



## SWIFTSURE INTERNATIONAL YACHT RACE

Hosted by the Royal Victoria Yacht Club  
May 27-28, 2023  
Victoria, British Columbia



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK 2023

This Handbook provides an overview of this historic race, along with information on the various responsibilities of the many volunteer roles. Further details on becoming a volunteer are provided at [Swifsure.org/volunteer/](https://swifsure.org/volunteer/).

## Message from the Race Event Chair

Thank you for volunteering with the 2023 Swiftsure International Yacht Race, the 78<sup>th</sup> race. We are looking forward to having you on our team. As a volunteer for Swiftsure, you will work with many dedicated and resourceful volunteers, many of them from the community or other sailing associations as well as from Royal Victoria Yacht Club. Your commitment and expertise are essential to the success of this completely volunteer-run event – we couldn't do it without you!

We believe that a clear understanding of the working relationship between volunteers, the Swiftsure Committee and Royal Victoria Yacht Club will contribute to a harmonious and productive environment. This document has been developed to provide details about the responsibilities of the various volunteer roles, as well as the benefits of being a Swiftsure volunteer.

Thank you again for your support, we hope that your experience is enjoyable and rewarding.

Sincerely,

Randy Diamond  
Race Event Chair,  
Swiftsure International Yacht Race  
Royal Victoria Yacht Club

# **Volunteers and Racers are Needed to Make the Race Successful**

The Swiftsure International Yacht Race is organized and hosted by the Royal Victoria Yacht Club and takes place each year in May on the weekend following the Victoria Day holiday weekend in Canada. It consists of a number of races over various courses that start off Clover Point in Victoria on Saturday morning, May 27th.

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, guests, and members of the public who take an interest in the event. We work hard to create a festive atmosphere to encourage community awareness and involvement.

## **Swiftsure Volunteer Roles**

Many 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, engaging in communications with racers, inspecting boats to ensure safety requirements are met, and recording and finalizing results.

Swiftsure requires additional 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 skipper's packages and transponders, assisting with trophies and award ceremonies, assisting with crowd control at the Friday evening Dock Party, assisting with the post-race BBQ at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club for the Inshore Classic race, and organizing and running the Volunteer and Sponsor Recognition & BBQ Evening.

If you volunteer 6 or more 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 program committee of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. It is led by the Race Event Chair and is composed of members who oversee the various areas of event activity. In 2023, committee members include:

Race Event Chair: Randy Diamond ([chair@swiftsure.org](mailto:chair@swiftsure.org))

Principle Race Officer: Dugald Smith ([pro@swiftsure.org](mailto:pro@swiftsure.org))

Race Director: John Comuzzi ([racedirector@swiftsure.org](mailto:racedirector@swiftsure.org))

Registrar: Leslie Basham ([registrar@swiftsure.org](mailto:registrar@swiftsure.org))

Logistics: Doug Taylor Lee ([logistics@swiftsure.org](mailto:logistics@swiftsure.org))

Sponsorship: Randy Diamond ([chair@swiftsure.org](mailto:chair@swiftsure.org))

Media Relations: Ed Watson ([edwatson@telus.net](mailto:edwatson@telus.net))

Technical Support: Adam Serediuk ([technical@swiftsure.org](mailto:technical@swiftsure.org))

Entertainment: ([entertainment@swiftsure.org](mailto:entertainment@swiftsure.org))

Volunteer Coordinator: Gillian Manson ([volunteer@swiftsure.org](mailto:volunteer@swiftsure.org))

Assistant to the Chair: Vern Burkhardt ([chairassistant@swiftsure.org](mailto:chairassistant@swiftsure.org))

Teams of volunteers deliver and support the range of tasks needed to ensure that the racers have a great experience. Each team has a team lead reporting to one of the members of the Swiftsure Committee.

- **Race Management:** This group is responsible for the actual running of the race, and is led by the Principal Race Officer with support from the Race Director. It includes the Start Line and Finish Line teams and representatives on mark rounding boats where such boats are in place. It also includes the Radio Communications Team which provides radio and email/text communication between competitors and race organizers prior to the start of the race (check in by each boat including advising of the number of souls aboard and any changes in crew since check in) and during the races where reporting of roundings is required or when crossing a Line of Longitude as specified in the Sailing Instructions. In addition, Race Management also includes the Check-In Team that confirms that registration requirements are fully met when competitors arrive, distributes skipper's packages and transponders (for competitor tracking), and confirms names and emergency contacts of crew on the Thursday and Friday before the Race. The Inspection Dock Team is also part of the Race Management Team. It inspects competitor vessels for compliance with safety requirements, and collects race cards and transponders after competitors finish the race. In addition, Race Management coordinates with Swiftsure's myriad marine support organizations

including the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre, Marine Communications and Traffic Services (safety radio communications, scheduled information to racers about commercial vessels, vessel traffic), Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue (Oak Bay, Victoria, and Sooke), and Royal Canadian Navy (Anson Street for race finish crew).

- **Registration:** This group consists of the Registrar and Assistant Registrar who ensure that all boats registering for the event meet requirements and pay the required fees prior to the event. In addition, they also support the Check-In Team on the two 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 of competitors, and staffing an information booth near the Check-in site to provide information to both competitors and the public. It also is responsible for providing a bowl of soup to racers at the Inspection Dock after they finish their race.
- **Technology:** This group is responsible for delivering all the IT requirements of the event including Race Tracking using transponders, registration, results, and maintenance of the Swiftsure website and social media.
- **Sponsorship:** This team is responsible for recruiting and working with event sponsors before, during and after the event.
- **Media & Public Relations:** This team is responsible for all media communications and publicity arrangements including ads in sailing-related magazines, generation of articles for the media, creating interview opportunities for media with the Chair and other "official" spokespersons for Swiftsure, promotion of social media, and 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.
- **Entertainment:** This group is responsible for the organization and management of parties and social events including the pre-race dock party.
- **Volunteer Coordination:** This group is responsible for assisting team leads in recruiting volunteers, provision of T-shirts to volunteers, supporting all the volunteers who make the event possible, and coordinating the Volunteer and

Sponsor recognition BBQ at Royal Victoria Yacht Club after the race event.

## **Orientation**

Orientation for each team will be held in May ahead of the Swiftsure Race 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, 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 at Royal Victoria Yacht Club
- 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 the Swiftsure event in organizing everything from registration to marketing and race details. Others are most active in the four days of the actual event, supporting all the activities noted below. There are diverse and important tasks that come together to make Swiftsure a great experience for the racers and the community. Note that specific times for many activities are set by the team lead closer to the event:

### **Wednesday May 24**

- Some boats arrive at RVYC enroute from the Round Saltspring Race and, if applicable, to participate in a race to the Victoria Inner Harbour on May 25. Foreshore and a volunteer(s) arrange for and assist them to moor.
- Boats start arriving at the Causeway in front of the Empress, and at Ship Point in the Inner Harbour and are met and assisted by volunteer docking crews. They also provide each boat with an information sheet including location of Check-in and the Skippers' meeting.
- International arriving boats are guided by a volunteer-staffed RHIB to Customs clearance and advised where to then proceed for docking. The RHIB staff advise Canadian boats where to directly proceed for moorage.
- Set-up volunteers hang event and sponsor banners, docking signage, signal

flags and erect a flagpole on the Causeway dock.

## **Thursday May 25**

- Race Committee command station boat is located in the Causeway or Ship Point (and remains until Monday am)
- Arrival of boats continues at RVYC to participate in a race to the Victoria Inner Harbour (if it is being held)
- Arrival of boats continues at the Inner Harbour and beginning at 0730 are met and assisted by volunteers to dock. They also provide each boat with an information sheet including location of Check-in and the Skippers' meeting.
- Logistics reserves docking space at the Inspection Dock for the Start Boat and other boats involved in the start
- An information booth is set up on the Causeway float and staffed by volunteer ambassadors.
- Check-in volunteers set up and open the Check-in area to operate from 1400 to 2000 on the Causeway floating dock.
- Club foreshore staff set up a tent(s) at the finish line on McLoughlin Point on Anson Street located at the Royal Canadian Navy property. The finish line lead and other volunteers participate in the setup of the finish line site.

## **Friday May 26**

- Docking continues with a number of boats arriving after an overnight sail. Beginning 0730 boats are met and assisted by volunteers to dock and to provide them with the information sheet
- The Inspection Dock command centre boat arrives (if not on Thursday) and docks at the Inspection Dock
- Check-in opens at 1000 and closes about 1800
- Volunteer ambassadors are at the information booth 0800 1900
- Final details are completed of the finish line set up at McLoughlin Point on Anson Road on the Royal Canadian Navy property
- Awards ceremony for last year's winners at the Strathcona Hotel starts at 1400, 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 the Causeway ramp. Volunteers not on duty may also participate in the event.

## **Saturday May 27**

- Mark boat volunteers board mark vessels and proceed to marks
- Start boat volunteers and invited guests board start vessel and disembark after all

races have started

- Safety boat representatives board safety boats; a volunteer is assigned to each safety boat during the starts.
- 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 start boat offshore.
- Media relations and volunteer announcers arrive at Clover Point no later than 0730.
- 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 for the Inshore Classic 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 2400 on Sunday, May 28.
- At 1800 the Inspection Dock set up at the inspection dock, and maintain this station continuously until inspection of the last boat to finish within the limit for the race.
- At 1800 Soup Server volunteers set up on the Causeway floating dock and maintain this service continuously until the last boat finishes or until no boat will finish by 2400 on Sunday, May 28.

## **Sunday May 28**

- 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 May 29**

- Race activities cease and operations are shut down, either when the last boat has finished and cleared the inspection dock or at 2400 Sunday when the race time limit expires.

- Take down volunteers and foreshore staff remove all signage, trailers, tents and committee boats from the Inner Harbour by 1100
- Finish line tent(s) and equipment are removed and packed in an orderly manner

## **Volunteer & Sponsors Appreciation BBQ – June 6**

- Volunteer and Sponsors Appreciation BBQ begins at 1730 – complimentary food and a drink for a job well done!

## **Communications**

### **Volunteers and the Media:**

Enquiries from the media should be directed to Ed Watson, Media Relations Coordinator who will respond or arrange for an interview with the Race Event Chair (Randy Diamond), Principal Race Officer (Dugald Smith), a person in charge of a race boat, or other appropriate spokesperson.

As a volunteer 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 following Safety Plan which details action to be taken in various types of emergencies.

## Safety Plan

We are committed to running a race that is safe for all involved. Please be sure to review the safety standards and provisions described below.

### Safety issues Addressed in Plan

- Fire
- Person Overboard
- Pollution Spill
- Injury

### Fire

#### Action by Discoverer:

Shout "fire, fire, fire"

Use first aid extinguisher if possible (see Site Plan for locations)

Evacuate all personnel to Muster Point (see Site Plan for location)

Call 911 and report location of fire (Causeway Docks or Ship Point Jetty)

Standby to direct Fire Department to scene on arrival

**Action by Onsite Duty Logistics Head:**

Confirm that Fire Department has been called

Call GVHA at 250-383-8326 (marina office) or 250-383-8300 (corporate office).

Advise Media Relations Coordinator and, if not available, call the Race Event Chair

Standby to assist Fire Department as necessary

**Person Overboard**

**Action by Discoverer:**

Shout "man (or "person") overboard"

Keep eyes on person in water

Attract attention of bystanders

Throw life-saving device if available (see Site Plan for locations)

Call or have bystander call 911 to report person overboard and position

**Action by Onsite Duty Logistics Head:**

Call GVHA at 250-383-8326 or 250-383-8300

Obtain volunteer assistance

Advise Media Relations Coordinator

**Pollution Spill**

**Action by Discoverer:**

Inform Duty Logistics Head

Stop source of spill if possible

Remain on scene to render assistance as required

**Action by Duty Logistics Head:**

Call GVHA at 250-383-8300 or 250-383-8326

Obtain volunteer assistance

Deploy Spill kit as necessary  
or

Contact Volunteers on RVYC RHIB to assist in deploying spill kit

Inform Logistics Head

## **Injury**

### **Action by Discoverer:**

Render assistance within limits of medical training

Call for first aid (see kit location on Site Plan)

Seek assistance of qualified bystander

If considered life threatening or serious call 911 for ambulance

### **Action by Duty Logistics Head**

Call 911 for ambulance if necessary

Inform Media Relations Coordinator

## **Contacts**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Emergency                              | 911 (mobile phone)<br>VHF 16 (MayDay)          |
| GVHA Office                            | 250-383-8300                                   |
| GVHA Moorage                           | 250-383-8326                                   |
| Portable Toilet Service                | 250-380-1166                                   |
| Transport Canada Harbour Master Office | 250-363-3578 or VHF Channel 18A                |
| Transport Canada Harbour Master        | 250-380-8177 (mobile)                          |
| Victoria Harbour Flight Advisory       | Contact via Transport Canada<br>Harbour Master |

## Environmental Goals

Swiftsure Volunteers are asked to make all reasonable efforts to ensure the event is conducted in a safe, clean and environmentally sound manner.

## Parking

You will need 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 to eat 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. Open to monohull boats with Pacific Handicap Racing Fleet (PHRF) rating of 100 or lower (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. Open to monohull boats with an Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) handicap rating (118.1 nm)
- **Cape Flattery Race** (red) to Neah Bay near the Strait of Juan de Fuca western entrance and back to Victoria. Open to monohull and multihull boats with a PHRF rating (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. Open to monohull boats with a PHRF rating of 50 or higher, and to multihull boats with a PHRF rating. (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 over 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 <https://www.swiftsure.org/registered-yachts/> and, for most, there is background information about the boat, the race it's entered in, its crew and even a photo. 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 Ogden Point. The SPOT transponder units on each boat transmit their position about 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 2023 race begins, you can also replay the 2022 race by clicking 'OK' after selecting the 2022 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, which was an anchored boat marking the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca was removed from service, because navigation systems on commercial vessels entering and leaving the strait had advanced to enable safer passages. After the Lightship was removed race yachts in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic rounded a Royal Canadian Navy vessel temporarily anchored 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 only 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 overnight 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" and other fast boats that want good competition but are not prepared for the challenging conditions experienced in the open ocean in the Swiftsure Lightship Classic race course.

For owners of boats who did not wish the stiff competition of Swiftsure, but wanted to be part of the event, the idea arose of "racing" or motoring to Sooke to have a party on race day, stay overnight, and sail back to Victoria. It was called the "Sooksure" and had an unofficial start following the final Swiftsure start off Clover Point. Given the limited facilities at Sooke, and the desire of many to actually race, the Swiftsure Inshore Classic was established in the early 2000's. This race is the last start and boats compete off the Victoria waterfront, finishing at Cadboro Bay where they down sails, proceed to the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, and participate in a social event including BBQ and awards ceremony.

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 racecourse 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.

Technology has offered better ways of sharing the race with landlubbers. The Race Tracker on the Swiftsure.org website can be accessed from the comforts of home while the racers are dealing with whatever wind, sea states, and weather conditions that prevail.

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).

Swiftsure...

Always a Challenge