SWIFTSURE INTERNATIONAL YACHT RACE
Hosted by the Royal Victoria Yacht Club
May 23-24, 2026
Victoria, British Columbia

Meteorology Monitoring Protocol 2026

The following protocols will be followed by the Race Committee when preparing to start the race and throughout the race until the last boat has finished.

Race Morning

Prior to the start the PRO or designate will review the marine forecast for Juan de Fuca – central strait, Juan de Fuca – east entrance, Juan de Fuca Strait – west entrance, and Haro Strait at the following:

If the wind is consistently strong (>20Kts) or a strong wind warning, gale warning, storm force wind warning, or hurricane force wind warning (see Appendix 1) are forecast for any part of the racecourses, the Principal Race Officer (PRO) will consult with the JRCC Victoria before starting the race to determine the availability of SAR resources.

The PRO has the authority to delay the start or abandon one or more of the courses if they deem it is not safe to run the race in that course.

Throughout the Race

The Deputy Race Officer (DRO) or designate will monitor and record the Technical Marine Synopsis and Scheduled Marine Forecast for the race area (see Race Morning section above) when updated. This information will be logged and passed to the incoming DRO.

In addition, the DRO or designate will monitor on an ongoing basis VHF 16 for Securité messages regarding forecast updates with deteriorating conditions, which are provided in the continuous marine broadcast channels.

The DRO or designate will check and log selected buoy and land station observed conditions in the race area on an hourly basis (see Appendix 3 for a format to be used to record these observations and to determine whether conditions are deteriorating).

When 20+ knots of wind are forecast for the areas covered by any of the racecourses, the following protocols will be followed:

NORMAL WEATHER PROTOCOL:

When a Strong Wind Warning (20 – 33 knots) is observed or forecast for any part of the race area until all boats have finished or found safe haven:

DRO Monitoring Weather	Duty Race Officer	Principal Race Officer
1. Monitor weather reporting stations hourly (refer to Appendix 3 for a list) to determine whether sustained winds exceed 25 Knots. Maintain a log of reported winds/seas. 2. If observed or predicted winds are >25 Knots request hourly wind reports from rounding mark vessels	1. If the predicted winds exceed 25 Knots consult with EC Weather Professional (1-888-292-2222) to determine if gales are forecast for the race area 2. If Gales are forecast advise the PRO that gales exist in the race area or are forecast, and monitoring has been increased 4. Advise the mark boat at Neah Bay of this situation	1. Inform the Swiftsure Event Chair, or their delegate. 2. Consult with JRCC Victoria about SAR readiness

CAUTIONARY WEATHER PROTOCOL:

When a Gale Wind (34 – 47 knots) and/or high seas (more than 6 feet in height and period of less than 10 seconds) are observed or forecast for any part of the race area:

DRO Monitoring Weather

1. Monitor weather reporting stations (refer to Appendix 3 for a list) to determine whether observed sustained winds are gale force (34 to 47 knots) and/or if seas are or are forecast to be higher than **10** feet or less than **5** seconds apart

2 Maintain a log of reported and forecast winds/seas Appendix C)

3. Request hourly wind & sea reports from rounding mark vessel.

4. Request wind & sea reports from racers when making radio contact.

5. Contact Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) Victoria to provide a general broadcast in the race area on VHF 16: "Gales are forecast in race area. Racers are advised to monitor weather broadcasts." Include this information on radio contacts with boats on Ch 26. Request that MCTS add this info on their VHF 09 broadcasts.

6. Take additional action as directed by the PRO

Duty Race Officer

1. If a) Winds are or are forecast to be gale force
   OR
   b) Seas are or are forecast to be higher than **10** feet or less than **5** seconds apart consult with EC Weather Professional (1-888-292-2222) to determine if conditions are expected to deteriorate any further in the race area

2. Advise the PRO of the forecast, actual conditions, and EC advice

3. Obtain the PRO's direction and either
   a) Request VTS to make advisory broadcasts on VHF 16 and to append this wording on their half hourly traffic broadcasts
   OR
   b) If a race is to be abandoned implement Race Abandonment Procedure (Appendix 2)

4. Update the mark boats at Neah Bay about the situation

5. If a STORM or extreme seas are possible proceed to the next protocol level: **DANGEROUS** Weather

Principal Race Officer

1. Once informed by the Duty Race Officer of the wind/sea conditions and the wind forecast – decide on one of the following actions (after consulting with JRCC Victoria):
   a) Continue the race if the gale is likely to be localized and not expected to get worse
   OR
   b) Provide an advisory to racers that marginal conditions (sea and/or wind) exist or are expected, provide as much specific information as possible, and indicate boats should decide whether or not to continue racing or to seek safe haven
   OR
   c) Abandon the race if STORM conditions or dangerous seas threaten to adversely affect racers. This could be applied selectively to specific race courses or races depending on the location of the fleet

2. Direct the Duty Race Officer to take the required action based on your decision

3. Advise the JRCC Victoria of your decision

4. Inform the Swiftsure Event Chair who will inform the RVYC Commodore. Also inform the Swiftsure Media Lead

DANGEROUS WEATHER PROTOCOL:

When the reported or forecast wind is storm force (48+ knots) or seas are or will be extreme (more than 12 feet in height or their period is less than their height) in the race area (any area that racers are likely to be in):

DRO Monitoring Weather

1. Continuously Monitor weather reporting stations (Appendix 3) and EC observations and forecasts for the race area.

2. Maintain a log of reported winds/seas and update the Duty Race Officer as conditions change

3. Request wind & sea reports from all vessels and maintain log of reports (see Appendix 3)

4. Contact MCTS Victoria to have a broadcast made on VHF 16: " A Storm is forecast in the race area. (If required: <Name of Race> has been abandoned.) (Add other wording as appropriate) ". Include this information on all VHF 26 radio contacts with boats. Inform boats still racing in the affected area via mobile or satellite phone, and if necessary, using the DSC function of VHF

Duty Race Officer

1. Consult with EC Weather Professional (1-888-292-2222) to determine if any race can be completed before the forecasted storm will affect the race area

2. Consult with the PRO to determine the appropriate course of action. If unable to contact the PRO take appropriate action on his/her behalf.

3. Obtain the PRO's decision and:
   a) Request VTS to make advisory broadcasts on VHF 16 and to append this wording on their half hourly traffic broadcasts
   OR
   b) If a race is to be abandoned then implement Race Abandonment (Appendix 2)

4. Update the mark boats at Neah Bay.,

Principal Race Officer

1. Once informed by the Duty Race Officer of the wind/sea conditions and the forecast – decide on one of the following actions based on racers known positions (after consultation with JRCC Victoria):
   a) Continue racing if the storm will not overtake the racers, AND Provide an advisory to racers that marginal or dangerous conditions (sea and/or wind) exist or are expected with as much specific information as possible
   OR
   b) ABANDON the race if STORM or dangerous seas threaten to adversely affect racers. This could be applied selectively to specific racecourses or races.
2. Direct the Duty Race Officer to take the required action based on your decision

3. Advise the JRCC Victoria of your decision

4. Inform the Swiftsure Event Chair who will inform the RVYC Commodore. Advise the Swiftsure Media Lead.

Appendix 1

Environment Canada (EC) and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) use the following terms in their marine forecasts:

Wind

Wind ((excluding gusts))	Term	Comment
20 – 33 knots	Strong Wind Warning (EC). Existing or will occur within next 12 hours. Issued March 20 to November 11 for Juan de Fuca and Haro Straits	Warning thresholds and marine forecasts refer to the 'sustained wind' (10 minute average). Mariners can expect gusts (less than 30 seconds) up to 40% higher than the forecast wind speed.
22-33 Knots	Small Craft Advisory (NOAA)	Instantaneous winds (~1-second wind) reported by on-board anemometers will be higher than gusts reported by Environment Canada instruments
34 -47 knots	Gale Warning	
48 – 63 knots	Storm Force Wind Warning	
64+ knots	Hurricane Force Wind Warning	

Note:

1. Forecasts are predictions of the future; observations & conditions are past and present
2. Wind directions are given in degrees True
3. Wind speeds are forecast at 10 meters above surface level

Wave Height

Forecast is for significant wave height, which is the average of the highest 1/3 of all waves
The maximum wave height may be double the significant wave height

Note:

1. Wave height is measured from trough to crest
2. Wave forecasts do not take into account geographic/land effects or effects of wind against current
3. Crossing wave patterns and wave shape may be significant, e.g.; steep or square or breaking waves

Appendix 2

Race Abandonment Protocol

Duty Race Officer

1. Advise PRO of wording of broadcast being issued (if not already aware)
2. Request VTS to make advisory broadcasts on VHF 16 of the race status and to append this wording on their half hourly traffic broadcasts
3. Contact MCTS Victoria to have a general broadcast made on VHF 16: "<insert which race(s)> Race has been ABANDONDED due to <insert the reason why – be specific>. All affected yachts are to report their intentions for seeking a safe haven as soon as possible on VHF 26."
4. Contact rounding marks boats to determine if they can assist in ensuring that the fleet makes safe haven.
5. Advise, via JRCC Victoria, the USCG (206-217-6152) of the situation, and that a *Force Majeure* situation exists and yachts may be seeking safe havens on the Olympic Peninsula.
6. Advise the mark boats at Neah Bay that they may wish to seek safe haven.
7. Contact boats which have not been heard from using the boats' mobile or satellite phone, and if necessary, by contacting them using DSC on VHF.
8. Begin logging racers' reported intentions & ETAs and request that they report when they have reached a safe haven.
9. Continue to monitor weather conditions Ensure JRCC Victoria is aware of any yachts that have lost radio contact and cannot be contacted by their mobile phone, are in trouble, or are overdue. Their SPOT transponder or AIS (the Registration System indicates whether or not boats have AIS) may provide information about their last reported position.

Principal Race Officer

1. Advise the JRCC Victoria of the race status and confer on the SAR resource status. Seek information about their readiness and/or deployment.
2. Confer with EC Weather Professional (1-888-292-2222) as needed
3. Determine which races are to be abandoned
4. Inform the Swiftsure Event Chair (who will advise RVYC Commodore) of the situation
5. Have Swiftsure Event Chair brief Media Lead so a news release can be issued, a notice can be put on the home page of the Swiftsure website and on the Race Tracker system.

Swiftsure Abandonment Resources Roles

Principal Race Officer	Decide whether to abandon (in consultation with Swiftsure Event Chair), leads the abandonment process
On Duty Race Officer	Go to HQ and assist PRO as required (e.g., key contact with JRCC Victoria)
Off Duty Race Officers	Contact On Duty Race Officer to determine whether needed at HQ earlier than scheduled shift time
Finish Line Lead	In consultation with PRO, determine the number from the finish line team who should remain at the finish line trailer to spot returning boats and record any not needed will be deployed to HQ to assist as required
Inspection Dock Lead	In consultation with PRO, determine the number of inspectors who should remain at the Inspection Dock (e.g.; communicate with docking staff as boats arrive in the inner harbour), and what duties they will be given
Dockmaster Lead	Ensure that docking volunteers are advised when boats are returning so they can be ready to dock them
Swiftsure Event Chair	Go to HQ to be the decision maker on behalf of the Organizing Authority, advise PRO as required, be focus for external communications with media and concerned emergency contacts of racers, be focus for communications with RVYC Commodore and Swiftsure Media Lead

Appendix 3

Wind & Sea Monitoring

Wind Velocity (Direction/Speed) Knots – e.g. SE 35G40

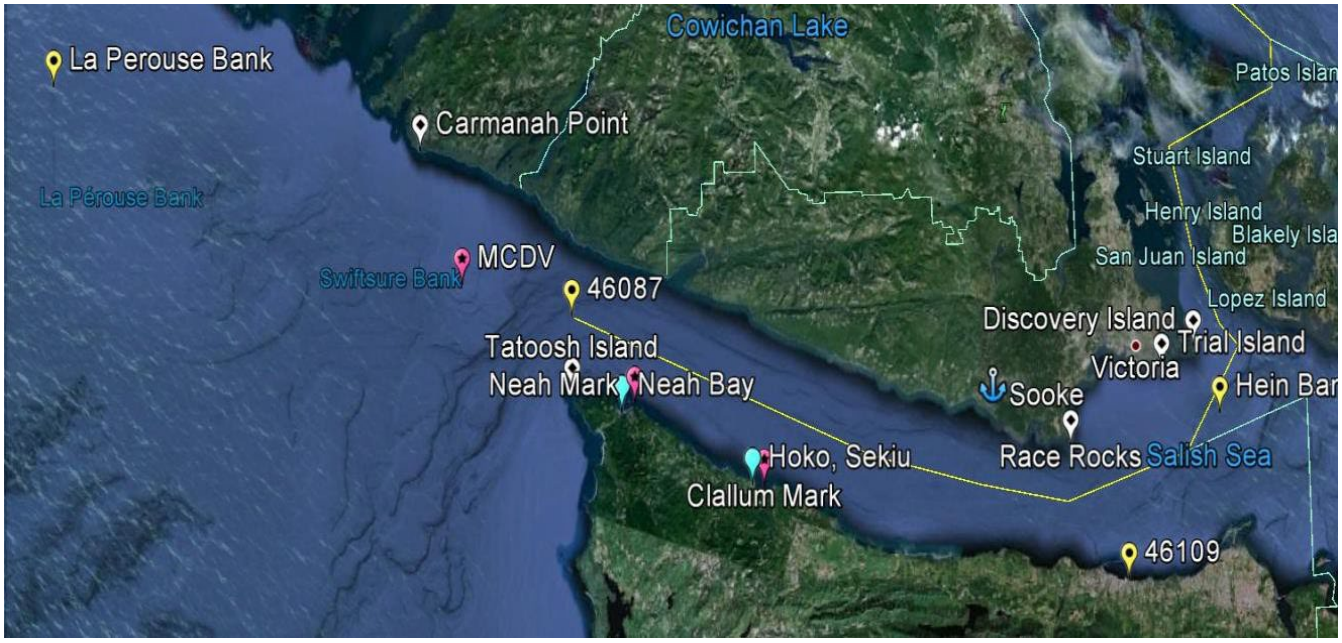
Station	Time (PDT)
La Perouse Bk	
Carmanah Pt	
Swiftsure Mark	
46087 Buoy	
Tatoosh Is	
Neah Bay	
Neah Mark	
Hoko, Sekiu	
Clallam Mark	
Sheringham Pt	
Race Rocks	
46109 Buoy	
Trial Island	
Hein Bank	

Sea Conditions (Wave Height (feet)/Period (seconds)) – e.g. 6/8

Station	Time (PDT)
La Perouse Bk	
MCDV Mark	
46087 Buoy	
46109 Buoy	
Hein Bank	

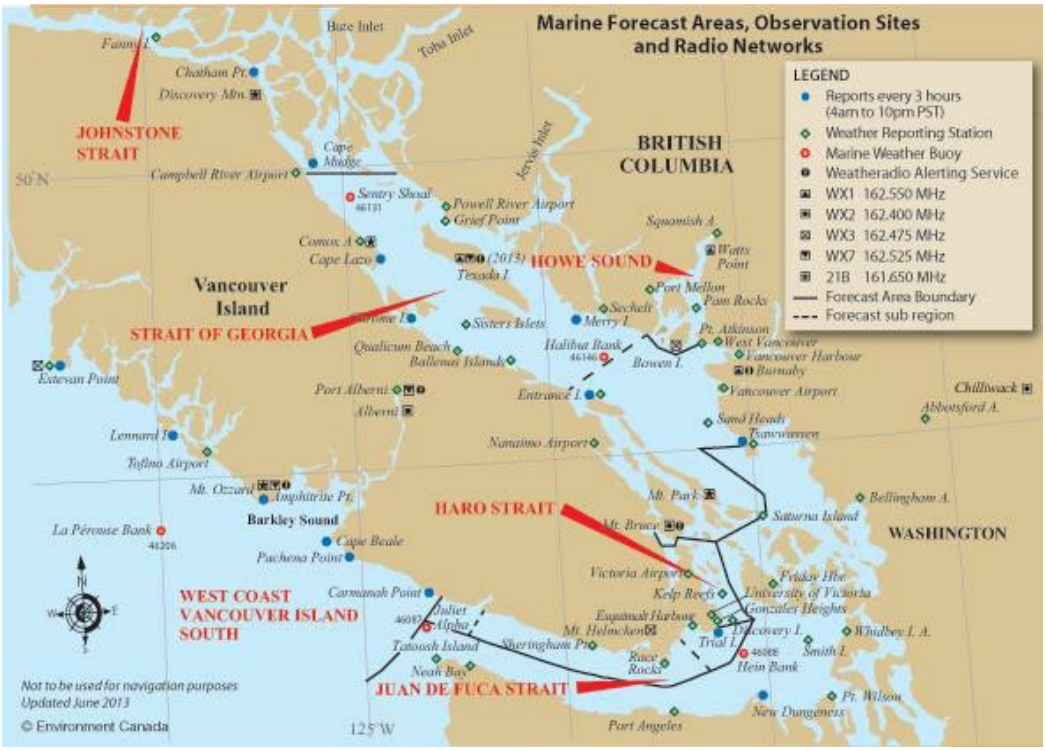
Appendix 4:

Weather Reporting Stations



Marine Forecast Areas

Environment Canada



Forecast Issue Times

All issue times are Pacific Standard or Daylight Saving Time (PST/PDT). Updated forecasts are issued as required.

- **Regular Forecast and Technical Marine Synopsis:** 4 am; 10:30 am; 4 pm; 9:30 pm
- **Extended Forecast:** 4 am; 4 pm
- **Wave Height Forecast:** 4 am; 4 pm

Marine Forecast Content

Wind Speed and Direction: The wind speed is the average wind that is expected over the open water, given in units of knots (1 kt = 1.85 km/h). Wind direction refers to the direction from which the wind is blowing (based on true north and not on magnetic bearings). It should also be noted that with the rugged Pacific coastline, considerable local variations from the forecast winds are possible.

Weather and Visibility: A brief description of the weather is included in the forecast when visibility is expected to be reduced to near or below one nautical mile (1.85 km).

Freezing Spray: Is mentioned in the forecast if conditions are likely to result in ice buildup on exposed vessel surfaces.

Air Temperature: Is included in the forecast only if temperatures are expected to be at or below 0° Celsius.

Marine Weather Warnings

- **Strong Wind Warning:** 20-33 knots (issued only for southern inner coastal waters between March 20th and November 11th)
- **Gale Warning:** 34-47 knots
- **Storm Warning:** 48-63 knots
- **Hurricane Force Wind Warning:** 64 knots or greater (refers to wind speed and does not imply that a hurricane is occurring or expected to occur)
- **Freezing Spray Warnings:** Ice is expected to build up at a rate of 0.7 cm per hour or greater.
- **Localized Warnings:** Issued for any hazardous weather that requires immediate attention. Examples include water spout or squall warnings.

Obtaining Forecasts

- **Environment Canada's Weather Website**
- **EC Weather Professional (Forecast Consultation Service - user fees apply):** 1-888-292-2222 (direct billing) or 1-888-292-2222 (cellphone access, credit card account billing)
- Environment Canada's public and marine forecasts and warnings broadcast 24 hours a day on **Weatheradio**.
- Environment Canada's marine weather forecasts and warnings. For information on Radio Aids to Marine Navigation, visit **Canadian Coast Guard's Continuous Marine Broadcast (CMB)**.

National Weather Service, NOAA

National Data Buoy Center (www.ndbc.noaa.gov)

See: Weather and Hazards Data Viewer:
http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/map/?wfo=sew&obs=true

Buoy 46088 (Hein Bank)
Race Rocks Automatic Weather Reporting System (CWQK)
Port Angeles Coast Guard Air Station (KNOW)
Port Angeles Fairchild International Airport (KCLM)
Sheringham Automatic Weather Reporting System (CWSP)
HOKO 1SW Weather Station (HKOW1) – at Kydaka Point (4 nm west of Clallam Bay, 11 nm east of Neah Bay
Buoy 46087 (midway between Tatoosh Island and Carmanah Point (i.e., 13 nautical miles east of Swiftsure Bank)

Marine Forecasts (http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/marine/zone/west/sewmz.htm)

PZZ133: Northern Inland Waters including the San Juan Islands

PZZ131: Central US Waters Strait of Juan de Fuca

PZZ130: West Entrance US Waters Strait of Juan de Fuca

PZZ150: Coastal Waters from Cape Flattery to James Island out 10 NM

PZZ170: Waters from Cape Flattery to James Island 10 to 60 NM

What is a "Marine Zone Forecast"?

US National Weather Service marine zones are specific, defined over-water areas contained in the various NWS marine forecast products. Each zone is identified by a text description and a Universal Generic Code (UGC), e.g. LONG ISLAND SOUND EAST OF NEW HAVEN CT/PORT JEFFERSON NY, ANZ330. Zones are divided to identify meteorologically dissimilar areas. Marine Zone Forecasts outline the range of conditions which may be found within the entire zone. The size of a zone and the number of zones within a forecast product is a compromise between forecast accuracy and dissemination limitations. Click HERE for several different options to obtain marine zone forecasts.

NOTE....High seas forecasts track individual weather systems rather than subdividing the forecast area into zones and providing a forecast for each.

What is a "Marine Point Forecast"?

A US National Weather Service "Marine Point Forecast" refers to a text forecast for a single point. In actuality, the "point" is a single small rectangle which represents the resolution of the computer forecast models which is typically 2.5 by 2.5 kilometers. The point forecast is generated from a forecaster-generated gridded data set known as the National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD) also used to produce graphics. The NDFD is used as the basis for the majority of local public and marine forecasts and is in the process of being further expanded to the offshore and high seas areas.

Please Note: Being a forecast for a single point, the point forecast is very specific and mariners should also be aware of weather conditions in the surrounding area. Forecast information for the surrounding area can be found within the zone forecast and the NDFD graphics. Be aware, the forecast conditions at a particular point may not exceed the criteria of a Small Craft Advisory, Gale, Storm etc. These watches/warnings/advisories are issued for the entire zone in which the point resides and mariners should act accordingly.

Marine Point Forecasts are available as part of US National Weather Service webpages popularly known as the "Point-and Click" pages. Included on these pages are the Forecast-at-a-Glance feature which allows a quick overview of forecast weather, a listing of any active warnings, watches or advisories, and links to an "Hourly Weather Graph" and other data of local interest. Marine "Point-and Click" pages are available HERE and via the maps found at the relevant forecast office. At the majority of offices clicking on the map will link to the marine zone forecast and then allow further zooming to the point of interest whereas on the Great Lakes, the first link is directly to a point forecast with the further option to link to the associated zone forecast which includes that point.

Note....Point forecasts are not yet available and/or may only be available experimentally in the areas of Alaska, Micronesia, Samoa, offshore, high seas, Canada, etc. (zone forecast may be returned in some cases or may also be returned when point data is temporarily unavailable).