

Baltimore Sailing Center Skipper Requirements

The Baltimore Sailing center conducts its own skipper checkouts regardless of experience or certifications of the skipper candidate. All skipper level members are subject to the requirements outlined below:

1. A sailing certification from a recognized authority subject to approval from BSC
2. 3 years of sailing experience on cruising boats with inboard engines
3. Safe boaters license recognized in the state of Maryland (regardless of state age requirements)
4. Proof of towing insurance from Tow Boat US or similar provider that covers the sailing area
5. Review and approval of a submitted sailing resume that describes the requirements in this document to be approved by BSC management
6. Successful completion of a minimum of 10 mentoring sessions with a BSC mentor More sessions may be required based on progress
7. A passing score on the rules of the road written examination that consists of USCG approved rules on the inland rules
8. On the water and verbal examination checkout that demonstrates competence in all skills documented in Appendix A of this document
 - Multiple sessions may be required if conditions do not permit demonstration of all skills

Appendix A – Skills Requirements

Candidates who wish to become skipper level members must demonstrate skills in the following areas:

1. Sailing a large keel boat both in light and heavy air

- Must be able to sail a given point of sail or compass course without sails luffing or boat veering off course more than 10 degrees
- Tack, jibe and heave-to safely and efficiently
- Put up and take down the sails properly

2. Operate a large keel boat under power

- You must have a safe boater license or a captain's license. This is required regardless of the age of the candidate
- Change gears correctly after throttling down and winding down in neutral
- Perform a pivot turn in tight quarters
- Understand the prop walk effect in reverse and use it to advantage if possible

3. Docking the boat and departure planning

- Analyze the forces acting on the boat and determine the best way to depart from the docks
- Use the boat's momentum to your advantage
- Understand the prop walk effect in reverse and use it to advantage if possible
- Employ the spring lines correctly to control the boat in adverse wind conditions
- Assign crew to handle the dock lines
- Bring the boat alongside the dock (within 2 ft) to a complete stop without any part of the hull touching the dock (fenders may touch)
- If getting into the slip, the boat must be stopped no more than 3/4 of the way in.
- Spring line should not be necessary to stop the boat
- Select the correct dock lines to use when operating with minimum crew

4. Anchoring the boat and weighing anchor

- Select a suitable area to drop anchor
- Check the anchor and rode

- Assign crew to handle the tasks
- Operate the vessel under power to approach the anchoring location and drop anchor and set it, verify it's not skipping or dragging
- Turn on the anchor light or hoist the proper day shape as required
- Explain how to perform anchor watch checks with transits
- Weigh anchor by bringing the vessel just above the anchor to make the rode vertical.
- Allow crew sufficient time to pull up the anchor

5. Reefing the sails

- Determine when to reef the sails
- Assign crew to tasks
- Reef the sails correctly
- Shake out the reef correctly

6. Person overboard recovery

- Must be able to explain the steps to perform steps to recover a person overboard, include use of engine and recovery under sail
- Must be able to execute a quick stop maneuver under sail by tacking while backing the jib, and then circling back to the victim in 15+ mph winds
- Must pick up the victim on the leeward side, with the boat stopped without getting into irons (close reach with main luffing)
- Must be able to describe how to physically get somebody out of the water and on board the vessel, especially if the victim is heavier than you can easily lift out
- Must be able explain hypothermia and how to deal with it

7. On board boat systems knowledge

- Diesel engine operation and basic troubleshooting
 - Describe the basic diesel principle and the differences
 - between gasoline engines and diesel engines
 - Perform checks such as oil, coolant, fuel level and belt tension
 - Explain the recommended engine startup and shutdown sequence
 - Identify major subsystems of a diesel engine

- Troubleshoot common no crank problems
- Explain diesel fuel line air bleed procedure
- Electrical systems and basic troubleshooting
 - Batteries and switches, voltage levels
 - Marine boat wiring and required navigation lights and visibility range
 - Shore power, solar panels and charging systems, alternator

8. Basic knot tying and general familiarity with lines and rigging

- Whipping the line ends, coiling the lines, securing the dock lines properly
- The knots candidate must be able to tie:
 - Bowline, also with Yosemite Finish or another way to secure it
 - Running bowline (or rolling/tautline hitch, adjustable grip hitch)
 - Clove hitch
 - Cleat hitch (US method, not the RYA/OXO method)
 - Girth hitch (similar to cow hitch)
 - Figure of 8 or similar stopper knot
 - Round turn and two half hitches
 - Sheet bend (or a variation like double sheet bend, zeppelin bend)
 - Slipped square knot.

9. Perform basic rig inspection to recognize common failures:

- Winches not operating correctly
- Fish hooks on the wires
- Missing cotter pins or ring dings
- Frayed lines, lifelines too loose.

10. Rules of the Road knowledge

- Must pass a written rules of the road test
- Must be able to analyze on-the-water boat-on-boat situations correctly and answer questions related to the rules.

11. Commanding and instructing the crew.

- In all procedures involving the crew, skipper candidate must be able to give clear instructions and commands so that the crew can execute them safely. This skill is evaluated by the mentors continuously during the sessions.
- Brief the crew on the boat systems and provide basic orientation before departure.
- Must remember the name of each person on board and address them directly when giving commands.
- Be aware of crew capabilities and limitations not to put anybody in an unsafe situation.
- Exhibit a calm and confident demeanor to gain crew's trust and handle emergencies without making things worse.

12. Member policy and guidelines knowledge. The candidate:

- Must be familiar with the sailing center safety policies and agree to follow them
- Must be familiar with the member policies and guidelines
- Must return the boat safely and leave it in ship-shape condition
- Must report any discrepancies or mishaps through the online boat check-in procedure and by contacting the boat manager or cruising program manager as needed.
- Make a proper entry in the ship's log before and after the trip.

13. Weather-related warnings and their interpretations

- Understand the 4 basic weather elements: Temperature, pressure, atmospheric activity and winds.
- Check weather prediction sites and other sources before and during the voyage.
- Correctly decide when to seek shelter, reduce sail area or postpone a trip
- Know the best practices if caught in a lightning storm

14. VHF radio usage and emergency signals

- Demonstrate proper VHF radio usage and channel selection and DSC procedures
- Explain the difference between mayday, pan-pan and sécurité calls
- Demonstrate ability to make a proper mayday call including latitude and longitude information
- Be familiar with radio range limitations, line-of-sight communication etc
- Explain other emergency signals and when to use them
- Explain the obligations of a mariner in different emergency situations

15. Handling on board emergencies other than person overboard

- No functional engine emergency docking at the T-head
- Fire on board, extinguisher usage
- Medical emergencies and common situations such as sea sickness
- Running aground and self-rescue attempts
- Rope or crab pot fouling the prop
- AED usage and CPR - not tested but taking an official First Aid w/AED class is highly encouraged

16. Reading marine charts and basic navigation

- Explain chart symbols, scale and indicators
- Explain channel marks and buoy system
- Perform basic plotting and measurements on a paper chart
- Explain waypoints and GPS coordinates to locate things based on lat/lon on a chart

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