

Vic Maui 2012

Frequently Asked Questions

Preparing for the Safety Consultation

Q: Why is the safety consultation so important?

The organizing authority of Vic Maui 2012 strongly believes in the importance of safety and self-reliance. This race traverses 2300 miles of open ocean, much of it beyond the reach of coastal rescue organizations. Vessels and crews must be prepared to deal with all situations that might arise. The role of the safety consultation is to assist the Skipper in emphasizing the importance of making safety paramount with other preparations.

Q: How do I book?

A: The Notice of Race specifies that you must contact the Technical Committee on or before April 28, 2012 to book an appointment for a safety consultation/inspection. Boats based in Canada can contact Greg Westerlund at gregwesterlund@shaw.ca. U.S. based boats can contact Frank Shriver at banditwa@msn.com.

Q: Why is it called a consultation?

A: While the process of an inspection and consultation are the same, the Technical Committee wants to emphasize the responsibility placed on the Skipper (or the Person in Charge) to make sure his/her vessel is ready to race and that it complies with all of the requirements listed in the Notice of Race. Of particular note are Section 1.02 of the Offshore Special Regulations ("OSR") which says "**The safety of a yacht and her crew is the sole and inescapable responsibility of the person in charge ...**" and Fundamental Rule 4 of the Racing Rules of Sailing which says "**The responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is hers alone.**"

Further the Technical Committee notes that in Section 1.02 of the OSR, it is emphasized that "Neither the establishment of these Special Regulations, their use by race organizers, nor the inspection of a yacht under these Special Regulations in any way limits or reduces the complete and unlimited responsibility of the person in charge."

Q: If the Skipper bears all of the responsibility, then why have a safety consultation/inspection?

A: The consultation is exactly that – a consultation. The process is designed to use a systematic approach to assist the Skipper and crew in their preparations to comply with the requirements of the Notice of Race and the OSR. Experience has shown that

most skippers and vessels, even those with considerable offshore racing experience, can benefit from assistance in reviewing the specific requirements and determining how best to comply.

Q: Will the safety consultants/inspectors fail a vessel?

A: The process is designed to assist the Skipper with interpreting the requirements and highlighting areas where a vessel might not be in compliance – there is no failing grade. Whether a vessel is in compliance is the sole responsibility of the Skipper. Once he/she believes the vessel is in compliance, he/she signs the Declaration in the Checklist, and the boat races.

Q: What happens if a Skipper signs the Checklist Declaration, but the vessel is not really in compliance?

A: The Technical Committee will be available in Victoria before the Start to assist in last minute preparations. If there is evidence that a vessel races while not in compliance, the Race Committee, the Technical Committee, or another competitor have the option to lodge a protest. If a protest finds that an infraction has occurred, the resulting penalty can include disqualification.

Q: How does a typical safety consultation/inspection proceed?

A: Appendix B of the Notice of Race contains a Checklist that is intended as a guide for the preparation of the vessel and will be used by the consultant/inspector and Skipper to review the safety preparations. It would be expected that necessary preparations are mostly complete and all required safety equipment be on board and prepared for viewing. A consultant will usually want to proceed through the Checklist in order.

The whole process is expected to take 2-3 hours if the boat has been prepared and the required safety equipment is available for viewing without having to search through lockers and storage.

Q: What if I miss something; can I schedule a second consultation/inspection.

A: The consultants/inspectors are available to assist. That said, completing all vessels in a short period of time can strain the available time of our volunteer consultants. To avoid problems, it is strongly encouraged that Skippers do a dry run through the Checklist prior to the consultation.

Missing items or preparations that are not in compliance, can usually be dealt with through communication with the consultants by email or other means. If absolutely necessary, a second consultation can be scheduled.

Q: What if the consultant/inspector and Skipper disagree on whether a particular item meets the requirements?

A: It is fully recognized there are various strategies to comply with the requirements in a number of areas. The Technical Committee will strive to have consultations/inspectors conducted by 2 volunteers. This should allow a good discussion on areas of uncertainty. The goal of the consultation/inspection is to assist the Skipper to find an effective way to comply, not to find fault.

Q: Will there be particular attention on specific items?

A: The OSR and the consultation are based on reducing the major risks to the people and vessel that might be encountered during a race. Reduction of these risks can be thought of as including:

- Protecting the Crew from Heavy Objects and Structural Failures,
- Keeping the Crew on the Boat,
- Keeping Water Out When Heeled, Knocked Down or Capsized,
- Being Seen and Heard by Other Vessels & Rescuers,
- Being Ready to deal with Minor and Major Damage,
- Being Ready to Respond to Emergencies.

If a Skipper approaches his/her preparations with a risk reduction focus in mind, complying with the requirements of Notice of Race and OSR should be straightforward.

REMEMBER: It is the goal of Technical Committee to encourage safety and self-reliance during participation in this race. We will work hard to assist vessels in their preparations so that all participants have a successful and safe outcome.