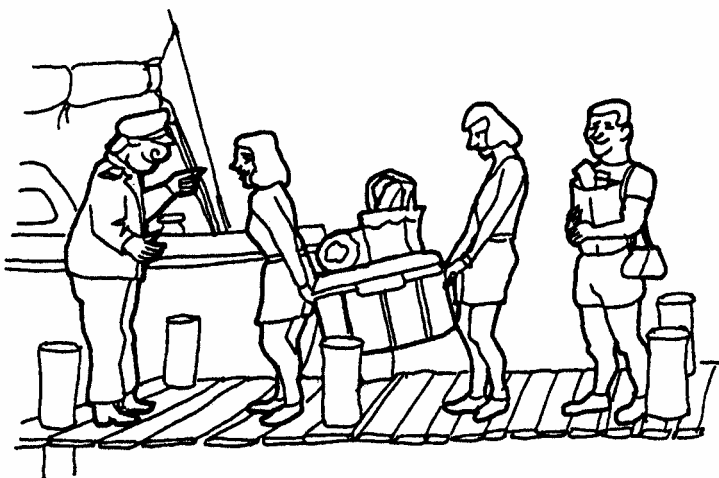


Prior to crew arrival, a skipper should make certain that the boat is ship-shape and ready to receive guests. At a minimum, the boat should be clean with all personal items stowed. Sufficient space should remain for crew to stow their belongings. All systems, such as electrical charge, fuel, water, ice, and cooking fuel, should be either full or filled enough to support the crew for the duration of the cruise. Skippers know their holding tank capacity and starting with an empty one is always a good idea.

B. Crew arrival

Skippers may be meeting some of their crew for the first time and should facilitate introductions. Additionally, skippers shouldn't be intimidated by the volume of gear everyone is carrying. Crewmembers are advised to bring their own bedding, complete foul weather gear and sufficient clothing for any anticipated weather, plus their meal requirements. No one on an SOS cruise ever starves so seeing more food come aboard than one usually would consume is normal!

After introductions, the first task will be to get everything stowed. Stowing the food in inverse order of the designated meals makes it easier to access the food while underway. Having a portable cooler or borrowing one of the crew's coolers is a good way to handle any overflow or to serve as a separate cooler for drinks. The remaining portable coolers should be returned to the owners' cars depending on available storage space. Crew should be shown where to stow their remaining gear and how to secure everything before departure. Waiting up to thirty minutes for tardy crew is traditional. Having a cell phone aboard and exchanging cell phone numbers with crew is helpful for any unexpected delays.



C. Safety briefing

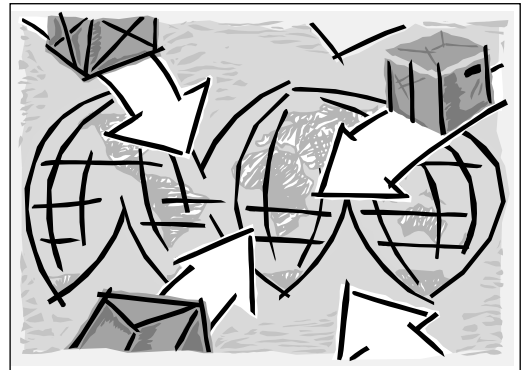
The most important responsibility of the skipper prior to departure is to give the assembled crew a safety briefing using the Pre-Cruise Check-list mentioned previously. Just as every boat is different, the location and often the use of critical safety equipment may vary also. Each crewmember should know the location of and proper use of life jackets, fire extinguishers, flares, VHF radio, etc. Since different brands of VHF radios may vary, their operation may have to be explained. At the end of this manual is a boat outline that can be used to locate all essential safety items on a boat. Skippers are urged to use this to indicate where safety equipment is located and to place it in an easily visible area.



The briefing is an excellent opportunity for skippers to ensure that crewmembers understand the purpose and use of safety equipment. Skippers should feel free to ask questions of the crew and to provide a climate where crew freely can do so also. The checklist is completed and saved. The Cruising Chair may want it returned to him or her.

D. Selecting a destination (weekend cruises)

Each weekend cruise has one or more intended raft locations. If the weekend includes more than one location, skippers will be asked by Cruising to declare their preference. It is expected that boats participating in SOS weekend cruises will go to the designated raft site as indicated on the Cruise List unless weather or other unavoidable circumstance prevents it. As always, the skipper has sole discretion regarding the safety of the boat and crew and the raft captain has the right to alter the raft location or cancel the raft entirely.



The raft captain must know of a vessel's intended arrival well in advance. Additionally, if a skipper changes a destination, (for example, if he or she indicated to the skipper tender or to the cruise coordinator that the intention is to go "North" but on the day of the sail changes that intention to "South."), the raft captain(s) must be notified. This information is vital so that the raft captains may properly and safely build their rafts. Similarly, if the skipper discovers during the day that he or she will not be able to arrive at the raft site before nightfall or won't be able to make it at all, every effort should be made to notify the raft captain as early as possible by VHF or cell phone. See Chapter 4 for communication instructions.

II. Underway

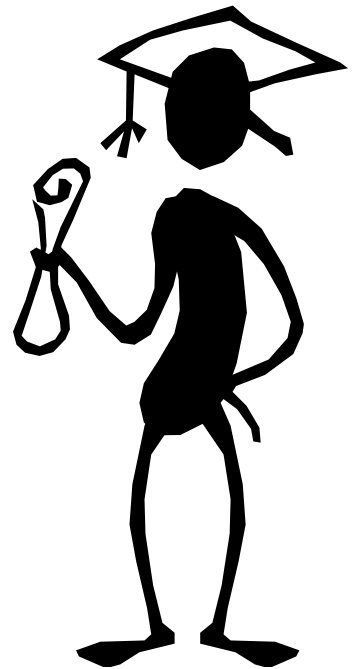
A. Skill levels of crew



Obviously, some crew will be more skilled than others. SOS makes every attempt to place a well-rounded crew on every boat and tries very hard to avoid providing an all-novice group to a single boat. It is understood that a competent crew is more likely to enjoy the sail and to avoid injuries to themselves and to others or to damage the boat. Before sailing on a weekend or extended cruise, the Club expects all members to either complete the Basic Skills I & II program or to demonstrate that an equal or greater level of skill has been learned elsewhere. Only with the permission of the skipper, may the cruise coordinator place a sailor who has not demonstrated proficiency in Basic Skills I and II aboard a boat for a weekend or a longer cruise.

B. The Basic Skills Program

1. The Education Committee directs the Basic Skills Program. The first two levels, appropriately called "Basic Skills I & II," are the minimum skills requirement for crew to sail on SOS weekend cruises. The higher levels, "Basic Skills III & IV," are designed to increase the members' value as crew.
2. Normally, Basic Skills I & II are conducted on land and on day-sails. Basic Skills III & IV are conducted while underway on any SOS cruise. Either the skipper or the first mate may conduct this training. Prior to the cruise, the cruise coordinator should inform the skipper that the crewmember wants to complete III and IV on a weekend sail. It is the crewmember's responsibility to bring the necessary paperwork aboard for the checkout. If a novice is placed aboard a boat for a weekend or longer cruise with the skipper's permission, the skipper or first mate should ensure that the member completes Basic Skills I & II before the conclusion of the cruise.
3. Members are expected to complete all four levels of Basic Skills before they can be considered for an evaluation of a request to become a first mate candidate or to be considered as crew on any of the SOS chartered bareboat cruises.



C. Sailing with crew

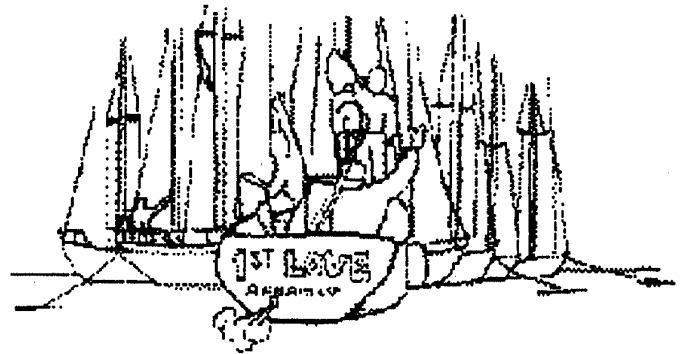
1. Many skippers have expressed their belief that the best benefit the Club provides for its skippers is crew. Of course, this is a mutual benefit, for one of the wonderful opportunities for non-skippers is sailing on the many different boats and with different skippers. These benefits are best realized when everyone participates and has a good time. Skippers need to evaluate the skills of crew to their own standards. Once the skipper feels confident in the crew's skills, letting them take part in a team effort of sailing the boat by taking turns in the various tasks involved with sailing (raising and lowering sails, reefing, trimming sails, taking the helm, and doing some navigation) are wonderful ways to improve their skills.
2. Almost all of the less skilled crew want to improve. Skippers have a captive and attentive audience should they want to teach their skills. Also, skippers should try to be aware if certain crewmembers are doing all the chores while others may be doing less than their share. This issue should be addressed with as much diplomacy as possible but to not do so is not fair to crew who are doing their share. Rotating crew through the various sailing responsibilities helps ensure that all will have a pleasant sail.
3. The Club encourages all skippers to conduct at least one "man overboard" drill during every cruise using a cushion overboard, never a live person! These drills are excellent tools to teach boat handling, and someday may save a life. The majority of real man overboard accidents experienced by club members has been at the pier or in the slip so it is important to mention this also.
4. All boats are encouraged to keep a listening watch on Channel 16 while underway. Occasionally, an SOS boat or other vessel may need some assistance and another SOS boat may be in the best position to provide it.



5. If one needs to contact any other club boat, the moniker "Whisker Pole" is used. Upon hearing that moniker, it is expected that the skipper will answer the call giving the boat's name.
6. To avoid injury, all crew are expected to wear appropriate boat shoes while aboard.



1. Rafts generally are built between 1600 and 1800 hours. The raft captain will determine the time depending upon the weather, the time of sunset, the number of expected boats, and the availability of the anchorage. One may contact the raft captain to determine when the raft will be built.
2. Prior to arrival at the raft location, the boat must be prepared. For obvious safety reasons, one may not enter the raft under sail power. However, the raft captain may make exceptions for emergencies with the concurrence of all adjacent skippers. Therefore, the engine must be on and all sails furled or struck and stowed. The lines needed for rafting and at least two fenders must be available on deck. The anchor should be made ready for letting go; this applies even if one is not an anchor boat.
3. Prior to entering the raft, the holding tank must be engaged. As stated in Chapter I, SOS supports Federal Regulations for Recreational Boats in regard to MSDs.
4. See Chapter 5 for instructions for circle rafts. See Chapter 6 for instructions for linear rafts.



III. Return

A. Cleanup

1. Crew are expected to help clean up the boat at least to the level it was at the beginning of the cruise. Unloading the boat of all gear first is a good idea. Crew may be assigned specific tasks such as cleaning the galley, the head, the cabin sole and the topside deck. The skipper may want a complete wash down of the boat. Sufficient cleaning supplies should be provided for the crew to do the job.
2. Many skippers end a sailing season with a collection of unidentifiable clothes, books, and sailing gear. This problem can be avoided by inspecting the boat before crew leaves to ensure that they have removed all their personal belongings and leftover food and drink.



B. Crew Comment and Skipper Comment Forms

The Cruising Committee provides Crew Comment Forms and Skipper Comment Forms to each skipper. At the end of each sail, every crewmember should be given one Crew Comment Form and urged to mail it in. The skipper should complete a Skipper Comment Form as well. Instructions for submitting them are on the form. These forms are used by the Cruising Committee to help them place crew on boats, so cooperation in completing the forms benefits all.

I. Responsibilities of the Raft Captain



The raft captain is the SOS skipper chosen to be responsible for planning and constructing the raft for each night of a cruise. He or she is responsible for deciding where to physically locate the raft and when to break it up. Should severe weather be expected, the raft captain decides if the raft should be broken or even if there should be a raft of any size at all. The physical location of the raft is chosen by evaluating the local conditions (water depth, wind direction and strength) and the forecasted weather conditions. The raft captain also is responsible for setting the morning breakup time and seeing that the breakup takes place in an orderly and safe manner.

Raft captains also assist in docking for most land based cruises. They coordinate with marina personnel to place boats based on the individual boat characteristics and knowledge of any special needs of the skipper or crew. If there are not a sufficient number of slips available, the raft captain will instruct boats to raft up alongside other SOS vessels.

One of the most difficult parts of planning a raft is deciding where each boat will be placed. Part of this depends on the size of each boat, the available ground tackle, the experience of the skipper and even the experience of the crew. To successfully build a raft, the raft captain must know who is coming to the raft and when they will arrive. As any experienced SOS skipper knows, it is very frustrating to be told at the raft site to "just wait a few minutes longer; we have one more boat that we need to get in before you." All want to tie up and relax but the raft captain has a plan and needs to have certain boats in specific locations.



The details of the procedure for approaching and entering a raft are discussed in Chapter 5 on Circle Rafts and Chapter 6 on Linear Rafts. As the raft is being built or after it is completed, the raft captain may walk around the boats to be sure that each boat is properly secured and protected with fenders. What looks "fine" on a calm afternoon may be anything but at 0300 hours with 20 knots of wind! The raft captain may make suggestions to improve the integrity of the raft. Cooperation with the raft captain is expected so that all, the raft captain included, can get on with enjoying themselves in a safely constructed raft.

4-1

II. Communicating with the Raft Captain

To make the planning task easier, any boat that is not on the list for the particular destination is required to contact the raft captain as early as possible. If one knows that his or her

destination has changed, the raft captain can be informed before the cruise begins, using the name from the Cruise List and phone number from the SOS Membership Directory.

Note that the raft captain may leave early for the weekend, so unless one speaks to the raft captain directly, contact should be made while on the water to confirm via VHF or cell phone. The raft captain must be informed if a skipper because of an unfavorable wind direction or for other reasons makes a change in the destination. If there are two destinations and a skipper decides to go to the alternate one, that skipper must notify both raft captains.

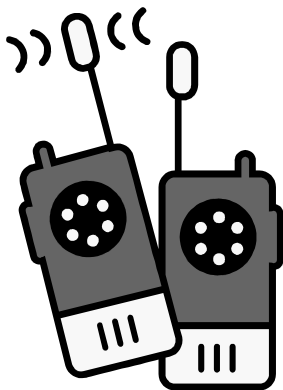
If one does not have the SOS working channel on the VHF, contact should be made on channel 9 or 16 and quickly shifted to another working channel. After noon on the day of the sail, the raft captain monitors the SOS working channel from 15 to 30 minutes past the hour; at other times the raft captain monitors channel 16.

At a designated time in the early afternoon of the first day of a weekend cruise, each SOS boat is required to check in with the raft captain. The time and channel to use for this check-in process is listed on the SOS Cruise List sent to each skipper who signs up to sail. It is important to check-in with the raft captain so that he or she knows exactly how many boats to expect and their expected time of arrival (ETA).

If one does not know the raft captain's name or vessel, the club moniker "Whisker Pole" can be called. This should make

contact with either the raft captain or another member's boat, which in turn can give the name of the raft captain's boat or relay a message if contact cannot be made with the raft captain.

While in sight of the raft, all VHF communications should be on LOW power. A handheld VHF is convenient, especially if the skipper is at the helm.



Chapter 5

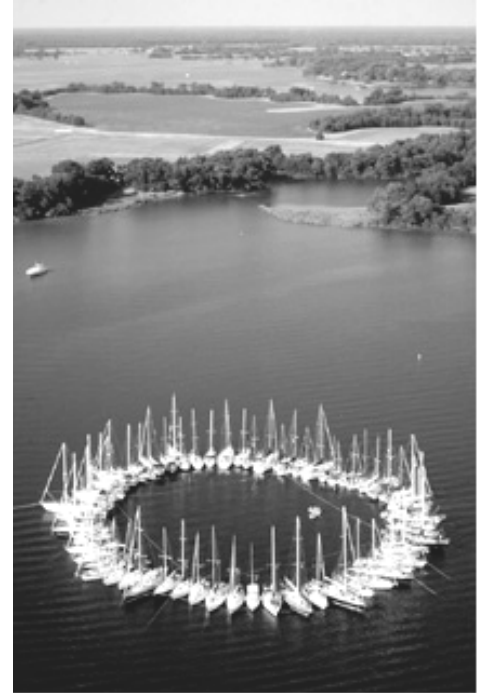
Circle Raft Procedures

I. Check List

- Raft captain contacted
- All crew briefed on their duties
- Engine on
- Decks clear and sails stowed
- Bow, stern and spring lines ready
- Fenders ready
- Anchor ready for letting go
- If anchor boat, passing line ready

II. Entering the Raft

- Contact with a the raft captain is important upon arrival at the raft location. The raft captain will direct each boat as to the position in the raft and advise if it is to be an anchor boat. All maneuvering in the vicinity of the raft should be done at minimum speed.
- Bow, stern and spring lines need to be ready in addition to a minimum of two fenders. The bow and spring lines should be approximately the length of the boat, while the stern line can be somewhat shorter. All lines should have a loop in one end, preferably an eye splice. The looped end should be handed, not thrown, to a crew member on the receiving boat. The fenders should be placed near the aft quarter, which is where the boats will make contact once the circle is completed. It is accepted procedure for the approaching boat to have the fenders out and the lines prepared on the side approaching the receiving boat, unless otherwise directed.
- The skipper of each individual boat is the only person who should give direction to his or her crew. Other skippers should direct their comments and suggestions to the boat's skipper only.
- All lines should be securely cleated and free of slack. At the direction of the raft captain, spring lines should be used to adjust the fore-and-aft positioning of the boat. Generally, in a circle raft, fore-and-aft positioning to provide spreader separation is not necessary. If one is concerned about spreader separation between adjacent boats, the raft captain can be contacted for advice or adjacent skippers can discuss the matter when tying up.
- Even if not designated as an anchor boat, the boat's anchor should be made ready for letting go, in the event of an emergency.
- The skipper should ensure the boat's holding tank is in operation while within the raft.



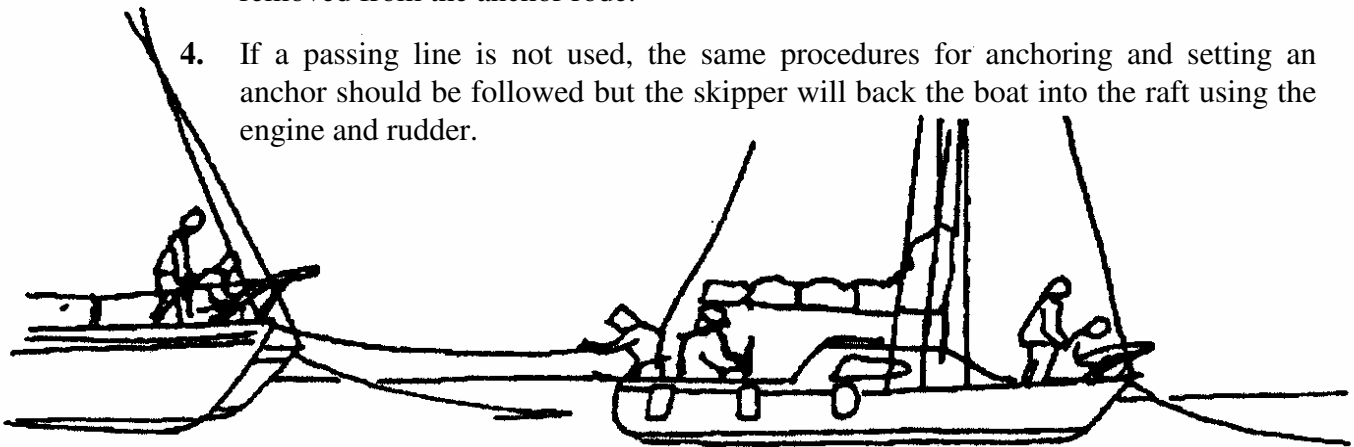
III. Anchoring

A. Anchor boat

1. If one is requested to be an anchor boat, the raft captain probably will give a magnetic heading from the center of the raft on which the anchor should be set. Alternatively, the raft captain may designate a physical landmark such as a dock, house or tree toward which to steer when placing the anchor.

B. Use of passing lines

1. Many sailboats do not maneuver well in reverse. It is recommended that skippers use a passing line to guide the boat into the raft once the anchor has been set. This should be a lightweight line, approximately 150 feet long. If necessary, two or more lines can be knotted together to provide the required length. In order to do this, a crewmember is stationed with the passing line near the stern of the anchor boat. One end of the line is handed to crew stationed at the bow of the adjacent boat in the raft while the anchor boat slowly motors forward to the limit of the passing line.
2. The crew on the anchoring boat is responsible for tending the line. At an appropriate point, the anchor is dropped and the boat motors astern. The raft captain will want at least 100 feet of scope on an anchor even if chain is being used. As the boat moves backward toward the raft, the crew on the anchoring boat gathers in the passing line, making sure to keep it out of the water, and uses it to control the direction of the stern. Again, at an appropriate point, the skipper will direct the crew on the bow to put strain on the anchor line so it can be set using the boat's engine and momentum. Once the anchor is set to the skipper's and raft captain's satisfaction, the rode is eased and the boat is directed backward by the passing line until alongside the raft.
3. Some skippers request that the passing line be switched to the stern of the receiving boat and some do not. The skipper may pass a stern line to the receiving boat once it is close enough. Otherwise, if the passing line is switched to the stern, a stern line replaces the passing line when close enough. Then bow and spring lines are passed to the rafted boat and the anchoring boat is secured. Then slack should be removed from the anchor rode.
4. If a passing line is not used, the same procedures for anchoring and setting an anchor should be followed but the skipper will back the boat into the raft using the engine and rudder.



5-2

IV. Securing the boat

- A. The skipper is responsible for the security of his or her boat.
- B. The raft captain will likely give the skipper specific instructions regarding the positioning of the boat in the raft and adjusting the boat's lines. Once the boat is secured, the raft captain should be advised. The crew should then be directed to await the arrival of the next boat to enter the raft. Crew should not be allowed to leave the boat until the next boat has arrived and is secured.
- C. After sunset, all boats should display anchor lights. An anchor day shape, a black ball, should be displayed during daylight hours if required.



- D. Before retiring, all lines and anchor rode should be checked and tightened if necessary.

V. Unexpected and Late Arrivals



- A. The raft captain will make reasonable efforts to include unexpected or late arriving boats as long as the safety of the raft is not compromised. However, it is the raft captain's decision and if a boat cannot be accommodated, it may anchor nearby.
- B. For safety reasons, boats generally are not allowed into a circle raft after dark, however the raft captain may authorize an after-dark arrival.

VI. Raft courtesy

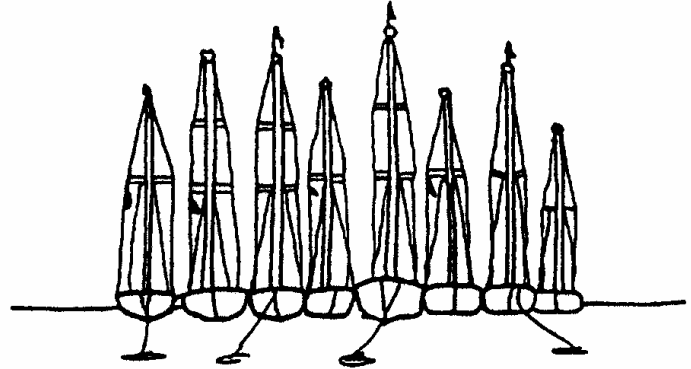
- A. Take appropriate care of other skippers' boats.
- B. Tread lightly and cross other boats via the bow, unless invited into the cockpit.
- C. After 10:00 P.M. and before 8:00 A.M., be aware that many in the raft are trying to sleep. Please keep the noise level down.



Linear Raft Procedures

I. Check List

- Raft captain contacted
- All crew briefed on their duties
- Engine on
- Decks clear and sails stowed
- Bow, stern and spring lines ready
- Fenders ready
- Anchor ready for letting go
- If anchor boat, passing line ready



II. Entering the Raft

- Upon arrival at the raft location, the raft captain is contacted. The raft captain will direct the boat's position in the raft and advise if it is to be an anchor boat. He or she may request a stern anchor or bow to stern anchoring. All maneuvering in the vicinity of the raft should be done at minimum speed.
- Bow, stern and spring lines should be ready in addition to a minimum of two fenders. The spring lines should be approximately the length of the boat, while the bow and stern lines can be somewhat shorter. All lines should have a loop in one end, preferably an eye splice. The looped end should be handed, not thrown, to a crewmember on the receiving boat. The fenders should be placed near the widest part of the beam, which is where the boats will make contact once the raft is completed.
- The skipper is the only person who should give direction to his or her crew. Other skippers and crew should direct their comments and suggestions to the boat's skipper only.
- Spring lines should be tightly cleated, while bow and stern lines should be given some slack to avoid jerking adjacent boats. Spring lines should be used to adjust the fore-and-aft positioning of the boat to provide separation between the spreaders of adjacent boats.
- Even if not designated as an anchor boat, the boat's anchor should be made ready to let go in the event of an emergency.
- The skipper should ensure the boat's holding tank is in operation while within the raft.

III. Follow the procedures for:

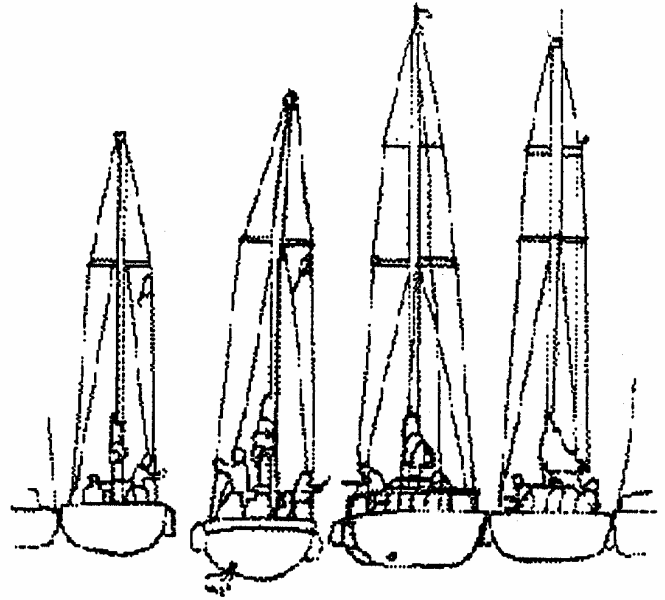
Anchoring, Securing the Boat, Unexpected and Late Arrivals, and Raft Courtesy as stated in the previous section on Circle Raft Procedures.

Chapter 7

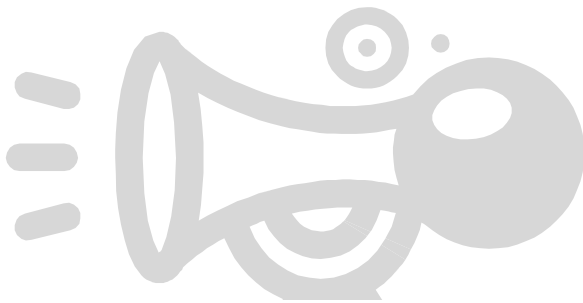
Breaking the Raft

I. Routine

- A. Most rafts break routinely in the morning. Others may break in the evening, preferably before dark, when weather or some other factor threatens the comfort or safety of the raft. It is the raft captain's decision when to break and the raft captain directs the breaking of the raft. Boats will not leave the raft until invited to do so by the raft captain. Skippers and crew should be ready to leave when asked by the raft captain to avoid delaying other boats.
- B. Circle rafts break from the down wind or 0600 position unless there is no wind. If there is no wind, but there is current, circle rafts break from the down current position. Linear rafts break from the ends inward.
- C. Lines should be released in the order, which, in the skipper's judgment will move the boat most safely from the raft. Crew should be directed to make sure all lines are kept out of the water to avoid fouling the prop.
- D. Always wait for the boat ahead to be well clear of the raft before breaking off. Boats wishing to remain at the anchorage must break off when invited by the raft captain and must remain well clear of the remaining raft even if this requires re-anchoring.



II. Emergency Other than Fire



- A. To signal an emergency breaking of the raft, the raft captain will sound five short blasts on the horn. All boats should monitor the working channel during emergencies and listen for instructions from the raft captain. All on board should wear PFDs during emergency breaks. After sunset running lights must be on. All other lights should be extinguished so that everyone's eyes can adapt.
- B. In emergencies other than fire, the raft will normally break in the same routine manner. In circle rafts, downwind anchor boats may break off with immediately adjacent boats still rafted to them if their scope will permit them to move safely a sufficient distance from the raft.

III. Fire Emergency

- A. In case of an uncontrolled fire, actions must be taken to provide for safety of the crew and to isolate the involved boat. This involves the following **immediate and simultaneous actions**:

1. Notify the raft by immediately shouting "**FIRE.**"

2. The raft captain will sound five blasts on the horn and initiate a "MAYDAY" call, if appropriate.



3. All crew should return to their own boats if that is possible without passing across the involved boat.

4. All crew don PFDs.

5. Crew on the involved boat should be taken aboard adjacent boats.

6. After sunset running lights should be on and all others extinguished.

7. On circle rafts or linear rafts anchored fore and aft, the boats immediately downwind of the involved boat should leave the raft as quickly as possible. On linear rafts allowed to swing, the involved boat can be released to leeward but should be kept tethered, if possible.

8. Other adjacent boats that enhance the fire potential (i.e. exposed gasoline tanks on board) should also leave immediately.

B. During efforts to isolate the involved boat, the raft should continue to break. Boats in positions closest to the involved boat will have priority leaving, with immediately downwind boats having first priority.

C. There is no set method for isolating the involved boat. The overriding concern is to keep the involved boat downwind from the remaining parts of the raft or other boats.

D. A good method to control the involved boat is to secure a tow by hooking an anchor with some chain over the bow pulpit of the involved boat. The anchor and chain will not burn.

E. Skippers' responsibilities are to the crew on their boats at that time and to save their boats however possible. To stay and fight a fire is a decision each must make individually. The guiding principle should be that boats can be replaced.

F. After an emergency breaking of a raft, each skipper should account for his or her own crew. The skipper and crew of each boat should also see to the first aid needs of any on the boat. The raft captain will coordinate communications on the working channel to account for crew who may have been on other boats at the time of the breaking. If the raft captain is not available to do so, another recognized raft captain or senior skipper should assume this role.



Chapter 8

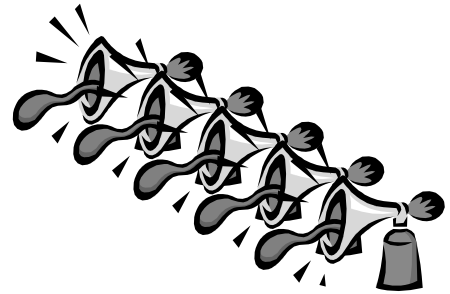
Emergency Procedures

I. What is an Emergency?

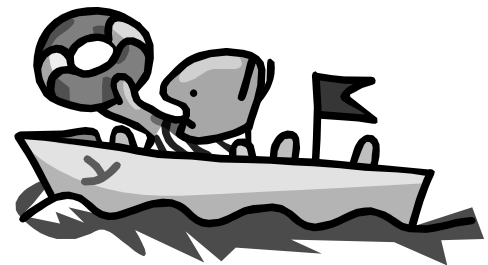
- A. An emergency exists with immediate danger of serious injury or loss of life of a person aboard, or immediate danger of loss of the vessel.
- B. Normally, in an emergency, outside help is needed quickly.
- C. The boat's skipper declares an emergency.

II. Getting Help

- A. **In a raft** - sound five or more short blasts on the air horn.
- B. **Underway** - call the Coast Guard on Channel 16, VHF
 - 1. If an emergency exists, use the MAYDAY call, "MAYDAY... MAYDAY... MAYDAY... THIS IS (boat's name) ...OVER."
 - 2. Once communications have been established with the Coast Guard, the following information should be given immediately:
 - a) Name and type of vessel with the nature of the emergency
 - b) The exact location, either giving the lat/long or a geographic location (bearing and distance from a navigational aid)
 - c) Number of persons on board



- 3. With the above information, the Coast Guard can dispatch appropriate rescue forces. However, the Coast Guard will ask additional information and will require that the boat maintain constant communications until rescue forces have arrived.
- 4. The Coast Guard may suggest that one change frequencies to free up Channel 16. Normally, they will suggest switching to Channel 22A, a Coast Guard working frequency. If one cannot establish communications on 22A, immediately switch back to Channel 16, and re-establish communications there.



III. Fire

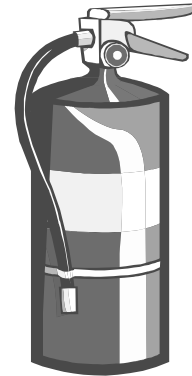
Fire is the most dangerous emergency aboard a boat. Nearly everything aboard a boat can fuel a fire and many boats carry explosive fuels, such as gasoline and propane. An uncontrolled fire can totally involve a boat in less than one minute.

A. Prevention

It is said that "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Surely this is the case for fire prevention on board a boat. Therefore, the most effective way of fighting fire is preventing it.

Each captain, after preparing his boat for the season, should take time to sit below and in the cockpit and think of fire. The purposes of this exercise should be twofold. The first purpose is to identify areas where fire could start. The second is to identify how to fight the fire if it starts.

While pondering fire prevention, each skipper should think of the appropriate location for fire extinguishers and make sure that one is always within easy reach. For example, if a person is in the V berth and the fire is in the galley area blocking the main hatch, the fire extinguisher in the cockpit is not much good. The one hanging near the forward hanging locker, however, could save a life and the boat!



B. Causes of Fire

Some of the potential hiding places for fire are as follows:

1. Engine room
2. Engine fuel storage area(s)
3. Bilge via engine or cooking fuel fumes
4. Cooking fuel storage area(s)
5. Battery compartment(s)
6. Electrical panel(s)
7. Large wiring harnesses
8. Electric motors
9. Paint and solvent storage areas
10. Open flame devices such as lanterns, grills, and fireplaces
11. Charcoal for cooking grills which can spontaneously combust when damp



C. Fire and Extinguishers

In order for a fire to exist, there needs to be heat, fuel, and oxygen. In order to put out a fire, one of these must be permanently removed. Most fire extinguishers operate on the principle of removal of one or more elements. Halon is the exception in that it inhibits the chemical reaction.

While Halon is still widely available, it is being phased out as Halon may produce toxic fumes in some fires. The two most common forms of fire extinguishers that we concern ourselves with are water and dry powder. Water operates mainly by the removal of heat and, in the case of alcohol fires, the removal of fuel. Alcohol diluted over 50% by water cannot burn. Dry powder extinguishers remove oxygen through the use of bicarbonates, which produce carbon dioxide.

Marine fires can start in a variety of fuels. Here is a list of the major ones listed from the most dangerous to the least.

FUELS	EXTINGUISHER	NOTES
Propane	Dry powder or water	Shut off fuel supply before putting fire out. Extreme explosion danger.
Gasoline	Dry powder	Will burn on water. Vapor is explosive. Shut off fuel supply.
Alcohol	Water or dry powder	Shut off fuel supply.
Kerosene	Dry powder	Will burn on water.
Electrical	Dry powder or Halon	After extinguishing, unplug and use water to get rid of heat.
Diesel	Dry powder or Halon	Will burn on water. Shut off fuel supply.
Upholstery	Water or dry powder	Water is best. Beware of toxic fumes. Consider throwing overboard.

In addition to the above fuels, once the boat has started to burn the fiberglass will ignite. Fiberglass produces highly toxic gases. In the event of a fire involving a boat equipped with propane there is also the danger of a Boiling Liquid Vapor Explosion (BLVE). Five minutes of direct flame on a propane tank can cause rupture and a major fireball. If a boat is in danger of full involvement, shut the propane tank off, cut it loose, and put it over the side.

C. Reacting to the Emergency

1. In the event of fire on a single boat or at sea:



- a) The crewmember discovering the fire (firefighter) **immediately CALLS OUT “FIRE”** and isolates the fire (closes bulkhead door, closes oven, etc), and then immediately gets the appropriate fire extinguisher. If a door is closed, it should be felt and not opened if it’s too hot to touch. Then all aboard should prepare to abandon ship. Otherwise, the firefighter pulls the pin on the extinguisher, aims at the base of the flames, sweeping back and forth, and empties the extinguisher on the fire. Other crewmembers supply the firefighter with additional extinguishers as the skipper directs.
- b) The helmsperson immediately puts the vessel in a position so that the wind blows the flames away from the boat.
- c) The skipper **immediately calls in a MAYDAY**. There may not be time if the fire gets out of hand.
- d) The crew dons lifejackets and supplies the firefighter, helmsperson, and skipper with lifejackets.
- e) The skipper is in charge of directing the fire fighting.

2. In the event of a fire on a boat in a raft, emergency procedures for uncontrolled fires in rafts are covered in Chapter 7, “Breaking the Raft”.

IV. Flooding

Fortunately, catastrophic flooding of a modern fiberglass sailboat is a rare event, as hulls are built to withstand forces far in excess of what most sailors will ever encounter. However, flooding does occasionally occur from one of two sources: through-hull failure or capsize.



A. Prevention

1. Most boats have a number of holes in their hulls. These include the through-hulls for raw water intake and discharge (most often found in the engine room, galley, and head compartments), the engine shaft log, and the rudderpost-log. The primary cause of failure in each is hose clamp failure. All hoses from through-hulls below the water line should be double clamped and the hoses must be of a heavy reinforced type. If hoses and clamps are inspected regularly, the chance of this type of failure is remote.

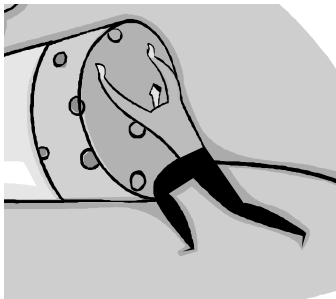
The next most common through-hull failure is from some heavy object striking the through-hull from the side. This is most common when dealing with through-hulls that are not true

seacocks or are made of some type of plastic material. Heavy, unsecured objects should not be stored near through-hull fittings. Finally, care should be taken when working near through-hull fittings so that a careless step doesn't result in damage to a through-hull.

2. Capsize is possible when sailing near the edge of a strong frontal system. A downburst can literally push a sailboat over until its mast is in the water. Under these circumstances, a boat can flood through open hatches and ports. Clearly, the best prevention here is to reduce or strike the sails whenever near a strong frontal system. The weather radio may give adequate warning but one's eyes probably will be best. The next choice is to keep hatches, ports and the companionway closed and latched while sailing in risky weather.

B. Reacting to the Emergency

1. Nearly all bilge pumps, including the manual pumps installed as "emergency" pumps, are inadequate to combat catastrophic flooding. These pumps eventually will empty a boat of water, as long as the flooding has been stopped.



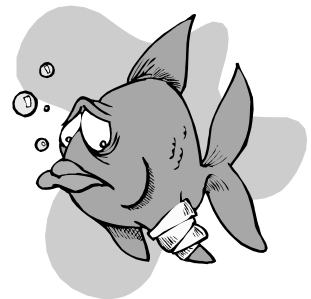
2. The most important task, then, is to locate the source of the flooding and stop it. Driving a soft wooden plug into the hole can sometimes check through-hull failure. (This is most effective when driven from the hull exterior, but one should not go overboard to do this!). As an immediate response, any cloth objects can be stuffed into the hole, such as rags or towels for smaller holes and even shirts, sheets or pillows for larger ones. Then a wooden plug can be inserted. Wooden plugs and a hammer to insert them should be readily available at all times.

3. Failure of the engine shaft log or rudderpost log is much more difficult. One probably will not be able to stop the flooding but may be able to significantly reduce it by stuffing the hole with clothing, pillows or any other soft material available.
4. Call for help as quickly as possible.

V. Injury and Illness

A. Prevention

1. Minor scrapes and bruises are a fact of life aboard sailboats. Prevention of more serious injuries can best be accomplished by rigid adherence to safety practices. Skippers must be aware of their crews' activities, skill levels and limitations.
2. Every boat should carry a first aid kit and a manual for treatment of common injuries. SOS encourages its members to take first aid and CPR training and may compensate them for part of the training fees. Contact the Education Committee Chair for further information.



B. Reacting to the Emergency

1. The victim of a serious injury or illness should be evacuated from the boat as quickly as possible. Help should be summoned immediately with a “Mayday” call to the Coast Guard. They will dispatch local help faster than others can.
2. The most capable member aboard along with the help of all should administer first aid (on site and enroute as applicable).
3. If an injury occurs to a crewmember while on an SOS cruise, the skipper must complete a Safety Incident Report and send it to the Chair of the Safety Committee.



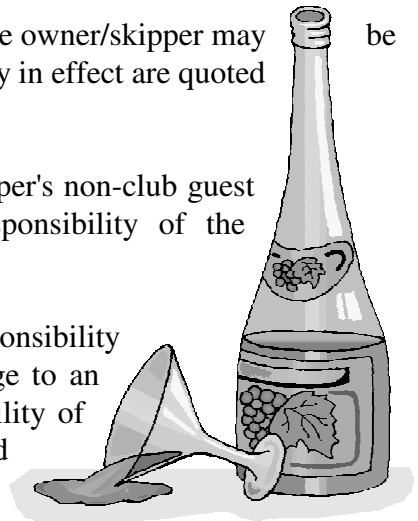
VI. Damage, Injury, and Reimbursement Policies

A. SOS Policies

If a boat or equipment is damaged while cruising with SOS the owner/skipper may be eligible for compensation from the club. The policies currently in effect are quoted below:

Any damage as the result of action of the owner/skipper's non-club guest to his vessel or another vessel shall be the responsibility of the owner/skipper.

SOS club members and owners' guests must take responsibility for their actions. When their actions result in damage to an owner's boat, replacement or repair is the responsibility of the person causing the damage and should be resolved between the person causing the damage and the owner of the vessel. In addition, guests, whether club members or not, must remain aware that there are many ways to be injured while engaged in a sports activity and exercise prudent care when voluntarily participating in club activities.



The club realizes that there could be some damage to a vessel while participating in an SOS cruise or orientation event. If the damage cannot be attributed to an action by a specific crew person or the skipper/owner, the owner may report the damage to the Chair of the Safety Committee. The Safety Committee will review the report, determine the facts available relating to the alleged damages and will report to the Board with a recommendation for reimbursement, if any.

Claims to be considered must be submitted within 30 days of the alleged incident and should be accompanied by as much documentation as available. The dollar amount shall not exceed the depreciated value of the item lost or damaged. Reimbursement shall not exceed \$1,000 per incident or occurrence. Reporting forms are available from the Safety Committee and a copy is in the Skipper's Handbook.

The Board of Directors deems that for safety, replacement of the anchor rode is a worthwhile endeavor. Approval of rode replacement is the responsibility of the Safety Committee. SOS may replace worn or damaged anchor rods on boats that regularly serve as the anchor boats at SOS rafts. Replaced rode will be donated to SOS for further use.



B. Reporting Damage or Injury

If a boat is damaged, if a crewmember is injured or if the skipper submits a claim for reimbursement due to lost or damaged equipment, a Safety Incident Report must be completed. The Safety Incident Report form is reproduced on the next page and additional copies are available from the Chair of the Safety Committee. It must be completed and sent to the Chair of the Safety Committee as soon after the incident as possible and no later than 30 days after the incident.



Safety Incident Report Form – Addendum #1

Please fill out this form completely. Use the back of this page and/or additional pages as needed to provide a complete description of the incident.

This report is for (check one) ☐ Boat damage ☐ Injury ☐ lost/damaged equipment

Boat Owner Name: _____

Skipper Name (if not Boat Owner): _____

Boat Name: _____

Insurance Company: _____ Deductible amount \$ _____
Crew Names Phone (W) Phone (H)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Date and time of incident: _____

Approximate location: _____

Was there personal injury? ☐ Yes ☐ No Name of injured: _____

Describe injuries: _____

Was medical treatment sought? ☐ yes ☐ no. Where? _____

Was another vessel involved? ☐ yes ☐ no Was it another SOS vessel? ☐ yes ☐ no

Other Boat information: _____

Boat's name: _____

Name of skipper: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Work _____ Home _____

Weather Information: Direction / estimated speed of: Wind ____/____ Current ____/____

Wave height ____ feet Visibility: _____ miles ☐ Rain ☐ Fog ☐ Night ☐ Dusk

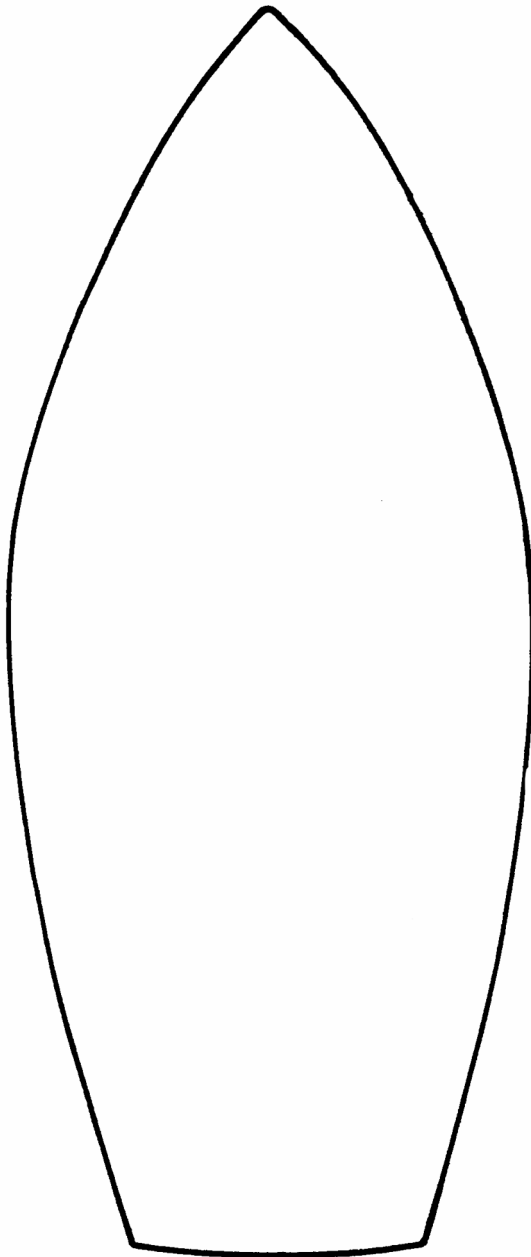
On the reverse of this form, describe what happened and the damage to the boat or equipment. If two (or more) vessels were involved, draw a diagram of what happened.

Owner's signature _____ Date _____

Boat Diagram – Addendum #2

Singles
On
Sailboats
INCORPORATED

LEGEND



Please locate the following items by letter on the drawing:

- A. PFDs (life jackets)
- B. Fire extinguishers
- C. First Aid Kit and book
- D. Flares
- E. Thru-hull locations
- F. Wooden plugs for thru-hulls
- G. Cooking fuel cut-off
- H. Engine fuel cut-off
- I. VHF radio
- J. Horn
- K. Bell
- L. Whistle
- M. Tools
- N. Battery switch
- O. Engine stop
- P. Navigation lights/switches
- Q. Emergency steering tiller
- R. Bilge pump switch
- S. Manual bilge pump and handle
- T. Other_____

Boat Name_____

LOA_____ Draft_____ Rig_____ Beam_____