

Baltimore Sailing Center Safety Policies

Revision 20240304a

Safety Policies

1. BSC vessels may only be operated by qualified persons who are active skipper level members, who have received an orientation on the vessel, with a valid reservation for the vessel or assigned as a skipper to that vessel during an official event.
2. The skipper is responsible for the vessel as well as all passengers during the session.
3. The skipper is responsible for ensuring that everyone boarding the vessel has signed a liability waiver for the sailing season.
4. A US Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) is required to be worn by all persons on a BSC vessel when underway (not docked, anchored or otherwise moored) and not inside the cabin. Each member is required to bring his or her own PFD. For certain events that involve ocean sailing, night sailing or when sea conditions are rough, a PFD equipped with a built-in harness, or a separate PFD and harness, may be required before boarding the vessel. Jacklines for tethering will be provided on each boat. It is the skipper's responsibility to set up the lines when needed.
5. The skipper shall provide a safety briefing for all crew at the beginning of a sail and ensure crew are following safety policies including use of PFDs.
6. Drugs or alcohol and boating do not mix. A vessel operator with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 has double the risk of collision compared with an operator who has not been drinking alcohol.
7. Operation of BSC vessels while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is prohibited. Any violation will result in the termination of the membership as well as reporting to the authorities.
8. If you are on prescription drugs, read the label or ask your doctor or pharmacist if they will affect your ability to operate a vessel or participate in water activities.
9. All boats are equipped with jacklines on both sides. Use of harnesses and tethers is mandatory when going on deck outside of daylight hours and may be required at other times by the skipper.
10. All vessels are equipped with USCG required safety equipment including 6 personal flotation devices, one type IV throwable, 2 fire extinguishers, 3 or more flares, an air horn, pollution regulation placards, navigation lights including sidelights, stern light, masthead light and an all-around anchor light. The skipper shall check for presence and function of such equipment prior to departure.
11. A float plan with the following information must be submitted prior to departure for any trips that go beyond 6nm from the BSC marina (White Rocks and beyond).
 1. Planned course for the trip
 2. Estimated return time
 3. Names and emergency contact information for all persons on board
12. Sailing beyond the Key Bridge is only permitted during daylight hours unless prior approval is provided by BSC management.
13. Sailing beyond the 40nm radius from the BSC marina is not permitted without prior approval by BSC management. Additional safety equipment and qualifications may be required.
14. BSC vessels shall not leave the docks if there is an active Gale Warning for the sailing area. BSC events are canceled if the sustained winds exceed 26kts as reported by the nearest NOAA station.

15. It is the skipper's responsibility to reduce sail area by reefing, furling or dropping sails when the winds are above 17kts sustained.
16. BSC vessels shall not sail if lightning is observed for a period of 30 minutes. If underway, seek shelter until conditions improve.
17. Every vessel is equipped with a fixed DSC capable VHF radio unit. Skipper and crew should be capable of its operation and the skipper is responsible for following any regulations regarding radio use. Skippers are required to carry a personal hand held VHF in addition. VHF Channels 16 and 13 shall be monitored at all times.
18. Swimming off the boats is inherently dangerous, due to cold water, fast moving currents, difficulty in getting swimmers aboard, and other factors. It is the responsibility of the skipper to assess the safety of a given situation before allowing swimming. Precautions for retrieving swimmers from the water, keeping a lookout at all times and for keeping them close to the boat need to be taken. **The skipper and crew shall accept entire responsibility for any injury or drowning that may occur from swimming and shall hold the Baltimore Sailing Center harmless against any and all claims pertaining to this activity.**
19. If you run aground, the skipper is responsible for calling towing assistance and recovery of the vessel. Any damage caused by grounding is the responsibility of the skipper. All groundings must be reported to BSC at the end of the reservation or event. BSC will then schedule inspection of the keel for damage.
20. The skipper is responsible for filling a log entry for use of the boat. The log entry should include information on all crew, engine hours, fuel and any issues noticed with the boat. Boat discrepancies can be reported in the boat reservation system during check-in after the trip. These reports are relayed to the maintenance group on Telegram automatically.
21. Use of the marine toilet (the "head") is available when underway. Please use the marina facilities if you are at the docks. The skipper is responsible for pumping out at the end of the session if the head is used.

Protecting the Environment

1. Under the US Federal laws, it is illegal to toss ANY garbage from a boat while you are anywhere in lakes, rivers, bays, sounds, and offshore in the ocean less than 3 miles from land.
2. Violations may result in civil penalties up to \$25,000, a fine of up to \$50,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to 5 years. Additionally, state anti-littering laws may also apply.
3. Remember that while on inland and coastal waters where most of us do our boating, no garbage should go overboard.
4. All garbage on BSC vessels must be retained on board until it can be discarded on shore.
5. The holding tank shall be used for all sewage and pumped out upon returning to a marina with the appropriate facilities.
6. Keep bilges clean. If bilge contains oil or fuel use polypropylene bilge socks to absorb any fuel or oil.
7. Dispose of used bilge socks, oily rags and waste oil facility at a waste oil station.
8. Do not overfill the diesel tank when refueling. Use absorbent mats and other precautions to prevent any spillage.
9. During refueling:
 - Only use low volume fuel stands; ask the operator which ones are low volume. Our tanks are too small for high volume fuel dispensers.
 - Make sure the fuel you are getting is diesel, not gasoline.
 - Don't start the dispenser until the outlet nozzle is securely in the tank fill hole.
 - Operate the fuel dispenser by hand, don't lock it open.
 - Carefully monitor the tank as it fills, using your hand to check for air escaping from the vent.
 - Have a cloth handy to clean up any spills.
10. After refueling:
 - Don't remove the filler hose until the fuel has stopped flowing.
 - Lift the filler hose to drain all residual fuel into the tank.
 - Check for any fuel which may have spilled onto the decks and clean up if necessary.
 - Leave boat wide open to ventilate and start the engine only once satisfied the boat is free of fumes.

Incident Reporting

1. Any incidents that qualify for reporting requirements must be reported to the authorities following state and federal laws:
 - a. A person is killed or disappears from the boat (must be reported within 48 hours).
 - b. A person requires medical treatment beyond first aid, loses consciousness or is disabled more than 24 hours (must be reported within 48 hours).
 - c. There is property damage in excess of \$2,000 (must be reported within 10 days).
2. Additionally any damage, equipment failure and injury onboard must be reported to the BSC management at the conclusion of the trip.

Emergency Action Plan

1. When a person, or the vessel is threatened by grave or imminent danger, and requires assistance, use the fixed VHF station to issue a MAYDAY DSC alert and a call. Keep in mind the boat's radio has a longer range than the handheld units.
2. Call 911 for any life threatening emergencies immediately, whether on land or on the water.
3. If you need to be towed due to grounding or equipment failure, call your on-the-water towing provider.
4. BSC management is not available to render immediate assistance in case of an emergency, however all on the water emergencies shall be reported at the conclusion of the trip using the on-line check-in system.

MAYDAY Procedure

- Use DSC (digital selective calling) functionality to issue a MAYDAY alert, choosing nature of distress as appropriate.
- On VHF radio channel 16, transmit a message as below speaking slowly, clearly and calmly:
 1. "MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY"
 2. "This is (name of your vessel x3) MMSI (MMSI number of your vessel)"
 3. "MAYDAY (name of your vessel)"
 4. "Our position is (latitude/longitude OR reference to a known geographical location)"
 5. (nature of your distress and assistance needed, ex. "we are sinking and require immediate assistance")
 6. "We have (number of people) people on board"
 7. Any addition information (ex. We are a 30 foot blue hulled sailing vessel)
 8. "Out"