ISORA – Irish Sea Offshore Racing Association

Skippers Briefing – Pre-Race Crew Meeting (Template)

This template is updated following the Sydney Hobart Incident Report to include a new section on heavy Weather downwind sailing, tether release systems, and AIS MOB Beacons.

PLEASE USE THIS TEMPLATE TO SET UP YOUR CREW BRIEFING STARTING WITH A DETAILED EXPLANATION DESCRIPTION OF THE BOAT TO ALL CREW

ISORA has share its risk assessment for the race, and in providing mitigation and to allow the race to proceed, ISORA relies on the Skipper conducting a boat specific Safety Briefing before the race with all crew present.

This briefing template is specific for Cat 3 + Life-raft Racesthat is all ISORA Offshore Races).

Responsibility - Person In Charge

Yacht racing can be dangerous. The attention of Persons in Charge is drawn to RRS Fundamental Rule 3: "The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone" and to Special Regulation 1.02.1 which begins: "The safety of a yacht and her crew is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the Person in Charge…."

Sailing is by its nature an unpredictable sport and therefore inherently involves an element of risk. By taking part in the event, each competitor agrees and acknowledges that:

a) they are aware of the inherent element of risk involved in the sport and accept responsibility for the exposure of themselves, their crew and their boat to such inherent risk whilst taking part in the event.

b) they are responsible for the safety of themselves, their crew, their boat and their other property whether afloat or ashore.

c) they accept responsibility for any injury, damage or loss to the extent caused by their own actions or omission.

d) their boat is in good order, equipped to sail in the event and they are fit to participate.

e) the provision of a race management team and other officials and volunteers by the event organiser does not relieve them of their own responsibilities.

f) they are responsible for ensuring that their boat is equipped and seaworthy so as to face extremes of weather; that there is a crew sufficient in number, experience and fitness to withstand such weather; and that the safety equipment is properly maintained, stowed, in date and familiar to the crew. they are responsible for ensuring that their boat is equipped and seaworthy so as to face extremes of weather; that there is a crew sufficient in number, experience and fitness to withstand such weather; and that the safety equipment is properly maintained, stowed, in date and familiar to the crew.

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Responsibility - Starting and Continuing to Race

Each boat shall exercise her responsibility under RRS Fundamental Rule 3 and decide whether or not to start or to continue to race.

Before Racing Skippers must consider the following:

'Is my boat and crew capable of competing safely in this race, taking full regard of the expected weather conditions, duration of the race, and confident that my boat complies with the specified WS category of this race and the associated safety requirements'.

DSC – VHF calls

- Describe the procedure for the use of the VHF in an emergency (have you a handy crib sheet at your nav station with Call Sign and MMSI No? – use our template here
- Ensure crew understand the need to listen on Channel 16 for the whole race (dual watch with the racing Channel)

EPIRB

- Describe the use of the EPIRB (if you have one – mandatory for Category 2 races eg Fastnet /Round Ireland)

Life Jackets

- Ensure that all crew have an Ocean-Going Life Jacket with hood, light and whistle
- Ensure they are always worn but mandatory in the following instances:
    - Between sunset and sunrise
    - Main sail reefed or being reefed
    - Visibility less than 1 mile
    - Wind greater than 18 knots
    - Alone on deck
    - On the instructions of the skipper or watch leader

Harness Release Systems

When weather conditions warrant, the use of tethers is encouraged and if a crew member does end up in the water, staying connected to the boat is generally safer than being unattached.

However, in the event of going overboard, you can be dragged or trapped alongside or behind the boat. The option to quickly release a safety line can be lifesaving.

- Explain how the tether is released underload by the person in the water.

Man-Overboard

- Describe the procedure at the dock including locating the position on your Chart Plotter
- Describe the recovery procedure
- Demonstrate both pre-race

Template

AIS and Personal Beacons

If you do fall overboard, the best chance of rescue is most likely to be your own boat. In any MOB situation the most important thing to know is where is the person in the water.

AIS MOB Beacon provided the vital link for the boat to zero in on the person in the water – a simple direct link between the beacon) and the boat (the receiver) – not dependent on any other human input or system interface.

- Ensure that any personal AIS beacon is compatible with the boat systems.
- Describe and demonstrate on the Chart Plotter
- Ensure that the AIS is watched appropriately for the conditions
- Explain link to Personal Beacons

Downwind Heavy Weather Sailing

Downwind sailing in strong winds can be one of the most challenging points of sailing – boats are capable of very high speeds with equipment under significant load. Experience and skill is required to handle the boat and this starts with setting up the boat appropriately for the conditions.

In certain condition things can 'go wrong' very quickly and the consequences might be dire, leading to serious injury or major damage.

- Please set out your downwind sailing management strategy/policy which should include points such as;
    - the dangers of a 'crash gybe',
    - the danger areas on the boat during a crash gybe.
    - pre-planned sail configurations to keep the boat balanced and controllable without being over-powered at different wind speeds and sea states;
    - identifying dangerous crew positions and how crew can avoid them;
    - heightened awareness of dangerous rigging or pieces of the boat's structure that need to be avoided.
    - The angles to be sailed by all primary and secondary helms.

Flares

- Describe and demonstrate

Abandoning Ship

- Describe the procedure and the use of the liferaft

Rigging

- Fully explain all rigging components
- Describe and demonstrate how the main boom preventer is rigged and safely released in tack/ gybes

Dismasting

- Describe the tidy up procedure – bolt croppers etc

Storm Sails

Template

- Describe and demonstrate the use of storm sails

Emergency Rudder Steering

- Describe and demonstrate the use of emergency rudder

Fire Precaution and Fighting

- Describe and demonstrate

Communications

- Explain clearly the chain of command on board

Heads

- Make sure that all crew are aware of the proper use of the heads – 'the speech'. There are no plumbers at sea.

Trash

- Ensure the crew understand the need to retain trash and to follow the doctrine of "leave no trace"

THIS IS A TEMPLATE AS A GUIDE FOR SKIPPERS ON THE MATTERS TO BE COVERED AT THE CREW BRIEFING – PLEASE ADD YOUR OWN NOTES TO THIS LIST -

Template