



# Swiftsure International Yacht Race

Hosted by the Royal Victoria Yacht Club



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

## 2019

### Handbook Content

This Handbook provides you with an overview of this historic race, along with core information on the various responsibilities of the many volunteer roles. Further details on your specific tasks will be provided by your team leader. This Handbook includes:

- Swiftsure: RVYC's signature Race Week
- The Critical Role of Volunteers
- Definition of a Swiftsure Volunteer
- Volunteer Organization
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*Thank you for volunteering for this year's Swiftsure!*

Welcome to the Swiftsure International Yacht Race. Thank you for participating as a volunteer for our event and we are looking forward to having you on our team. We recognize that your commitment and expertise is one of the most valuable assets to the success of this event – we couldn't do it without you! As a volunteer for Swiftsure, you will work alongside more than 200 dedicated and resourceful volunteers, RVYC members and non-members alike. We believe that a clear understanding of the working agreement between the Club, the Swiftsure Committee and Volunteers is the basis for a harmonious and productive environment. This document has been developed in order to explain in detail what the Swiftsure Committee of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club offers to and asks of its volunteers. Thank you again for your support. We hope that your experience proves to be both enjoyable and rewarding.

Sincerely,

Dr. Roger Hind,  
Commodore,  
Royal Victoria Yacht Club

Andrew McBride,  
Event Chair,  
Swiftsure International Yacht Race

## **Volunteers are Vital**

The Swiftsure International Yacht Race is organized and run by the Royal Victoria Yacht Club and takes place each year in May; on the weekend following the Victoria Holiday weekend in Canada. It consists of a number of races over various courses, starting off Clover Point in Victoria on Saturday morning.

Swiftsure relies completely on a large group of dedicated and hardworking volunteers whose mission is to make the event an enjoyable and memorable experience for all race participants, their families and guests and members of the public who take interest in the event. We work hard to create a festival atmosphere to encourage community awareness and involvement.

## **Swiftsure Volunteer Roles**

Approximately 100 volunteers are involved in the actual running of the races. The majority of these individuals have extensive experience in the various activities involved. These include: starting and finishing the races, recording mark rounding times of competitors, managing an extensive radio communications network, inspecting boats to ensure safety requirements are met and recording and finalizing results.

Swiftsure requires an additional 100 volunteers who are involved in setting up and taking down the various event venues, docking yachts as they arrive for the event, greeting competitors and providing information, checking in yacht skippers and giving them their skippers packages and transponders, assisting with trophies and award ceremonies, serving at the Racers/Sponsors party, selling drink tickets and assisting with crowd control at the Friday evening Dock Party and helping setup for the Silent Auction at the Volunteer and Sponsors BBQ.

If you volunteer between 4 and 6 hours of time to the overall Swiftsure event, you will be considered a volunteer and enjoy all the privileges/perks offered to event volunteers, including a T-shirt. We welcome volunteers from the community and from other sailing associations. And if you're accompanying a sailor to Victoria, we'd welcome your involvement! There is no requirement for volunteers to be members of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, apart from key positions on the Swiftsure Committee.

## Volunteer Organization

The Swiftsure Committee is a standing committee of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. It is led by the Event Chair and is constituted of members who oversee the various areas of event activity. In 2019, committee members include.

Event Chair: Andrew McBride

Special Advisor: Vern Burkhardt

Race Management: Mike Cowley

Registration: Ann Steele

Logistics: Brian Shorter

Sponsorship: Deborah Tolman

Media Relations: TBD

Technology: Dennis MacMillan

Trophies and Awards: Guy Tyrwhitt-Drake

Event Coordination: TBD

Volunteer Coordination: Peter Testemale [volunteer@swiftsure.org](mailto:volunteer@swiftsure.org)

Each area of event activity is managed by one or more teams focused on delivering, or supporting the range of specialized tasks needed to ensure that the Race Week goes smoothly. Each team has a team lead reporting to the responsible Committee Member.

- **Race Management:** This group is responsible for the actual running of the race. It includes the Race Committee, which is made up the Start Line and Finish Line teams and representatives on mark rounding vessels. It also includes the Radio Communications Team which provides radio communication between competitors and race organizers prior to and during the races. In addition, Race Management also includes the Check-In Team which confirms that registration requirements are fully met when competitors arrive and distributes skipper's packages and transponders (for competitor tracking) on the Thursday and Friday before the Race. The Inspection Dock Team is also part of the Race Management Team. It inspects competitor vessels to ensure safety requirements are met, and collects race cards and transponders after competitors finish the race. In addition, Race Management organizes Swiftsure's myriad marine support organizations such as the Royal Canadian Navy and RCM-SAR.
- **Registration:** This group consists of the Registrar and Assistant Registrar who ensure that all yachts requesting entry in the event meet requirements, and pay the required fees prior to the event. In addition, they also support the Check –In Team on the 2 days prior to the race.
- **Logistics:** This group is made up a number of teams responsible for the set-up and take down of signage and equipment at most of the event venues, and the organization and delivery of supplies to many of the venues. In addition, Logistics teams run a number of

event operations including docking assistance, welcoming services for competitors, and operating the Information booth that provides Swiftsure and services-related information to both competitors and the public.

- **Technology:** This group is responsible for delivering all the IT requirements of the event including Race Tracking.
- **Sponsorship:** This team is responsible for recruiting and working with event sponsors before, during and after the event. It also organizes silent auction prizes and conducts the auction at the Volunteer/Sponsors BBQ.
- **Media & Public Relations:** This team is responsible for all media communications and publicity arrangements including photographic coverage of the races.
- **Trophies and Awards:** This team is responsible for perpetual and keeper trophies and pennants, organization of the awards presentation as well as the maintenance of race result records.
- **Event Coordination:** This group is responsible for the organization and management of parties and social events including soup service to racers at the Inspection Dock after they finish their race.
- **Volunteer Coordination:** This group is responsible for recruiting, organizing and supporting all the volunteers who make the event possible.

## Orientation

Orientation for each team will be held in May ahead of the Swiftsure Race Week to outline duties and coordinate shifts to be worked. Wherever possible new volunteers will be assigned to work with an experienced volunteer on a “buddy system”.

## Volunteer Appreciation

In addition to being part of a remarkable yachting and community event, both volunteers and sponsors receive the following privileges and perks in appreciation for their important role:

- A souvenir Swiftsure T-Shirt
- Access to the Volunteer and Sponsor recognition BBQ and Silent Auction
- Opportunity to enjoy beverages with the racers at the Friday dock party and Inshore Race Event at RVYC when not on duty

## **Swiftsure Activities**

Some volunteers are busy in the months prior to Swiftsure organizing everything from registration to marketing and race details. Others are most active in the five days of the race week, supporting all the activities noted below. As you review this overview, you'll appreciate the diverse and complex tasks that come together in the Swiftsure Race Week. Note that specific times for many activities are set by the team lead closer to the event:

### **Wednesday**

- Boats start arriving at RVYC, the Causeway in front of the Empress and at Ship Point in the Inner Harbour and are met and assisted by volunteer docking crews.
- International arriving boats are guided by a volunteer-manned RHIB to Customs clearance and then to their docking assignment.
- Set-up volunteers hang event and sponsor banners, docking signage, signal flags and erect a flagpole on the Causeway dock.

### **Thursday**

- Docking continues at RVYC and the Inner Harbour.
- The information booth is set up on the Causeway float and staffed by volunteer yacht ambassadors.
- Club foreshore staff set up a tent at the finish line on McLoughlin Point in Esquimalt and trailers are delivered there and at Ship Point.
- Registration volunteers set up and open the Registration area from 1400 to 2000 on the Causeway floating dock.
- Between 1900 and 2100 there is a Racers/Sponsors party on a Prince of Whales vessel with volunteers controlling entry and serving appetizers.

### **Friday**

- Docking continues, starting at 0800 and concluding at 2000
- Registration opens at 1000 and closes at 1800
- The information booth is opened at 1000 by Yacht Ambassadors
- The finish line set up between Ogden Pt. and McLoughlin Point on Anson Rd. in Esquimalt
- Awards ceremony for last years winners is held at the Strathcona Hotel at 1530, preceded by a Technical Presentation and followed by the Skippers' Meeting
- Between 1900 and 2200 there is a Dock party for the racers, sponsors and invited guests on the Causeway float. Volunteers are involved in ticket selling, crowd control and to assist the band in moving equipment down and up.

## **Saturday**

- Mark boat volunteers board mark vessels and proceed to marks
- Start boat volunteers and invited guests board start vessels and disembark after all races have started
- Safety boat representatives board safety boats; a volunteer is assigned to each safety boat during the start.
- Photographers board boats
- Clover Point set-up volunteers arrive at 0700 and pack-up after all activities are concluded. During the event they assist with crowd control.
- Pin and volunteer crew arrive at Clover Point and set up starting pin. Start line is between the pin and the naval vessel offshore.
- Media relations and volunteer announcers arrive at Clover Point.
- Radio communications volunteer team leave for Sombrio Pt. (between Jordan River and Port Renfrew) and establish radio communications for the duration of the races.
- Beginning at 0900 Swiftsure races start off Clover Point at 10 minute intervals.
- Finish line volunteers set up in Cadboro Bay for the Inshore Race.
- Docking crew volunteers arrive at RVYC and stay until the last boats have finished and docked.
- At 1730 the Inshore Race Prize giving, and BBQ are held at RVYC
- At 1800 the finish line volunteers arrive at McLoughlin Pt. and the finish line is crewed continuously until the last boat finishes or until 0600 on Monday.
- At 1800 the Inspection Dock and Soup Server volunteers set up at the inspection dock, and maintain this station continuously until the last boat finishes or until 0600 on Monday.

## **Sunday**

- Mark boats start returning when all boats have rounded or by 1400 when the time limits have expired
- Most non-RVYC Inshore racers leave RVYC or the Inner Harbour for home
- Finish line, Inspection and Soup Serving volunteers go to minimal crews (2 each) by 2000

## **Monday**

- Race activities cease and operations are shut down, either when the last boat has finished and cleared the inspection dock or at 0600 Monday when the race time limit expires.
- Sombrio Radio volunteers return.
- Take down volunteers and foreshore staff remove all signage, trailers, tents and committee boats from the Inner Harbour by 1100
- Finish line trailer and tent are cleaned and removed.

## **Tuesday**

- Sponsorship volunteers set up the Silent Auction at RVYC
- Volunteer and Sponsors Appreciation BBQ begins at 1730 – complimentary food and a drink for a job well done!

## **Communications**

**Volunteers and the Media:** Most enquiries from the media should be directed to Andrew McBride, Swiftsure's Event Chair, or to individual specifically identified as spokespersons for the event.

You may be asked a number of questions by a variety of people, including members of the media. Please be a good ambassador and be as helpful as possible. Should the media ask you a question while on duty, it is important to know what you may and may not say. Here are some guidelines:

- **What you MAY talk to the media about:**
  - Why you volunteered and the role you play as a volunteer
  - Your enjoyment of the event
  - Any practical information about the event such as when and where the races start
- **What you should not talk to the media about:**
  - Financial arrangements between the event and sponsors
  - Personal information about participants, volunteers, and/or Swiftsure Committee members
  - Security or emergency issues
  - Noise or crowd issues
  - Incidents involving race boats, participants, visitors, families of our racers, or volunteers
  - The race itself or other aspects of the event for which you do not have detailed or accurate information

**Confidentiality:** As a volunteer, you may have access to some personal information of the race participants, committee members, or other volunteers. If someone asks you for that information, it is important to remember that information of this nature is private and/or confidential. Always be helpful and understanding while explaining why you cannot give out such information. If you sense it is of great importance for the inquirer to contact someone, you can indicate that you will pass on their contact information to the person in question.

**Incident Reporting:** Emergency incidents such as fire or medical injury should be reported by calling 911, and immediately thereafter by contacting a shift team leader, the Swiftsure Ambassador, or a member of the Swiftsure Committee.

Other unusual or troubling situations or incidents should be immediately reported to a shift team leader, the Swiftsure Ambassador, or a member of the Swiftsure Committee. Incidents of a less serious nature should also be reported in a timely fashion.

Volunteers should also familiarize themselves with the Safety Plan which details action to be taken in various types of emergencies. This can be found by going to [Swiftsure.org](http://Swiftsure.org).

## **Environmental Goals**

For volunteers, your consideration towards keeping Swiftsure sound. Swiftsure Volunteers are expected to make all reasonable efforts to ensure the event is conducted in a safe, clean and environmentally sound manner.

## **Parking**

You are required to make your own way to the site where you will be performing your volunteer role. Check if free parking has been prearranged by the event coordinator; otherwise you are responsible for your parking fees. Of course, travelling by bicycle or public transportation contributes to Swiftsure's environmental goals.

## **Refreshments**

Volunteers are responsible for any snacks or meals they may wish while on duty. In some cases, your duty Team Leader for the shift may have organized some refreshments during late night shifts.

## General Information on the Swiftsure International Yacht Race

The more you know about Swiftsure, the more you'll enjoy your volunteer role! Here is some general information that may be useful. For a comprehensive overview of The Swiftsure International Yacht Race, please visit the website at <http://www.swiftsure.org/>.

### Five Races:

- **Swiftsure Lightship Classic** (black) to Swiftsure Bank in the Pacific Ocean and back to Victoria (138.2 nautical miles (nm))
- **Hein Bank Race** (blue) to Neah Bay near the Strait of Juan de Fuca western entrance, to a weather buoy south of Juan de Fuca Island, and back to Victoria (118.1 nm)
- **Cape Flattery Race** (red) to Neah Bay near the Strait of Juan de Fuca western entrance and back to Victoria (101.9 nm)
- **Juan de Fuca Race** (yellow) to Clallam Bay on the US side of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and back to Victoria (78.7 nm)
- **The Inshore Classic Race** course set on race day, depending on weather predictions and tidal currents, in the vicinity of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the Victoria waterfront, Trial Island and in the vicinity of Haro Strait finishing in Cadboro Bay near RVYC.



**Participation:** Swiftsure competitors come from all points in the Pacific Northwest and sometimes as far away as California. You'll see that all sailboats that have registered for the race are identified under the Registration, Registered Yachts <http://2019.swiftsure.org/registered-yachts/> drop-down menu and, for most, there is background information about the boat, the race it's in, its crew and even a picture. Also, there are interesting photos under the Photos & Videos drop-down menu plus many stories on the home page under News.

**Race Tracker:** Swiftsure has developed a system to track the progress of each sailboat participating in the four distance courses, each returning to Victoria near Odgen Point. The race tracker SPOT transponder units on each boat transmit their position every 10 minutes from the race start until each sailboat finishes or withdraws from the race. Volunteers can see the Race Tracker system by going to the Swiftsure Race Tracker page: Race Info, [Swiftsure Race Tracker](#). Until the 2019 race begins, you can also replay the 2018 race by clicking 'OK' after selecting the 2018 Race Tracker button.

**Brief History of Swiftsure:** The first recorded sailboat racing in the Victoria area was in the late 1850's, between boats of the Royal Navy and the early colonists. Interest in the sport grew in the following decades and, by 1930, a long distance race from Cadboro Bay around the Lightship on Swiftsure Bank, at the entrance to the Juan de Fuca Strait, was organized. There were six entrants from yacht clubs in Victoria, Vancouver and Seattle. By 1960, forty-five boats were entered in this now-classic race. In the following year, the Lightship was removed from service, and race yachts in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic rounded a Royal Canadian Navy vessel temporarily on station at the same location.

In 1962, after considerable grumbling by skippers of boats too small to go to "the Bank", the Royal Victoria Yacht Club introduced the shorter Juan de Fuca race to Clallam Bay, some fifteen miles west of Port Angeles. Like the granddaddy classic, it started with modest beginnings. In the first year of the Juan de Fuca race, there were but four entries; by 1969 this had risen to forty-nine boats.

With increased participation, and faced with only two courses, one of 138.2 miles and the other of only 78.7 miles, the race organizers and many skippers found themselves in a dilemma: many boats wanted a more challenging race although they didn't want to go all the way to the Bank. The solution was the introduction in 1988 of the Cape Flattery race to Neah Bay, 101.9 miles in length, halfway between the Swiftsure Bank and the Clallam Bay courses. This has proved to be very popular, and attracts larger boats.

In 2015, a fourth course, Hein Bank Race, was introduced. At 118.1 nautical miles, this course holds appeal for fast racing sleds that wish for good competition but are not prepared for the challenging conditions experienced in the open ocean in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic race course. <<Also the casual day race could be noted here>>

The community of Victoria has embraced Swiftsure. In the post-war years, the Swiftsure Committee negotiated the use of Eaton's (the largest local department store of the day) display window at the corner of Douglas & View in downtown Victoria to serve as the Swiftsure headquarters. A large map of the race course was installed, and race progress was shown by moving miniature boats across the map grids. As the numbers of yachts increased, this became a daunting task. Nonetheless, the event, and this way of graphically displaying progress, was much appreciated by Victorians. As one observer said, "People used to line the sidewalks, sit on the curbs. There was a feeling of excitement right there, in the middle of town."

And for almost 70 years, the community has followed the race on the radio. Humphrey Golby served as the Voice of Swiftsure from the first broadcast when “Dose crazy yotsmen” competed with the fisherman's band to reach the outside world during the 1952 race. Radio station CKDA pioneered with the limited ship-to-shore equipment of the day and “The voice was born”. When L'Apache's (later Diamond Head) broke her backstay, the whole community followed the excitement. Swiftsure coverage expanded when Harold Elworthy's Island Tug and Barge Company generously provided tugboats for the press.

For more details on the biggest yacht race on the Pacific Coast, refer to *Swiftsure: The First Fifty Years*, by Humphrey Golby and Shirley Hewitt, 1980 (no longer in print but available in libraries).