



Royal Victoria Yacht Club
Home of the Swiftsure International Yacht Race



Swiftsure International Yacht Race

Safety Policy

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the key aspects of safety measures and processes used by the Swiftsure Organizing Authority. It also provides the rationale for the designated category of the races within the Safety Equipment Requirements and the exceptions that have been made to the requirements.

ORGANIZING AUTHORITY

The Royal Victoria Yacht Club (RVYC) has a Standing Committee that is delegated responsibility to act as the Organizing Authority for the Swiftsure International Yacht Race. The members of this Swiftsure Committee are all volunteers, with administrative support provided by RVYC's office staff. The Principal Race Officer (PRO) for the race sits on this committee; the other members are the Chair, Special Advisor, Race Director, Head of Technology, Head of Trophies and Awards, Head of Media Relations and Webmaster, Head of Sponsorship, Head of Logistics, Registrar, and Volunteer Coordinator.

The Organizing Authority issues the Notices of Race (NoRs) while the PRO is responsible to issue the Sailing Instructions (SIs) and for running the race. Swiftsure's PRO is a World Sailing certified International Race Officer. The Race Officers (RO) and members of the Race Subcommittee (described in the next section) report to the PRO. The Official Judge for the race is a World Sailing International Judge. The Official Judge is in a dedicated jury boat to observe the 6 starts, chairs the protest committee, advises the Organizing Authority related to the NoRs or other aspects of the race, and advises the PRO related to the Sailing Instructions.

Safety is an overriding priority in all aspects of running the race. There is a healthy safety culture within the Swiftsure Committee and Race Management Subcommittee which encourages continuous improvement, and suggestions are welcome from everyone. Financial resources are allocated and steps taken to ensure good communication with the racing fleet during the race. A close working relationship exists with the Victoria Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) and Marine Communication and Traffic Services (MCTS) during advance planning and during the race.

RUNNING THE RACE

The PRO chairs the Race Management Subcommittee. It is composed of the PRO, Race Director, Event Chair, and leads of Radio Communications, Inspection Dock, Results, and Finish Line (Inshore and Four Long Courses). The Heads organize and coordinate the activities of their volunteers in order to support the PRO in providing the highest possible calibre of race management.

The Swiftsure International Yacht Race is composed of Four Long Courses and the Swiftsure Inshore Classic. The courses are as follows:

Four Long Courses

1. Swiftsure Lightship Classic Race for Monohulls (PHRF handicap class and ORC handicap class) -- from a starting line at Clover Point, leaving a mark at Swiftsure Bank to port, and crossing a finish line across the Victoria Harbour – 138.2 NM
2. Hein Bank Race for Monohulls (ORC handicap class) -- from a starting line at Clover Point, leaving a mark at Neah Bay to port, leaving to port the ODAS 46088 (located about 5 nautical miles bearing approximately 238⁰ M from Hein Bank, and crossing a finish line across the Victoria Harbour – 118.1 NM
3. Cape Flattery Race for Monohulls (PHRF handicap) and for Multihulls (PHRF handicap) -- from a starting line at Clover Point, leaving a mark at Neah Bay to port, and crossing a finish line across the Victoria Harbour – 101.9 NM.
4. Juan de Fuca Race for Monohulls (PHRF handicap rating of 40 or slower) and for Multihulls (PHRF handicap) -- from a starting line at Clover Point, leaving a mark at Clallam Bay to port, and crossing a finish line across the Victoria Harbour – 78.7 NM

Swiftsure Inshore Classic

There are separate races for Monohull Flying Sails, Cruising Flying Sails, and Cruising Non-flying Sails. The PRO determines the course for each of the Races after consideration of the weather prediction and tidal currents, and this is announced to racers on the morning of the race. The racecourse area is from a starting line at Clover Point and occurs in the vicinity of Juan de Fuca Strait and the Victoria waterfront reaching from William Head to Trial Island, and in the vicinity of Haro Strait, as far easterly as Beaumont Shoal and northerly to D'Arcy Shoals and Zero Rock. The finish is in Cadboro Bay near the Royal Victoria Yacht Club.

Having four long courses and the inshore course complicates race management.

A Meteorological Monitoring Protocol (to track actual and forecast winds) has been implemented and is reviewed annually to ensure it is current, and takes into account lessons learned from prior years and input from various sources such as other races, Environment

Canada, and JRCC Victoria. The 2019 protocol has been published on the Swiftsure website, and is part of the PRO's orientation and training of race management volunteers and of the Communications Lead for Radio Operations volunteers. Necessary steps are taken to ensure up-to-date information is received from Environment Canada concerning wind and wave observations and predictions prior to the start and during the race, and arrangements are in place for briefings from Environment Canada should wind warnings/advisories be issued. During the race, the Radio Operators provide the PRO and duty RO's with hourly updates of weather observations in various locations of the racing area – these are automated reports especially designed for managing the race event.

RACE ENVIRONMENT

The Juan de Fuca Strait poses a number of challenges for Swiftsure racers and the Organizing Authority implements measures to continually assess and mitigate risks. Not all racers are accustomed to sailing in such waters where the commercial vessels can be steaming at 22+ knots.

There is a Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), which is recognized by the International Maritime Organization, in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Haro Strait. Puget Sound Vessel Traffic Service ("Seattle Traffic") and the Victoria and Prince Rupert MCTS Centres ("Victoria Traffic" and "Prince Rupert Traffic") provide timely information to participating vessels regarding traffic movement, weather, and hazards to navigation. Swiftsure boats are not participating vessels in the TSS, and therefore they are not required to report and obtain a traffic clearance when crossing the TSS. This further necessitates that boats be vigilant in keeping a constant watch.

Naval vessels most often do not broadcast an Automatic Identification System (AIS) transmission but Seattle Traffic, Victoria Traffic, and Prince Rupert Traffic are aware of location, direction and speed of these vessels.



There is a relatively strong current that can set up a steep wave pattern when opposed by wind. Fog can occur as well to impede visibility, and racers will be sailing at night to further the challenge. Many sailors have encountered all of the foregoing issues at one time or another but rarely together.

The water itself poses another consideration – a prevailing sea temperature of ~10°C means cold water shock and the risk of hypothermia exists if a racer is swept overboard. And the risk of drowning is increased significantly if the person in the water is not wearing a personal flotation device. MOB recovery is a challenge and even more so at night.

While there have been instances of MOB, dismasting, and grounding in some previous races, there has only been one fatality since Swiftsure's inception in 1930 – a most commendable record given the challenges of the race. In the 1976 race, Wilbur Willard, skipper of *Native Dancer*, was swept out of the cockpit after grounding off Bonilla Point in a 30-35 knot gale. This plus fatalities in other races in other parts of the world are strong reminders that safety is a paramount consideration in sailboat racing.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

In response to the risks identified above, the Organizing Authority ensures that a number of measures are implemented. This includes, but is not limited to, the following actions.

Weather and Currents

An experienced meteorologist provides a weather briefing at the Skippers' Meeting the afternoon prior to the race. The PRO and ROs follow Swiftsure's Meteorological Monitoring Protocol when making a decision about whether to start or postpone the start, or abandon races in one or more courses in the event of existing or forecasted high winds and hazardous sea states.

An oceanographic expert from Ocean Networks Canada (located at the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of Victoria) provides a briefing to skippers about the currents they may encounter during the race. This expert also produces hourly current predictions for all of the Swiftsure racing area, and these are posted well in advance on the Swiftsure website. Skippers and navigators are advised of their existence through the Notice of Race and email from the Event Chair.

Crew Lists

Having accurate crew lists for every competing boat before they cross the start line is emphasized. Skippers or their designates are able to enter their crew lists together with emergency contact names and telephone numbers online when they register, and these lists can be updated as required. When Skippers check in at Swiftsure, which is a mandatory requirement, they are asked to review online their crew list and assistance is given to amend it if needed. Also, boats are expected to advise Swiftsure Communications via VHF radio, email, or

phone the morning of the race, should they have any crew changes. And the importance of accurate crew lists in the event of a Search and Rescue (SAR) incident is stressed at the Skippers' Meeting.

The JRCC has direct access to the electronic crew lists during the race should they be needed for a SAR incident.

Communication with Fleet

Notwithstanding Racing Rules of Sailing's Fundamental Racing Rule #4, ("The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone."), one of the key aspects of safety is the ability to communicate with racers for the duration of the race or, should an abandonment of the race be necessary, until they reach safe haven. It is also necessary to keep in contact with boats which have withdrawn from the race until they reach safe haven. This is accomplished through use of VHF 26, which Innovation, Science and Economic Development designates for Swiftsure's use during the race.

Skippers and navigators are reminded in the Sailing Instructions of the need to monitor VHF 26 in case they are hailed by the Race Committee.

Qualified radio operators serve as the communications hub for the PRO and the ROs (using VHF signals transmitted via radio tower at Mount Matheson). Radio operators and a transmitter are also stationed at Sombrio Point throughout the period of time that racers are in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca. They are able to relay messages between competitors and the radio operators in Victoria should traffic via Mount Matheson not function with a specific racer. In addition, the radio operators at Sombrio Point have a Digital Selective Calling (DSC) capable VHF radio, which can be used to contact a specific boat if it has failed to report in as required. All traffic with competitors is duly logged.

Notwithstanding the Race Committee's communications capabilities, it is stated in the Sailing Instructions that if a competitor requires emergency assistance they should contact the Coast Guard on VHF 16, and use DSC on their VHF radios which would alert other race boats within VHF range.

For all courses boats are required to have a cellular or satellite phone aboard for use in case their boat's VHF and portable VHF radios are not working. However, cellular phone coverage is unreliable in the western part of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Carrying satellite phones is not mandatory, but for those who have it aboard it provides much more reliable coverage than mobile phones.

Location of Commercial Vessels

To assist Swiftsure boats to keep a watch, avoid collision, impeding or obstructing fast-moving commercial vessels, Seattle Traffic, Victoria Traffic, and Prince Rupert Traffic make half hourly

broadcasts on VHF channel 09 of commercial traffic in real time (i.e., current position of vessels, direction, and speed) at 15 minutes and 45 minutes past the hour. These broadcasts cover all of the TSS areas located within the racecourses. Boats are issued a VTS Grid chart for reference when listening to these VTS commercial shipping broadcasts. The Sailing Instructions indicate that all boats shall monitor VHF channel 09 for Vessel Traffic Services (“VTS”) broadcasts in the following circumstances even if monitoring AIS:

- Before entering a VTS Lane; and
- While operating in a VTS Lane or in a VTS Separation Zone.

In the Rules section, the Sailing Instructions reinforce that boats shall not impede or obstruct commercial traffic and further that a boat whose actions or manoeuvres result in a danger signal (5 or more blasts) from commercial or military traffic shall be protested by the race committee.

Even those boats that monitor Automatic Identification System (AIS) transmissions while racing are advised to listen to the VTS commercial shipping broadcasts prior to entering and while within VTS Lane or VTS Separation Zoned. This is because the US Navy is not obligated to transmit AIS information so these potential hazards will remain unknown to racers if they do not monitor the VTS broadcasts. Similarly, the position of commercial vessels that have a malfunctioning AIS transmitter would otherwise remain unknown.

Location of Fleet

Knowing the location of competing boats is important, but it is not expected that exact locations will be known at all times due to technology limitations. However, a number of steps have been taken for the Four Long Courses, which include night sailing and considerable distance, to ensure the general locations of boats are known.

Boats participating in the Four Long Courses are required to check in with the race committee prior to the start of the race. Check in is accomplished by ensuring the boat is showing on the Tracker System and, if not, by contacting Swiftsure Communications to check in. This procedure, initiated for the 2018 race, is intended to ensure the race committee knows which vessels actually started the race.

All boats in the Four Long Courses are given a SPOT unit, which feeds position data about every 10 minutes to the Swiftsure Tracker System using the Globalstar satellite system. While this is not part of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (an EPIRB is part of the GMDSS, for example), it does provide valuable information provided that crews follow, as instructed, the positioning of the unit on their boats, as well as the turn on and reboot procedures (reboot for Generation 2 units). Experience has demonstrated, however, that the SPOT units are not failsafe so launching a SAR activity when a unit ceases to transmit may or may not be justified. The PRO will discuss with JRCC Victoria any concerns about non-reporting SPOT units as part of the decision process of whether a SAR should be initiated. Intermediate steps include the race

committee attempting a voice call to the applicable boat on VHF channel 26 and their onboard mobile phone, contact via DSC, MCTS broadcasting on VHF channel 16, and announcements by VTS during their half hourly broadcasts. In addition, VHF contact to the whole fleet can be made requesting traffic about where and when any competitors had visually seen the applicable boat.

Other steps are taken to identify locations of boats and, conversely, identify boats for which concern about their safety status may be a red flag. Boats in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic (going to Swiftsure Bank) are required to report their position twice when outbound and twice when inbound when crossing specified lines of longitude. Boats in the Hein Bank, Cape Flattery, and Juan de Fuca courses are required to report their position once when outbound and once when inbound when crossing a specified line of longitude. This reporting process can assist in identifying if a boat appears to be in difficulty—especially if they cannot be reached via VHF 26 or 16, fail to be alerted by a message from VTS on VHF 09, cannot be contacted by DSC using VHF radio, and are not transmitting AIS (AIS transmission is not mandatory for any of the race courses because the majority of competitors are not equipped with this equipment, and AIS is not generally required for coastal racing).

Because it is a day race, there is no need to have boats report their position when racing in the Inshore Classic. Most boats are within a short distance of each other and will be within view except in the case of fog. Communication with the boats in the Inshore Classic is possible using VHF 26 and, in the event of an emergency, mariners are expected to contact the Coast Guard using VHF 16 or other means of communications.

Minimum Safety Requirements

Ensuring a boat is seaworthy, adequately equipped, and has an experienced crew with sufficient ability to face bad weather is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the person in charge of each boat. Skippers (the Persons in Charge) confirm that they accept this responsibility when they register to enter Swiftsure.

Section 1.2 of the Safety Equipment Requirements for all monohull and multihull boats, which is covered by the Notices of Race, states: “Under RRS 4 the responsibility for a boat’s decision to participate in a race or continue racing is hers alone. The safety of a boat and her crew is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the Person in Charge who shall do his best to ensure that the boat is fully found, thoroughly seaworthy and manned by an experienced and appropriately trained crew who are physically fit to face bad weather. The person in charge shall also assign a person to take over his responsibilities in the event of his incapacitation.”

Fundamental rule 4 in World Sailing’s Racing Rules of Sailing, which govern the race (covered in the Notices of Race and Sailing Instructions), says: “DECISION TO RACE - The responsibility for a boat’s decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone.”

The first page of the online registration form (and it is on the paper form as well) is a liability waiver which must be checked that they agree before they can proceed to next page in registration process.

It is not feasible to conduct a safety inspection of each boat prior to the start of the race as a considerable number of boats are not moored in the Inner Harbour (they come directly from boat clubs or marinas in the Greater Victoria area) and the logistics and resources for inspection of about 200 boats would be significant. In any event, even if there were to be a pre-race inspection it would be advisory in nature, as this would not mitigate the responsibility of the persons in charge to ensure they have safe boats, adequate safety equipment, and capable crew who have adequate personal safety equipment.

In order to reinforce the need for boats to be safely prepared for the Four Long Courses, each boat, upon finishing, must proceed to the inspection dock where they are greeted and subjected to an inspection of a sample of the Safety Equipment Requirements. The inspection is formally recorded, signed by the inspector, and retained by the Swiftsure Inspection Team. Should a boat fail to comply with any item on the inspection list, this is recorded and referred to the PRO who will decide whether a protest action is to be initiated.

A post-race safety inspection is not done for the Swiftsure Inshore Classic competitors but the NoR indicates they are subject to inspection, and this could be undertaken if the RO or PRO were to conclude that a boat appeared to not be in compliance with required safety requirements.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Background

Swiftsure's Organizing Authority has historically used the Pacific International Yachting Association's PIYA Category Certificate as the safety requirements for Swiftsure International Yacht Race. When PIYA adopted the Safety Equipment Requirements (SERs) for monohulls, which were developed by US Sailing using the World Sailing's Offshore Special Regulations for reference, the Organizing Authority adopted these SERs for the Swiftsure race, but with some modifications.

In the absence of PIYA developing Safety Equipment Requirements for multihulls, the Swiftsure Event Chair developed them in consultation with the BC Multihull Society and the Northwest Multihull Association.

PIYA has ceased updating its recommended SERs for monohulls so the Swiftsure Organizing Authority reviewed the SERs used for 2018 and made a few modifications with safety in mind. The SERs for multihulls, which were developed specifically for Swiftsure, are being used with some minor modifications for Swiftsure 2020. Both sets are on the swiftsure.org website under

Registration, Notices of Race & Safety Equipment Requirements page, and they are identified within the Notices of Race and Sailing Instructions.

The SERs are used for Swiftsure rather than the World Sailing's Offshore Special Regulations because they are an easier reference for racers and cover the necessary elements of safety. Also, many of the races in the Pacific Northwest use the US Sailing's SERs so racers are accustomed to using them albeit not every race uses the most current US Sailing version.

When determining what minimum safety equipment requirements will apply to the Four Long Courses and to the Swiftsure Inshore Classic, it is understood that there is no absolute in safety and by the nature of the challenge of sailboat racing there is risk. The goal is to assess potential objective risks with the view of preparing response scenarios should they materialize and reducing subjective risks, which are those mariners can control. The Organizing Authority and PRO also play a role in reducing subjective risks. However, it is also a consideration that sailboat racing could be greatly diminished, if not extinguished, by making the safety requirements too onerous, thereby making it impossible or too expensive to compete.

Compliance with the SERs is ultimately the responsibility of the Person in Charge of each competing boat. This includes secure storage of heavy items, strength of build of the boat, watertight integrity, hull and structure, the boat's safety equipment, crews' personal safety equipment, minimum gear, heavy weather sails, rigging, crew skills for emergency steering methods and MOB procedures, and safety training.

The rules for the Four Long Courses include that between sunset and sunrise while on deck all crew shall wear life jackets having lights, whistles, tethers, marine grade retro-reflective material, and crotch/thigh straps. In addition, a clause in the Sailing Instructions encourages persons in charge to establish a safety protocol for their crew as to when PFDs are to be worn and tethers used to ensure safety, and it is recommended that personal flotation devices be worn at all times, and that tethers be used when conditions warrant and definitely when winds are over 20 knots, seas over 3 feet, diminished visibility (fog), or when sailing short-handed. It is recognized that requirements may vary depending on the type of boat being sailed. Crotch/thigh straps attached to PFDs are mandatory for the Four Long Courses and recommended for the Inshore Classic courses. This feature is vital in case a MOB is/becomes unconscious or is being pulled out of the water via their inflated PFD (to avoid slipping out of it).

Four Long Courses

The rationale for the Four Long Courses being designated as 'Coastal' for monohulls is that it most closely relates to the criterion for this category in the PIYA's 2017 SERs; specifically: "Races across open water, most of which is relatively protected or close to shorelines." Coastal equates to Category 3 for monohulls and multihulls in the World Sailing's Offshore Special Regulations.

The alternative would be to designate these courses as 'Offshore', which is defined as "Races of extended duration along or not far removed from shorelines or in large unprotected bays or lakes, where a high degree of self-sufficiency is required of the boats." When in the Strait of Juan de Fuca competitors are never more than about 6 nautical miles from either the Canadian

or US shorelines. And Swiftsure Lightship Classic competitors are not more than about 10 nautical miles from shorelines when sailing to round the turning mark at Swiftsure Bank.

While a relative term, it is felt that rescue in the event of an emergency would be quickly available; i.e., within no more than one hour. Racers are in relatively close proximity to each other and would likely be the most immediate resource in the event of an incident involving one of the competing boats. Adjacent boats should become aware of such an emergency as they are required to monitor VHF 16 and those with DSC capability will be alerted of activation by another competitor.

SAR emergency resources are quite readily available throughout the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Royal Canadian Naval vessels stationed at the turning marks at Swiftsure Bank and Neah Bay are within relatively close proximity of the fleet at the western entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Although they are not designated as SAR resources, the JRCC could task them in the event of an emergency. JRCC tasks the Oak Bay, Sooke, and Victoria Royal Canadian Marine Search & Rescue units (33, 35, and 37) to be available in the event of a SAR related to Swiftsure. JRCC re-deploys to the Victoria airport one or two Cormorant helicopters from 442 Squadron for the duration of the Swiftsure race as well as a Coast Guard vessel to be located in the Jordan River area. The Canadian Coast Guard also has a fast response vessel located in the Victoria inner harbour. In addition, JRCC is able to task, in coordination with the US Coast Guard, the resources of the US Coast Guard Puget Sound Sector in the event of a SAR incident.

It is noted that the 2018 Southern Straits' Grande, Long, Medium and Short courses hosted by West Vancouver Yacht Club were designated as 'Coastal'. The racecourses for Southern Straits occur within Georgia Strait, which is also subject to high winds and waves. It is considered that SAR resources are more readily available for the Swiftsure International Yacht Race since it does not take place on a Canadian holiday weekend (Southern Straits occurs Easter weekend). The Royal Canadian Air Force Squadron 442 redeploys a Cormorant helicopter to the Victoria airport during the Swiftsure race, and the Port Angeles Coast Guard station is near the race courses, thereby supplementing the Canadian SAR resources in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

The Organizing Authority has made some modifications to the SERs for monohulls for the Four Long Courses, and the rationale for these changes is as follows:

1. Coated stainless steel lifelines are permitted if installed within the last 10 years and the Person in Charge has visually inspected them. A number of relatively new boats have been manufactured with coated stainless steel lifelines. It would be unfair to expect skippers to replace perfectly good lifelines with uncoated prior to their needing replacement. Deterioration is most likely to occur at the swaged fittings and these are most often readily visible for inspection. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Person in Charge to ensure that all safety equipment on their boat is in safe working condition. This modification was made after consultation with the Rigging & Metal Fabrication Manager, Blackline Marine Inc.

High molecular weight polyethylene (HMPE) lifelines are also permitted provided that the person in charge is satisfied they are well constructed and not UV damaged – also places the onus on the person in charge who is ultimately responsible for safety on their boat.

2. The mechanical propulsion system has been increased from the SER requirement of 4 hours to 10 hours. It is expected that boats will be able to seek safe haven when motoring for 10 hours; 4 hours is insufficient for the Swiftsure race.

3. The requirement for SOLAS flares has been modified to require boats comply with US Coast Guard/Transport Canada requirements (it is noted that the US Coast Guard has developed standards for electric S-O-S Distress Lights and accepts that manufacturers will self-assess their products against these standards). The minimum requirements of US Coast Guard/Transport Canada are accepted because of the relatively close proximity of competitors to each other and the fact that other forms of Mayday communication will be effective from anywhere within the race area.

4. The requirement for a VHF masthead antenna has been eliminated. While it is considered as highly desirable, the Person in Charge will need to be satisfied that their boat can communicate with the Race Committee and the Coast Guard, and receive communications from VTS if they do not have a masthead antenna. A well-installed VHF antenna on the pushpit connected to a VHF radio via a coaxial cable in excellent condition should provide adequate communication. Past experience has shown that boats without a masthead antenna have been able to communicate as required. Given the receiving capabilities of the US and Canadian Coast Guards, and Swiftsure's VHF radio coverage, a VHF antenna on the masthead is not thought to be a safety issue.

5. An alternative to having soft plugs attached or stowed adjacent to every through-hull opening is being permitted. Specifically, "Alternatively, some soft plugs (e.g., Forespar Tru Plug) and/or Stay Afloat Instant Leak Plug & Sealant may be stored in an easy-to-obtain place and the location identified on the Safety Equipment Chart per SER #3.28"

6. In addition to crew being aware of methods of steering the boat with the rudder disabled (SER 4.1.2), Swiftsure requires that all boats have a secondary steering mechanism. A sea drogue system is an acceptable method. This requirement is meant to ensure that not only are crew aware of methods of steering with the rudder disabled but also that such equipment is actually on board.

7. Safety at sea training for at least some of the crew on a boat is being recommended but not made mandatory. This exemption is being made because it is felt that a considerable number of boats could not comply and therefore could not enter the race. US Sailing and BC Sailing offer a 2-day Safety at Sea course and in 2019 a one-day course is being offered prior to the Patos Island and Southern Straits Races. It is noted that over 1,100 racers have taken the Safety at Sea course offered by BC Sailing and US Sailing also offers similarly recognized training in Seattle. Thus, safety training is being rolled out among racers. Voluntary compliance with this SER is encouraged.

The SERs for multihulls were specifically drafted for Swiftsure in reference to the SERs for monohulls and taking into consideration the unique characteristics of multihulls.

Swiftsure Inshore Classic

The rationale for the Swiftsure Inshore Classic being designated as ‘Inshore’ is that it is a day race, close to shore in relatively protected waters. This is comparable to Category 4 in the World Sailing’s Offshore Special Regulations.

The racecourse is within the area described as “in the vicinity of Juan de Fuca Strait and the Victoria waterfront reaching from William Head to Trial Island, and in the vicinity of Haro Strait, as far easterly as Beaumont Shoal and northerly to D’Arcy Shoals and Zero Rock, and crossing a finish line located in Cadboro Bay near the Royal Victoria Yacht Club.” This is within the same area that the Royal Victoria Yacht Club’s long distance races normally occur, and they are designated as ‘Inshore’. Significantly more SAR resources are readily available for the Swiftsure Inshore Classic Race than the long distance races in the Greater Victoria area, should an incident occur.

SEARCH AND RESCUE SUPPORT

Enabling the Coast Guard to plan availability of SAR resources during the Swiftsure International Yacht Race is accomplished by promoting excellent relationships and communications with the officer in charge and the supervisor of the JRCC Victoria. The JRCC communicates with the Canadian Coast Guard and the Royal Canadian Air Force 442 Squadron in planning SAR contingency plans, and with the US Coast Guard as the Canadian and US Coast Guards have interoperability arrangements (i.e., either US Coast Guard or Canadian Coast Guard SAR resources, or both agencies at the same time, may be tasked by JRCC in the event of a SAR incident). This is depicted in the following graphic of 2014 CCG SRUs.



The JRCC tasks the Royal Canadian Air Force to deploy one or two CH-149 Cormorant helicopters to the Victoria airport to be on standby during the Swiftsure Race. In coordination with the JRCC, the Canadian Coast Guard deploys at least one vessel to the western part of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Coast Guard also has a fast response vessel located in the Victoria inner harbour which can be tasked. The JRCC tasks the Royal Canadian Marine Search and

Rescue Unit 33 (Oak Bay) and Unit 35 (Victoria) to provide safety support at the start of the Swiftsure race. Units 33 and 35 plus Unit 37 (Sooke) are also tasked to be on standby throughout the duration of the race in case of a SAR incident.

The Royal Canadian Navy has a vessel at the Swiftsure Bank and Neah Bay rounding marks, which the JRCC could use as SAR resources if needed. A member of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club's boat is stationed at Clallam Bay to be a rounding mark, and could be tasked in the event of an emergency within its geographic area albeit the SAR capability of this private vessel may not be appropriate to the task.

In addition, Swiftsure requests the support of a vessel from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, South Island Integrated Marine Unit, to provide security and safety support during the start of the races.

Swiftsure obtains a marine event permit from the US Coast Guard Sector Puget Sound. This also alerts the USCG about the timing and area covered by the Four Long Courses of the Swiftsure race.

SAFETY REVIEWS

In an effort to encourage continuous improvement, the Organizing Authority ensures that a review of race safety is completed every year. When updating this policy and other applicable race documents, the Organizing Authority considers findings and recommendations from the review.

SUMMARY

Racers in the Swiftsure International Yacht Race can encounter benign or challenging wind and tidal current conditions, and there are always dangers such as commercial traffic and collisions among racers as well as MOBs. Therefore, a focus on safety in the organization or the race and in the attitude of participating racers must be ever-present. This needs to continue to be reinforced to skippers at the Skippers' Meeting.

The Safety Equipment Requirements do not mitigate the responsibility of the person in charge to ensure that their boat is well prepared, well crewed, and sailed in a fashion that would be expected of highly competent mariners. These SERs are minimum requirements, and many persons in charge will choose to exceed these standards.

Excellent communications with the JRCC Victoria and other agencies is considered a key aspect of safety, and the advice and support of the JRCC is a necessary component of safety for the race.

GLOSSARY

AIS – Automatic Identification System
CCG – Canadian Coast Guard
CMCC – Canadian Mission Control Centre
COSPAS-SARSAT- ‘Cosmicheskaya Sistyema Poiska Avariynich Sudov’ – Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking (satellite-based search and rescue system)
DND – Department of National Defense
DNS – Did Not Start (the race)
DSC – Digital Selective Calling
EC – Environment Canada
EPIRB – Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon
GMDSS – Global Maritime Distress and Safety System
IRC – IRC handicap system managed by the Royal Ocean Racing Club in the United Kingdom
ISAF – International Sailing Federation, renamed “World Sailing”
JRCC – Joint Rescue Coordination Centre
MCTS – Marine Communications & Traffic Service (CCG)
MOB – Man Overboard
NOAA – National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (US)
NOR – Notice of Race
OA – Organizing Authority
ONC – Ocean Network Canada (VENUS and NEPTUNE Canada cabled networks)
ORC – Offshore Racing Council
PFD – Personal Flotation Device
PHRF – Pacific Handicap Racing Fleet
PIC – Person In Charge (of a racing sailboat)
PIYA – Pacific International Yachting Association
PLB – Personal Locator Beacon
PRO – Principal Race Officer
RC – Race Committee
RCAF – Royal Canadian Air Force
RCC – Rescue Coordination Center
RCMSAR – Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue
RCN – Royal Canadian Navy
RO – Race Officer
RRS – Racing Rules of Sailing (“Sail Canada”/International Sailing Federation)
RVYC – Royal Victoria Yacht Club
SAR – Search and Rescue
SER – Safety Equipment Requirements

SI – Sailing Instructions

SOLAS – Safety Of Life At Sea

SPOT – Satellite Personal Tracker assigned to each boat racing in the Four Long Courses of Swiftsure (is not part of GMDSS)

SRU – SAR Response Unit

TC – Transport Canada

USCG – United States Coast Guard

USN – United States Navy

VHF – Very High Frequency (radio)

VTS – Vessel Traffic Service (Sector Puget Sound)

VTS – Vessel Traffic Services (CCG)