



BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM

**Including Orientation Requirements for SOS Crew
and Instructions to Skippers and others designated to
perform checkouts**

SOS Education Committee
January 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome and Introduction	3
Skipper & First Mate Checkout Instruction	3
Member Introduction	4
Roles of Skipper, First Mate and Crew	5
Heat & Cold Related Illnesses & Injuries; Seasickness	6
Stowing Gear and Personal Dress	7
Personal Safety	8
Raft Courtesy	9
Basic Skills Level I	10
Expectations and Study Guide	
Safety Items	10
Sailing Skills	10
Nomenclature	10
Directives and Explanations	
Use of Safety Equipment, Overboard Procedures, Knots, Cleats ..	12
Anchoring, Leaving a Dock or Slip, On Board Activities	13
On Board Notes Items	14
Checkout Sheet Level I	15
Basic Skills Level II	16
Expectations and Study Guide	
Safety Items	16
Sailing Skills	16
Nomenclature	17
Directives and Explanations	
Knots, Rafting	19
Docking	21
Checkout Sheet Level II	22
Basic Skills Level III	23
Expectations and Study Guide	
Safety Items	23
Sailing Skills	23
Nomenclature	24
Directives and Explanations	
Rules of the Road	25
Navigational Aids	26
Points of Sail, Coming About and Jibing	26
Anchoring	27
On Board Activities	28
Checkout Sheet Level III	29

WELCOME TO THE “SOS” BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM

Welcome to “Singles on Sailboats” also known as “SOS”. The purpose of this Orientation Packet is to provide you with the educational Basic Skills for sailing enjoyment and safety with other SOS Members. The Basic Skills Program is not intended to teach sailing or piloting, but rather to give information needed to be safe and helpful crew.

This packet includes all three levels of the Basic Skills Program. Completion of Level I is an Orientation Requirement for all our members’ safety while sailing with SOS. This level is completed before or during a member’s first sailing experience (usually a day sail). Completion of Level II advances crew to be more knowledgeable with sailing in general and more active crew around the boat. Level III advances those members who wish to fully assist in the sailing of a boat. While this program does not apply to Skippers; members aspiring to be First Mate Candidates must complete all three levels of the Basic Skills Program before applying to the First Mate Program. Details to become a First Mate can be found on the SOS web site under Forms and Such, First Mates.

Sailing opportunities are listed on our website www.singlesonsailboats.org under the Events Calendar and in the “Whisker Pole” newsletter under Fleet Exercises.



TO SKIPPERS & FIRST MATES PERFORMING BASIC SKILLS CHECKOUTS

Thank you for participating in checkouts of the SOS Basic Skills Program. Please file this material in your Skipper’s Handbook and keep it on board for SOS sailing activities.

Level I is a minimum skill requirement for all members who sail with SOS. Levels II and III complete the Basic Skills Program and are aimed toward the advancement of a members sailing knowledge.

Members should read and become familiar with the material prior to the checkout for that level. They are not expected to have mastered the skills. These checkouts are an opportunity for exposure to and learning of some of the skills. Once checked out, however, skippers have a reasonable expectation that the individual has some degree of demonstrated proficiency.

Members should have the Basic Skills Manual and corresponding Checkout Sheets with them on the sail. Have the member perform the tasks and define the sailing terms. Your initials and signature indicate the completed items on the corresponding checkout sheets and are required for them to receive completion credit. When asking crew to perform certain tasks, please keep in mind the level for which the member is being checked out. For example, Level I tasks should coincide with simple/basic requests. Level II tasks should coincide with sail handling, docking, and rafting. Level III tasks should coincide with the maneuvering of a boat under sail, navigation, and “Rules of the Road”. We suggest that you first read through all levels to get a basic understanding the program.

Remember to minimize the impact on yourself and other crew when performing checkouts. Consider involving other crew members and using the time as a learning/teaching experience for all. It can be fun!

TO MEMBERS

This packet contains the information you need to learn and show competency for your checkout. Some skills will be demonstrated during the checkouts (such as properly putting on a Personal Flotation Device [PFD], attaching a fender to a lifeline, preparing a jib for sailing, using a winch, points of sail and “Rules of the Road”). Should you have trouble understanding the material or have any questions, you will receive some assistance during the checkouts.

All members have a responsibility to be at the boat on time, with their agreed meal(s), completed medical form and ready to relay any medical or limitation issues to the skipper.

The steps to complete each Level of the Basic Skills Program are as follows:

1. Study each Level’s nomenclature and materials.
2. Sign up for an event during which the checkouts can be completed, such as dockside training, a day sail or a weekend sail. Spring Training and Dockside Training Sessions are a great way to learn more about SOS and sailing in general.
3. If the Skipper agrees to do the checkouts, bring the forms with you to the boat. The Skipper will not have the Checkout Sheets for you. All Checkout Sheets are attached to the back of this packet.
4. Have the Skipper or other designated person initial each item for which you complete the required activity. If necessary, you can arrange to have the remaining items completed on another occasion.
5. When all items for the level have been completed, send a copy of the Checkout Sheet to: basicskills.sos.org@gmail.com
6. The Database/Education Team will update your skills in your profile. You should check your profile after you have completed each Level Requirement.

Level I of the Basic Skills Program is a minimum skill requirement for sailing as a crewmember on a weekend cruise. Members usually demonstrate these skills during a dockside training session or on day sails, prior to signing up for weekend cruises (although some Skippers will do checkouts during a member’s first weekend cruise, on a space available basis). This Level contains some basic boat and equipment nomenclature; some references on the use of basic safety equipment; securing lines to cleats; some key points regarding Man Overboard Procedures (MOB); and some basic knots for you to learn. The knots can be found in Attachment #2, on-line at www.animatedknots.com and in most basic sailing manuals. Many experienced club members will also be happy to demonstrate knots.

As you progress through the units of the Basic Skills Program, more of the material will be learned through demonstration aboard. You should bring both the Skill Level Checkout Sheet and the Basic Skills Manual and with you on the sail.

Level II includes some nomenclature related to sails and sail handling; considerations involved in moving the boat from the dock or slip; rafting; additional knots; points of sail and MOB procedures.

Level III covers a third level of nomenclature, navigation aids, “Rules of the Road”, points of sail, anchoring, and the maneuvering of a boat under sail. Completion of Level III recognizes you as a Basic Skills Graduate and makes you more desirable as competent crew.

ROLES OF THE SKIPPER, FIRST MATE AND CREW

Role of the Skipper:

There are many aspects to the role of the Skipper in law and tradition. Understanding a few aspects of the Skipper’s role in relation to SOS sailing activities should contribute to good communication, safety and the enjoyment of all aboard during SOS sailing activities.

The Skipper is responsible for the safe operation of his/her vessel; that is properly equipped with all U.S. Coast Guard required equipment and safe for its intended use. Skippers usually let crew know what standards of neatness and cleanliness they want maintained (which contributes to safety); these standards vary from Skipper to Skipper.

The Skipper will direct crew in the operation of the vessel and decide whether to continue or abort a planned trip or change destination because of unforeseen problems or safety concerns. The Skipper also decides whether or not to raft (tie up to another boat).

Role of the First Mate:

The First Mate should have the ability, should the necessity arise, to act competently as a skipper and to return a boat and crew safely to shore. Typically, the First Mate provides assurance to a Skipper that at least one other person in the crew is a competent sailor. This eliminates much of a Skipper’s concern over new (or unknown) crew. Conversely, the First Mate offers the same assurance to crew who, are new to the Club and may be new to sailing. At the request of the Skipper, the First Mate will perform the pre-cruise checkout so that everyone knows the location of the safety equipment. A First Mate is usually designated to sail with each new Skipper during his/her initial cruises with the Club to provide orientation in the practices and procedures of SOS, whether they relate to the safety issues of building a raft or to the social protocols of boat hopping once the raft is secure. The Skipper may also ask the First Mate to direct operations such as raising and lowering sails, rafting, docking, etc.

At the request of the Skipper, the First Mate may also perform some or all of the following in connection with a cruise: invite the crew, give directions to the boat and time of arrival, coordinate meals and meal preparation, inform crew of facilities on board including sleeping and cooking, and inform crew of any special preferences of the Skipper regarding provisions and operations on board.

Experienced sailors who wish to become First Mates should review the information on the website under Forms and Such, First Mates

Role of the Crew:

As a crewmember, you are responsible for your own individual safety and comfort aboard. You are responsible for informing those operating the vessel of any physical or other limitations on

your ability to perform tasks that may be given, in addition to providing that information on the Sailing Registration and Waiver Form. You are also encouraged to provide the Skipper with a completed Medical Form (found under Forms on the SOS website) in a sealed envelope upon boarding his/her boat (in case of an emergency). This form will be returned to you at the end of the cruise.

Sailing Questions? All sailing questions are welcome and encouraged. Don't be afraid to ask them, even the most seasoned sailors can learn something new.

The Skipper and First Mate, in order to carry out their responsibilities, must be able to rely on you to follow directions on operating the vessel. If you do not understand directions sufficiently to perform a task, let the Skipper or First Mate know. If you have questions regarding the "why" of directions, wait for an appropriate time to discuss these with the Skipper or First Mate. At times it is helpful to "Echo Orders" (relay messages) from the helm to the bow of the boat. Repeating a direction given by a Skipper is helpful to let the Skipper know you heard and understood the directive.

Understand that the handling of a vessel occasionally creates tension and patience may run short. Do not take personally comments made at such times or the manner in which they are delivered. **KEEP FOCUSED ON ACCOMPLISHING THE TASKS OF THE MOMENT!** Focusing on personalities at such times can adversely affect the safety of the vessel and those aboard.

You are on board as the invited guest of the Skipper. Act with the understanding that you are responsible for being a good guest. Take care to protect your host's accommodations: avoid spills (especially red wine), stains (wine, sweat and, lotions), scratches, and other damage (you may be responsible for their repair). Deck shoes should be worn for safety. There is no smoking below deck and no illegal drugs are allowed aboard.

A final responsibility of crew is to assist in clean up upon return to port. Help in advance by having your own gear ready to go when you arrive. Ask the Skipper what you can do to help clean. You will be expected to return the vessel to its condition prior to the cruise.



HEAT AND COLD-RELATED ILLNESSES AND INJURIES: SEASICKNESS

Become familiar with avoiding the following heat- and cold-related illnesses and injuries:

Sunburn
Eye damage

Heat exhaustion
Heatstroke

Hypothermia

In planning to avoid these conditions, keep in mind that the elements related to these conditions are magnified when sailing. The sun's effects are increased due to reflection. Early or late in the season, the wind even on a warm day can produce a chill as it passes over the colder water. Temperatures drop quickly after sundown. Add a little extra to the protection you think you need until you have sufficient experience to know how much you actually need. You should also protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses, especially those with good ultra-violet screening. A hat with a visor also contributes to eye protection.

The same principles apply to avoiding seasickness. The bay can get choppy and, if one is susceptible, it can be very unpleasant. Dramamine is the old standby, but some prefer Bonine as one tablet lasts up to 12 hours. In any case, take the tablets before you come aboard if you anticipate any kind of problem. Wristbands which use acupressure principles are also available at boat supply stores. “Behind the ear” patches obtained by prescription are effective, but some people have reported serious side effects (confusion, hallucinations), which can be especially dangerous on a boat. A traditional remedy, ground ginger root has been shown to also be effective and has the added advantage that it can be taken at any time with no known side effects. It is available in capsules from health food stores. Some sailors find that simply drinking ginger ale or eating ginger cookies relieves mild seasickness.

Most importantly **STAY HYDRATED**. Staying hydrated with water helps in avoiding heatstroke and seasickness.

STOWING GEAR

When stowing gear aboard a sailboat, remember that space is limited and some spaces are designated for special purposes. Stow gear only where instructed by the Skipper or First Mate. An overriding consideration is that the boat will generally be on an even keel (mast straight up) when gear is being stowed. Underway, the boat may tilt to one side (heel) up to 15 to 20 degrees. Consider where items stowed will end up when the boat is heeled over to starboard or port and how it will ride when the boat is forced to bounce or hobbyhorse over the wake of another boat or in choppy seas. Also, think ahead to what items you will need during the course of the day so they can be kept accessible.

When stowing gear associated with the operation of the vessel (e.g., winch handles, boat hook, lines, binoculars, etc...), it is likely that a specific place has been designated for it. Ask where the item should be stowed and make sure you understand the response. Gear may be needed quickly and problems can result when it is not in its proper place.



PERSONAL DRESS CONSIDERATIONS

Please wear weather appropriate clothing. Since weather can change quickly on the bay, dress or bring **extra layers**. **Foul weather gear** (rain gear) should always be a part of your gear. **Deck shoes** that have light colored soles and cover your toes should be worn. Bare toes are a hazard aboard a boat due to the many toe catchers on the deck. **No jewelry** should be worn except small earrings (that do not dangle). If you must wear small rings, you should wear **sailing gloves** over them when sailing. **A hat with a visor** will keep the sun and falling rain out of your eyes. Hats should have a **strap** to keep them from blowing away. Bring your own **sun block and lip protection**. **Nothing long or loose** such as scarves or long necklaces should be worn.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Sailing is not without risk. Personal Safety is your responsibility. Always be aware of your surroundings. Things can move quickly and without warning on a boat. In addition, keep in mind the following safety advice:

1. Make sure you pack sailing gloves, deck shoes, and foul weather gear. Don't forget to bring sunglasses, hats, and sunscreen. Bring a small flashlight to assist you around the raft or dock after dark.
2. Drink plenty of water before, during, and after your sail.
3. Avoid alcoholic beverages while underway. Drink alcohol only in moderation while in a raft or ashore so that you are able to assist with the boat in an emergency. Be especially cautious about mixing alcohol with medications.
4. Never step onto or off a boat that is still moving or not properly secured to raft or dock.
5. Never wrap a line around your hand or allow a line to become wrapped around any part of your body. This is especially true for passing lines, but also includes anchor rodes, sheets, and halyards, and any line under tension. Always be prepared to let go of a line quickly.
6. Never get your finger or hand between a winch and the line it is being used to control.
7. Always pull the line with the heel of your hand toward the winch with your thumbs pointing down or toward you.
8. Always reach around the wheel; never reach through the spokes of the wheel for something.
9. Never place a body part between two boats or a boat and a pier for the purpose of fending off or going over the side to reach something.
10. Never stand or sit where the boom can hit you if it suddenly swings to your side of the boat.
11. Unless medical in nature, leave your jewelry at home. This includes finger rings, toe rings, hoop or dangling earrings, bracelets, and necklaces.
12. Always have one hand for you and one hand on the boat when moving around, as the boat's orientation may suddenly change and toss you off balance.
13. Do not go swimming while a raft is being built, or in the vicinity of boats or equipment being maneuvered under power; wait for permission of the raft captain.
14. Always know the location of your Personal Flotation Device (PFD) in case of an emergency or nighttime raft breakup.



The bottom line: Maintain an awareness of where you are and what is happening around you. Plan your activities so as to **minimize risk**, while **avoiding fatigue, dehydration, or dangerous situations that you are unprepared to handle given your skills, training, and experience.** **If you have concerns about safety or for anyone's well-being, speak-up. If someone is behaving erratically, speak-up! Let others know of your concern. Take care of each other!**

RAFTING COURTESY

Rafts are among the most enjoyable of SOS social activities. They provide an excellent opportunity to meet other members, to learn about boats and sailing, and to socialize in a pleasant environment. Following a few simple rules ensures a pleasant environment for all:

1. Do not leave your boat to socialize until the boat has been secured and the skipper has given permission for you to leave (your help may still be needed for another incoming boat).
2. When moving to another vessel, request permission to board or cross if your doing so affects the activities of others (generally, if they are on board and in sight).
3. When crossing another vessel, cross by moving around to the bow, not through the cockpit (unless invited to do otherwise).
4. Always keep “one hand for the boat” (to ensure your safety); ask someone else to hold whatever you are carrying (drink, gear, or other equipment). After dark, use a flashlight. When moving from vessel to vessel, use shrouds and grab rails to steady yourself; do not hold onto halyards, sheets, awnings, dodgers, or (worst of all) radio antennae. If shrouds or grab rails are not within reach at the point where the hulls are close enough to cross, steady yourself by holding onto the lifelines, preferably near a stanchion, but do not pull your weight across on the lifelines. Try stepping outside of your boat’s lifelines before stepping over the lifelines of the next boat.
5. Do not go below on another vessel unless invited by the Skipper or his crew. (You may, of course, request an invitation.)
6. Never leave cans, cups, or other litter on a vessel you are visiting. Put them in the trash with the permission of the Skipper or return them to the boat on which you are sailing. They become safety hazards, especially after dark.
7. When people on the raft start retiring, respect their rest requirements by controlling the volume of conversation, music, etc. Also, be quiet and especially light of step when passing from boat to boat.
8. Remember, a change in conditions can require the breaking of a raft at any time. Be responsible about your own condition so you can assist in a safe and competent manner at any time.

Be Polite!

Be Responsible!



LET THE FUN BEGIN

Basic Skills - Level I

Basic Skills Level I is a minimum skill requirement for all members sailing with SOS. It provides basic sailing information and knowledge needed for a safe and enjoyable sail. You must study the below information before registering for a checkout on this level.

A. SAFETY ITEMS

1. Put on a life jacket known as a PFD (Personal Flotation Device).
2. Read the instructions on a fire extinguisher and be able to explain its use.
3. Read the instructions on a hand-held flare and be able to explain its use.
4. Identify a life sling, throwing ring or other flotation device and be able to explain its use.
5. Discuss Man Overboard (MOB) procedures and make sure you can identify and explain the steps. See section E.

B. SAILING SKILLS - Demonstration of correct line handling and usage

1. Wrap, tail, and crank a line using a winch and winch handle.
2. Tie a clove hitch by attaching a fender to a lifeline.
3. Tie a cleat hitch by attaching a line to a cleat.
4. Toss (heave) a coiled line.

C. NOMENCLATURE – You must be able to point out, explain, or define the following terms:

Locations and Directions Relative to a Boat:

1. Aft Toward the back of the boat or behind the boat.
2. Below Down inside the boat.
3. Forward Toward the front of the boat.
4. Port The left side of a boat when looking forward. Small words with 4 letters
Port/Left.
5. Starboard The right side of a boat when looking forward.

Activities on a Boat:

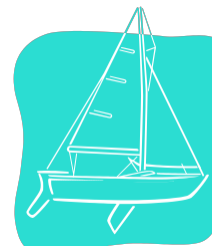
1. Batten down To secure hatches and loose objects below and on deck.
2. Cast off To untie and release docking or rafting lines in preparation for departure.
3. Ease To gradually let out or slacken a line (also called “pay out”).
4. Fend off To prevent the boat from touching an object, such as a piling or another boat, while bringing the boat alongside.
5. Haul To pull.
6. Heel Why the boat leans over to one side when sailing.
7. Reef To reduce the size of the sails.
8. Stow To put an item in its proper place.
9. Take in To pull in or tighten a line.

Things on a Boat:

1. Boat Hook A pole with a hook on one end used to retrieve or place a line over a piling, to recover an object dropped overboard.
2. Fender An item placed between the side of the boat and a dock, or another boat, to prevent rubbing or chafing.
3. Winch Handle A metal or plastic handle that fits into the top of a winch and is used to turn the winch. On some winches, the handle may be turned clockwise or counterclockwise to bring the line in slower or faster.
4. Bow Line A line that connects the bow to a dock or another boat
5. Spring Line A line led forward or aft to a dock or another boat that keeps the boat from moving forward or backwards.
6. Stern Line A line that connects the stern to a dock or another boat.

Attributes and Parts of a Boat: view Attachment #1

1. Anchor A heavy metal object fastened to a chain or line that digs into the bottom of the bay and keeps a boat in position.
2. Boom A horizontal pole attached to the back of the mast used to extend the bottom of a sail.
3. Bow The front of a boat.
4. Chock An opening along the edge of the deck through which lines are led.
5. Cleat A metal fitting with two horns used to secure lines.
6. Cockpit The box-like well in the deck from which the boat is steered.
7. Companionway The entryway to go down inside the boat, usually with steps.
8. Deck The surface on the top of a boat that acts as a floor.
9. Galley The kitchen area.
10. Genoa A very large jib sail that overlaps the mainsail, sometimes called a “Genny” and used interchangeably with “Jib”.
11. Hatch An opening on the top of the boat with a watertight cover.
12. Head A marine toilet.
13. Helm The object used to steer the boat, such as a wheel.
14. Hull The water tight body of a boat, which include the sides and bottom of a boat.
15. Jib A triangular sail at the front of the boat.
16. Lifeline A safety line along the edge of the deck supported by posts called stanchions.
17. Line Any rope on a boat.
18. Mainsail A sail on the back of the mast (pronounced “mains l”).
19. Mast A vertical pole to support raising a sail.
20. Navigation Station A desk area that stores navigation equipment such as charts. Also called the “Nav Station”.
21. Sheet A line used to control the lateral movement of a sail.
22. Stern The back of a boat.
23. Wheel The steering wheel used to turn a boat.
24. Winch A geared metal drum used to pull a line, such as a sheet.

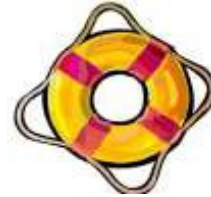


D. USE OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT

You will have the opportunity to inspect and read the instructions of safety equipment on board during your checkout for the following items:



PFD (Personal Flotation Device)
Fire Extinguisher
Flares
Throwing a ring or flotation device



E. OVERBOARD PROCEDURES

A person overboard should be treated as a possible life-or-death situation. There are certain things that must be done to respond and retrieve the individual.

1. If you witness a person overboard, continuously point to the victim and alert all aboard by shouting **“MAN OVERBOARD”**.
2. Keep the victim in sight **AT ALL TIMES** by having one assigned crew member point continuously at the person in the water.
3. Heave throwable flotation devices as close to the victim as possible without hitting him/her – this helps the victim remain afloat, as well as, marking their location.
4. Follow the instructions of the Skipper or the person directing the recovery to bring the boat back to the victim.
5. Assist in getting the victim back on board.

F. KNOTS

The following knots should be learned and practiced for Level I:

1. Cleat hitch (square knot)
2. Clove hitch (used to attach fenders to lifelines)
3. Stopper Knot
4. Square Knot (reefing knot)



online at www.animatedknots.com
and view Attachment #2

G. CLEATS

Cleats are mounted in a variety of locations and are used to secure (make fast) lines. They can be located on the mast to secure halyards; on the boom to secure lines; and on deck to secure sheets, docking or mooring lines, and the anchor rode. Although a horn cleat is the most commonly used cleat for a variety of purposes, there are others you will encounter, such as jam cleats and cam cleats. When you do, ask what they are called and how they are used.



Horn Cleat



Cam Cleats



Jam Cleat



Line Cleats

H. ANCHORING



When deploying, setting, or raising an anchor, the Skipper will give instructions to crew members. You may be asked to assist by relaying directions or rinsing off the anchor chain and anchor.

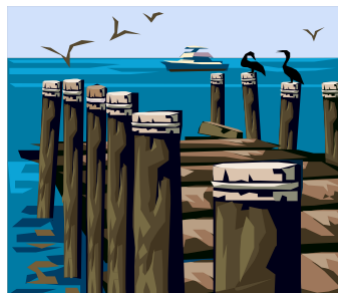
I. LEAVING THE DOCK OR SLIP

When leaving the dock or slip, the person at the helm will be dealing with a number of concerns simultaneously; wind direction and force, current direction and speed, other boats underway in the area, and the operation of the engine, to name a few. Skippers will give instructions before getting underway which will let you know what your role will be while leaving the dock.

Crew is usually responsible for casting off and assuring that the boat does not come in contact with pilings or the dock. Make sure you understand your assignment. When handling mooring or docking lines, make sure they are not looped under or around objects on the boat, such as the lifelines, and that when they are to be cast off, they are not still attached to cleats on board. Also, make sure lines are not dragging in the water; a line snagged by the propeller can end a trip before it starts.

Safety at the Dock: When you fend off, the goal is to prevent contact between the boat and a fixed object, such as a piling, dock, or another boat. Do not use force beyond what is needed to prevent contact. If you do, you may change the direction of travel and possibly cause a collision on the opposite side. The following safety rules must be observed:

1. Never let yourself get between a fixed object and a moving vessel (make sure you have room to move out of the way if contact cannot be avoided).
2. Keep your elbows bent when fending with your arms and knees bent when fending with your legs.
3. When fending with a boat hook, NEVER put the end of a boat hook between your body and a fixed object; always have the boat hook off to the side of your body.



J. ON BOARD ACTIVITIES

Your checkout Skipper will familiarize you with several operations on board and you will be asked to demonstrate these operations. They include:

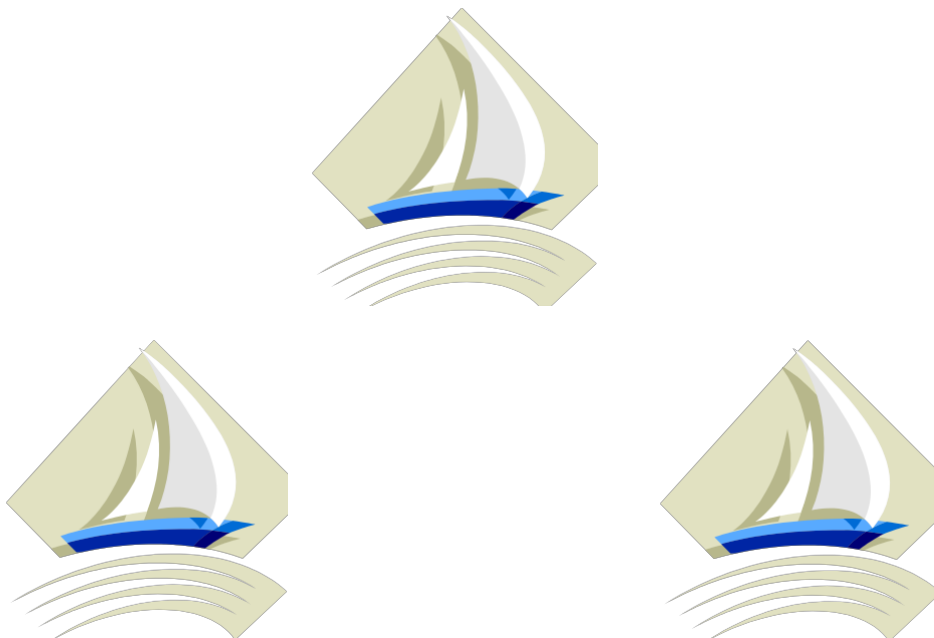
1. Use of winches
2. Making fast to a cleat
3. Attaching a fender
4. Heaving lines (throwing lines)
5. “Echoing” instructions (repeating instructions forward or aft)

K. ON BOARD NOTES

When operating winches be careful to keep clothing clear of the moving parts of the winch. Serious injury can result very quickly. Many sailors find it beneficial to tie their hair back and leave their jewelry at home.

When a sail is being raised, be observant. The sail should be free of obstacles or snags and the Skipper and other crew should be alerted if it is not. For example, a sail batten caught in the lazyjacks while being raised can be damaged or cause a mishap.

When rafting or docking, occasionally, it will be necessary to heave a line to someone on another vessel or on a dock. There are a number of different ways of doing this. We will cover one method which is adequate for the short distances normally involved: Coil enough line (starting with the end that has a loop) to pass well beyond the distance it must be thrown, half again as far if that much line is available. Make sure the coils are even and not entangled. Then tightly hold the uncoiled end of the line in your non-throwing hand and throw the coil, aiming above the head of the person to receive it. Remember to hold fast to your end!



Note:

Completion of Level I satisfies the minimum skill requirement for those wanting to sail as SOS crew. The SOS Database/Education team must receive the Check Sheet for this level with the initials and signature of those completing your checkouts before you can be credited with having completed this Level. Upon completion send a copy to:

basicskills.sos.org@gmail.com

Your Check Sheets are attached to the back of this packet. You should check the website under “My Profile” to verify the listing of your completed skills.

CHECK SHEET FOR **LEVEL I** of the BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM

Name of Member: _____

You must present this form at the time in which you wish to complete your Level I Basic Skills Checkout. When all items have been initialed and the form has been signed on the lines provided, you must forward this form as directed in the packet. UNTIL THEN, YOU CANNOT BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR COMPLETION.

For confirmation that your check sheet has been received, review your SOS web site "My Profile". It will have the level of skills completed, such as completion of Basic Skills I and II. If you have completed Basic Skills III, it will show Basic Skills Graduate. Save a copy of each completed form for your own records. The club will not be responsible for maintaining a completion file for you. Things can get lost.

NOTE TO SKIPPERS AND FIRST MATES: Initial only those items that have been satisfactorily completed. Remember to sign and date on the lines provided below. Members may need to sail more than once to complete Level I.

Have the Member

- _____ Properly put on a PFD.
- _____ Read the instructions on a fire extinguisher and explain how to use it.
- _____ Read the instructions on a hand-held flare and explain how to use it.
- _____ Identify throwable flotation devices (ring, cushion, etc.).
- _____ Describe what steps he/she is to take in a man-overboard drill.
- _____ Demonstrate safely getting on and off a boat and moving from boat to boat.

Sailing Skills

- _____ Properly secured a line to a cleat (cleat hitch).
- _____ Tie a clove hitch by attaching a fender to a lifeline.
- _____ Tie a stopper knot.
- _____ Tie a square knot (reefing knot).
- _____ Toss a coiled line.
- _____ Wrap and tail a sheet around a winch.
- _____ Properly crank a winch.

General Sailing Knowledge

- _____ Was responsive to directions from the Skipper and First Mate.
- _____ Had reasonable protection against the elements (cold, sun, etc.).
- _____ Was familiar with most nomenclature for Level I.
- _____ Was familiar with the role of crew in leaving a dock or slip.
- _____ Stowed gear in a proper manner.

Signature(s) of Skipper and/or First Mate doing check-outs:

_____	_____	____/____/____
Signature	Printed Name	Date
_____	_____	____/____/____
Signature	Printed Name	Date

When competed, send a copy of the checkout sheet to; basicskills.sos.org@gmail.com

Rev. 1/2025

You should check the website under "My Profile" to verify the listing of your completed skills.

Basic Skills - Level II

Basic Skills Level II includes additional knots, some nomenclature related to sails, and some sail handling. This level discusses the actions involved in moving the boat from a dock or slip and in recovering an overboard individual through “Man Overboard Procedures” (MOB). Also included are details related to rafting.

A. SAFETY ITEMS

1. Participate in a man-overboard (MOB) drill. (DO NOT PUT A PERSON OVERBOARD FOR THIS DRILL.)
2. Assist in a specific role (fending off, casting off, etc...) when entering or leaving the dock.
3. Assist in a specific role (hanging a fender, tossing a line, etc...) when entering or leaving a raft or dock.
4. Explain how to safely handle a passing line or any line under tension.

B. SAILING SKILLS:

1. Tie a bowline to create a loop in a line.
2. Tie a bowline through the clew cringle in a sail.
3. Tie a reef (square) knot to tie down reefed sails.
4. Tie a figure eight stopper knot.
5. Coil a line.
6. Lead lines through blocks.
7. Prepare and raise a mainsail for sailing (explain the control lines and how they are used).
8. Prepare a jib for sailing (explain the control lines and how they are used).
9. Assist in coming about (tacking); reviewing the commands and steps involved.
10. Assist during a jibe; reviewing the commands and steps involved with the head sail and main sail.
11. Identify the points of sail in a variety of situations (sailing in a circle or figure eight helps).
 - Close hauled (also known as “beating”).
 - Close reach.
 - Beam reach.
 - Broad reach.
 - Run.
12. Participate in lowering, flaking, and covering the mainsail.
13. Participate in furling the jib using the furling line (drum line).



[View Attachment #3](#)

C. NOMENCLATURE

Locations Relative to a Boat:

1. Abeam To the side of the boat.
2. Ahead In front of the boat.
3. Astern Behind the boat.
4. Leeward Away from the wind (also “lee”).
5. Windward Toward the wind.

Activities on a Boat:

1. Coil To arrange a line in loops so it can be stowed in its proper place.
2. Come About/Tacking To turn the boat so that the bow crosses the wind (also “tack”).
3. Fall off To turn away from the wind (also called “bear off”).
4. Flake To fold a sail in layers on the boom.
5. Head up To turn toward the wind (also called “come up”).
6. Jibe To turn the boat so that the stern crosses the wind.
7. Luff up To turn toward the wind so that the wind blows across both sides of the sail causing it to flutter (also “luffing”).



Things on a Boat:

1. Blocks Wheels (sheaves), encased in frames, used to control or change the direction of lines.
2. Boom Vang A line that pulls the mainsail boom down. The boom vang, traveler, and mainsheet are used to trim the mainsail
3. Shackle A fastener, closed with a pin or spring, used to connect things.
4. Sheaves The wheels in blocks (pronounced “shivs”).
5. Traveler A device that allows the attachment point of the mainsheet to be moved sideways.

Attributes and Parts of a Boat:

1. Beam The greatest width of a boat.
2. Bulkhead A vertical partition separating parts of the hull.
3. Draft The vertical distance from the waterline to the lowest point of the boat.
4. Lazarette A compartment in the stern of a boat used for storage; a storage space below the deck in the cockpit.
5. Locker A closet or chest-like storage space.
6. Rudder A movable board-shaped part, below the stern of the boat, used to steer the boat. It is controlled by the wheel or tiller.
7. Tiller A bar or handle used to steer a boat.
8. Shroud A wire rigged to the side of the mast to prevent it from moving sideways.
9. Spreader A horizontal piece extending from the side of the mast. A shroud is attached to the end of the spreader.

Sail-related Terms: see Attachment #4

1. Battens Slats inserted in pockets in a sail to aid in shaping the sail.
2. Clew The aft, lower corner of a sail.
3. Cringle A grommet in a sail through which a line or hook can be passed.
4. Foot The bottom edge of a sail.
5. Furling line A line attached to a spindle used to pull in or let out the jib or in some cases the mainsail. Also known as a drum line.
6. Halyard A line or wire used to raise/lower a sail.
7. Head The top corner of a sail.
8. Jib sheet A line attached to the clew of a jib used to control lateral movement of the sail.
9. Lazyjacks Light lines that form a cradle to hold the mainsail on the boom.
10. Leech The aft edge of a sail.
11. Luff The forward edge of a sail.
12. Mainsheet The line used to control the lateral movement of the mainsail.
13. Outhaul A line used to adjust the foot of a sail along a boom
14. Tack *n.* The forward lower corner of a sail. (Tack *v.* see page 24)



Navigation-related Terms:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. Buoy | A floating marker anchored to the bottom of the bay to indicate a position on the water. |
| 2. Chart | A map for navigating on water. |
| 3. Knot | The measure for the speed of a boat. 1 knot = 1 nautical mile per hour. |
| 4. Nautical Mile | A unit used in measuring distances at sea, equal to approximately 6,080 feet/2,025 yards/1,852 m. |

D. KNOTS

The following knots should be learned and practiced for Level II:

1. Tie a bowline to create a loop in a line.
2. Tie a bowline through the clew cringle in a sail.
3. Coil a line.

online at www.animatedknots.com
and view Attachment #2



E. RAFTING

Several types of rafts are used on SOS Sailing activities. They range from the small pods (two or three boats), to larger linear rafts (four or more boats), to large circular rafts (twelve or more boats). The type of raft used depends on a number of factors, such as, the number of boats expected to join the raft, the weather (and forecast), how well anchors hold in the area and how much room is available at the anchorage.

A pre-arranged specified Skipper is designated as Raft Captain. The Raft Captain decides whether it is safe to raft, what kind of raft to use, and whether or not the raft will be kept together through the night. The Raft Captain also directs the assembly and breakup of the raft. It is still, however, the decision of each Skipper whether or not to join the raft.

On approaching the raft site, all lines and fenders needed should be made ready and all crew should be clear as to their assigned task. During rafting, all crew must be alert at all times to assist with fending off should the need arise. A change in the wind or the current, the wake of a passing vessel, or a sudden storm can result in the sudden closing of space between boats causing an unsafe situation.

When rafting, the crew is to follow instructions from only their Skipper!

Review the previous passage regarding Personal Safety. In addition, keep in mind that there are 2 stages involved with rafting: **1- your boat being received** and **2 - your boat is receiving another boat**. Your skipper will let you know when you are free to move about the boat.

Anchoring and the use of Passing Lines:

Your boat may be assigned the additional task of being an “anchor boat.” If so, in addition to other preparations, your skipper will direct preparation of the anchor and ground tackle for deployment at the specified direction and distance from the raft. Placing an anchor and backing into the raft require close attention, skill, and experience, especially if there is wind or current on the beam. You may be asked to relay voice commands between the skipper and the person on the bow handling the anchor. To assist in the anchoring procedure, passing lines (from the receiving boat in the raft to your boat) are often used to keep the boat aligned as it backs into the raft after deploying and setting the anchor. Crew may be assigned to manage the use of the passing line only after they have been trained in its use. Because there maybe tension on the line, it should be used only with a winch for mechanical advantage and control. The crew managing the line should wear gloves to protect their hands, and be prepared to let go of the line if necessary, rather than trying to stop the boat if the line runs out. See attachment #5.

Fenders:

Once your position on the raft is assigned, fenders are attached to the lifelines on the side of the boat (the rafting vessel) that will be tied up to the receiving vessel (the vessel you are approaching). For linear rafts, fenders are attached just forward and aft of the beam (the greatest width of the boat). For circular rafts, the fenders are placed between the beam and the stern. They should be positioned so they will not ride up when squeezed between the two vessels, generally with the top of the fender itself just at the gunwale (the upper edge of the boat’s side).

Four lines are used in rafting: bow line, stern line, and two spring lines. Each line should be prepared by having a loop in one end. The loop is used to attach the lines to cleats or winches on the vessel you are approaching (the receiving vessel). However, not all lines received will have loops in one end (skipper’s preference). The end without the loop (the bitter end) is usually used aboard your own vessel (the rafting vessel). This also makes it easier when the raft is breaking since looped ends are cast off and the un-looped ends remain with you. (Occasionally, crew must heave a line from one boat to another. Refer to the discussion in Level I for heaving lines.)

Bow and Stern Lines:

On approaching the raft, the bow and stern lines should be coiled and ready for heaving. If the boat is going bow first into the raft (bow of the rafting vessel approaching the stern of the receiving vessel), the first line to heave or pass is the bow line, then the stern line. When approaching the raft in reverse, the stern line is passed first. When passing a line, identify it; i.e. “This is the bow line” or “This is the stern line”.

As soon as the lines are passed, you and the crewmember aboard the other vessel move to the positions at which the line will be secured. Make sure the line is kept outside all rigging and also out of the water as you move forward or aft. The crewmember on the receiving vessel will then make fast to a cleat and you will stand by to adjust the line before making it fast to a cleat. Passing the line around the cleat and under the horn will give you the control you need.

Once the lines have been made fast on the receiving vessel, your skipper will direct the adjustment of the lines. On *Linear Rafts*, the lines are adjusted so the centerlines of the receiving vessel and rafting vessel are parallel, adjusting the line so that the mast, spreaders, and shrouds are not side by side (if they are, there is a danger they may become entangled or damaged).

On *Circular Rafts*, lines are adjusted so the sterns are brought close together and bows spread apart. There is enough space between masts on a circular raft so they can be side by side. The stern line is primary for determining proper positioning. The bow line is adjusted according to the slack needed to get the sterns in place.

Spring Lines:

Spring Lines are usually attached after the bow and stern lines are initially adjusted. These lines are set to prevent forward and backward shifting of the boats. In some instances (i.e. current) they may be placed before the bow and stern lines. They are set from near the bow on the receiving vessel to near the stern on the rafting vessel and vice versa.

Once the lines are set, Skippers will check to make sure all lines and fenders are positioned properly.

Be Polite!

Have Fun!

Be Responsible!

F. DOCKING

The same general procedures apply to docking as to rafting. The same lines are used and fenders are required to avoid damage to the vessel from contact with the dock or the pilings on the dock.

At the direction of the Skipper, bow and stern lines with loops are passed over pilings or cleats on the dock and made fast to cleats on board. Fenders are placed or adjusted to prevent contact. Spring lines are then secured, if necessary, to prevent forward and aft motion. If docking for a short time, such as when refueling, bow and stern lines can generally be secured at a sufficient angle to the pilings on the dock to make spring lines unnecessary. As with rafting, crew must be prepared to fend off at all times when docking. Review Safety at the Dock on page 18.



Note:

The SOS Database/Education Team must receive the Check Sheet for this level with the initials and signature of those completing your checkouts before you can be credited with having completed Level II. Even if you are going on to complete Level III, send the Level II Check Sheet to the SOS Data Base after completion of Level II. When completed send a copy to:

CHECK SHEET FOR **LEVEL II** of the BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM

Name of Member: _____

You must present this form at the time in which you wish to complete your Level II Basic Skills Checkout. When all items have been initialed and the form has been signed on the lines provided, you must forward this form as directed in the packet. UNTIL THEN, YOU CANNOT BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR COMPLETION.

For confirmation that your check sheet has been received, review your SOS web site "My Profile". It will have the level of skills completed, such as completion of Basic Skills I and II. If you have completed Basic Skills III, it will show Basic Skills Graduate. Save a copy of each completed form for your own records. The club will not be responsible for maintaining a completion file for you. Things can get lost.

NOTE TO SKIPPERS AND FIRST MATES: Initial only those items that have been satisfactorily completed. Remember to sign and date on the lines provided below. Members may need to sail more than once to complete Level II.

Have the Member

- _____ Participate in a man-overboard drill.
- _____ Identify the points of sail in a variety of situations (sailing a circle or figure 8).
- _____ Assist in coming about.
- _____ Assist in jibing.
- _____ Assist in fending off when leaving the dock.
- _____ Secure a fender.
- _____ Toss a line when entering or leaving a raft/dock.
- _____ Explain how to safely handle a passing line.

Sailing Skills

- _____ Prepare the jib for sailing; explain control lines.
- _____ Lead lines through blocks.
- _____ Prepare and raise the mainsail.
- _____ Coil a line.
- _____ Tie a bowline to create a loop in a line.
- _____ Tie a bowline through the clew cringle in a sail.
- _____ Assist in leaving and entering the dock or slip.
- _____ Assist in rafting.
- _____ Participate in lowering, flaking, and covering the mainsail.
- _____ Participate in furling the jib using the furling line.
- _____ Was familiar with most nomenclature for Level II.

Signature(s) of Skipper and/or First Mate doing check-outs:

_____	_____	____/____/____
Signature	Printed Name	Date
_____	_____	____/____/____
Signature	Printed Name	Date

When competed, send a copy of the checkout sheet to; basicskills.sos.org@gmail.com

You should check the website under "My Profile" to verify the listing of your completed skills.

Rev. 1/2025

Basic Skills - Level III

Level III is focused around how a vessel moves best through the water and general navigation. Also included is some nomenclature related to “Rules of the Road”, navigational aids, and points of sailing. This level provides information about the roles of the helmsperson and the crew while maneuvering a sailboat under sail. Anchoring and use of the passing line are also considered. For optimal skill practicing and more time for questions, this level is best completed on a weekend cruise.

Each Skipper and boat operates differently. Although the basic elements of sailing never change, every vessel is laid out differently and provides a different learning platform. SOS provides a variety of boats to enhance and expand your skills and knowledge of sailing.

A. SAFETY ITEMS

1. Explain the “Rules of the Road” and the actions to be taken by each boat to avoid a collision.
 - Stand-on Vessels in order:
 - a) Not under command
 - b) Restricted maneuverability
 - c) Constrained by draft
 - d) Fishing (Commercial)
 - e) Sailing
 - f) Power
 - Sailing Stand-on Vessel:
 - a) Leeward
 - b) Starboard tack
 - Power Stand-on Vessel:
 - a) Crossing situation – boat on port
 - b) Crossing situation – boat on the starboard
2. Define the give-way and stand-on vessels in a variety of meeting and overtaking situations that occur during the sail.
3. Operate a VHF radio.



B. SAILING SKILLS

1. Locate and identify a variety of navigational aids and explain what they mean.
2. Describe the characteristics (shapes, numbers, and locations) of red and green buoys and other channel markers. Explain the appropriate way to approach red and green buoys and other channel markers.
3. Steer the boat on all points of sail.
4. Steer the boat to a compass course.
5. Steer the boat under engine power.
6. Helm the boat for a jibe and for coming about.
7. Trim the sails properly for the point of sail.
8. Assist with reefing the sails.
9. Assist with deploying, setting, and weighing (raising) an anchor.

C. NOMENCLATURE

Things on a Boat:

1. Preventer When sailing on a broad reach or run, a line attached to the boom that runs forward to a cleat to prevent the boom from swinging across the boat during an accidental jibe.
2. Whisker Pole A pole used to hold the jib or spinnaker in a stable position.



Attributes and Parts of a Boat: view Attachment #4

1. Backstay A wire rigged to the back of the mast and attached to the stern, to prevent the mast from moving forward.
2. Bilge The lowest area of a boat inside the hull and below the floor.
3. Chain locker A forward compartment below the deck where an anchor chain and/or rope rode is stowed.
4. Forestay A wire rigged to the front of the mast and attached to the bow, to prevent the mast from moving backward.
5. Gunwale The part of a boat where the hull and deck meet (pronounced “gun l”)
6. Keel A vertical appendage running fore and aft built into the bottom of the hull to help keep the boat upright and to prevent the boat from moving sideways.
7. Rigging A general term for all the lines and fittings.
8. Running Rigging The lines used to adjust the sails.
9. Standing rigging Rigging which is permanently secured and immovable such as shrouds, stays, etc.....
10. Seacock A valve fitted to an underwater inlet or outlet. Often referred to as a “through hull”.
11. Topping lift A line or wire that runs from the aft end of the boom to the top of the mast that is used to hold up the boom when the sail is lowered.

Sailing-related Terms:

1. Lee helm The tendency of a boat, left to its own, to turn away from the wind.
2. Weather helm The tendency of a boat, left to its own, to turn into the wind.
3. Give-way boat A boat that is obligated to give way.
4. Stand-on vessel A boat that is allowed to hold its course.

Anchor-related Terms:

1. Ground Tackle The combination of anchor, chain, and rode (rope).
2. Rode The rope line of the anchor.
3. Scope The length of an anchor line, relative to the depth of the water.
4. Windlass A special winch used to hoist an anchor. It has two drums designed to grab the links of the anchor chains.

Navigation-related Terms:

1. Anchor light A 360-degree (all-around white light), usually at the top of the mast, to indicate that a boat is anchored.
2. Current The horizontal movement of the water measured in knots.
3. Navigate To safely and efficiently guide a boat from one point to another.
4. Port tack Sailing with the wind coming across the port side of the boat.
5. Rules of the Road The rules written by the U.S. Coast Guard to prevent collisions and define the actions to be taken when two boats are about to cross paths.
6. Starboard tack Sailing with the wind coming across the starboard side of the boat.
7. Tack *v.* The act of turning the bow of the boat through the eye of the wind. (Tack *n.* see page 17)
8. Tide The periodic vertical movement of the water measured in feet.

D. “RULES OF THE ROAD”

“Rules on the Road” apply to all vessels on the water, motorized, sailing, kayaks, etc. You will not be expected to memorize these rules for the Basic Skills Program, but should have a general familiarity with them, especially those rules regarding sailboats under sail and/or power.

Rules come into play when one vessel is about to cross paths with another vessel which may result in “the possibility of a collision”. It is important for crew to be alert and to inform the Skipper and/or helmsmen, so that corrective action can be considered and/or taken early.

The following Rules of the Road apply when two sailboats encounter each other:

1. A boat on port tack shall give way to one on starboard tack.
2. A boat that is astern or overtaking shall give way to a boat ahead. The give-way boat always alters course to pass astern of the stand-on vessel, which has the right of way.
3. A boat to windward shall give way to a leeward boat when on the same tack.

For purpose of these rules; the windward side is the side opposite where the mainsail is carried.

If the vessel has the wind on her port side and cannot determine with certainty whether a vessel to windward is on a port or starboard tack, she must keep out of the way of the other vessel.

The commands or calls for coming about or jibing will differ slightly from boat to boat and may be varied depending on wind conditions. They are intended to alert crew to the next maneuver, giving them time to prepare when possible, and to coordinate activity. The usual sequence is:

	Coming about	Jibing
Helmsperson:	“Ready about”	“Ready to jibe” or “Standby by to jibe”
Crew:	“Ready”	“Ready”
Helmsperson:	“Hard a-lee” or “Helms a-lee”	“Jibe-O”

In some cases, the helmsperson will precede these commands by alerting the crew with “Prepare to come about” or “Prepare to jibe” to give them time to get to the proper positions to come about or jibe.

From time to time, a change in tack will be unanticipated. It could be due to a shift in the wind or distraction of the helmsperson. If the result is for the boom to start to swing across the deck, the helmsperson should shout “Jibe-O” to alert the crew.

G. ANCHORING



The role usually assigned to crew when anchoring is to handle ground tackle. The storage of ground tackle varies from vessel to vessel and you should become familiar with where and how it is stowed before you approach the anchorage. Because of the variety of equipment aboard SOS vessels, only the general aspects of anchoring are covered here.

Be careful handling ground tackle; anchors, chain, and long lines are heavy, especially when being lifted through the water. Make sure you use your arms and legs to control and lift the weight, not your back.

Anchors and chains are a principal cause of damage to a deck. Make sure that they are not dropped or permitted to drag on deck.

The anchor is never thrown; it is always set by lowering it straight from the bow of the deck or from its cradle, being careful not to hit the hull. The Skipper will instruct you as to how much rode to let out initially to set the anchor. Once the anchor is set, the Skipper will tell you how much rode to let out for the proper scope. Scope will depend on the type of anchor, the depth of the water, the weather and forecast, and the distance from other vessels anchored in the vicinity.

To weigh anchor, rode is taken in and the vessel brought to a position in which the anchor line is perpendicular to the bottom. At that point, the anchor rode is hauled to free the anchor. If the anchor cannot be freed in this manner, the Skipper will instruct you further (generally, the anchor will be freed by making fast to a cleat and nudging the anchor free using the force of the boat under engine).

As the rode and anchor are brought on board, they should be cleaned off by hosing or brushing.

H. ON-BOARD ACTIVITIES

You will be expected to assist in rafting, docking, anchoring, navigation, sail handling and handling the helm. You may have the opportunity to assist in more than one procedure. When you have the opportunity, ask the Skipper any questions you may have about the materials related to all the aforementioned Level III procedures or anything else you do not fully understand.



Note:

The SOS Database/Education Team must receive the Check Sheet for this level with the initials and signature of those completing your checkouts before you can be credited with having completed Level III and becoming a Basic Skills Graduate. Send a copy of the completed sheet to:

basicskills.sos.org@gmail.com

Your Check Sheets are attached to the back of this packet.
You should check the website under “My Profile” to verify the listing of your completed skills.



CONGRATULATIONS!

You are now a Basic Skills Graduate.



CHECK SHEET FOR **LEVEL III** of the BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM

Name of Member: _____

You must present this form at the time in which you wish to complete your Level III Basic Skills Checkout. When all items have been initialed and the form has been signed on the lines provided, you must forward this form as directed in the packet. UNTIL THEN, YOU CANNOT BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR COMPLETION.

For confirmation that your check sheet has been received, review your SOS web site "My Profile". It will have the level of skills completed, such as completion of Basic Skills I and II. If you have completed Basic Skills III, it will show Basic Skills Graduate. Save a copy of each completed form for your own records. The club will not be responsible for maintaining a completion file for you. Things can get lost.

NOTE TO SKIPPERS AND FIRST MATES: Initial only those items that have been satisfactorily completed. Remember to sign and date on the lines provided below. Members may need to sail more than once to complete Level II.

Have the Member

- _____ Explain the "Rules of the Road" and the actions to be taken by each boat to avoid a collision.
- _____ Identify when a "risk of collision" exists for right-of-way rules.
- _____ Explain the stand-on and give-way vessel in a variety of situations.
- _____ Identify a variety of navigational aids and their meaning.
- _____ Explain the appropriate way to approach red and green buoys and marks.
- _____ Identify points of sail.
- _____ Explain the operation of the VHF Radio.

Sailing Skills

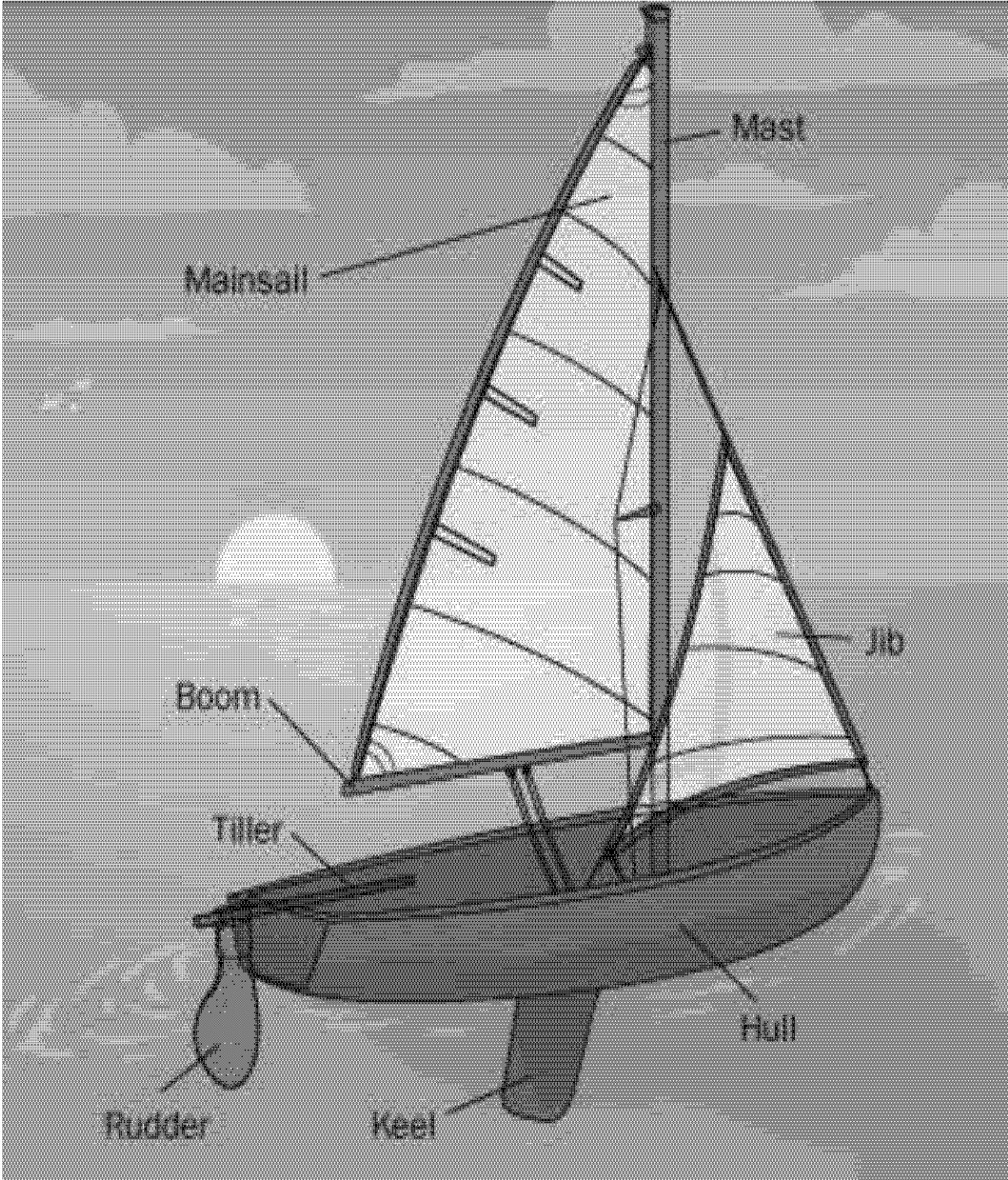
- _____ Steer the boat on all points of sail.
- _____ Steer the boat to a compass course.
- _____ Steer the boat under motor power.
- _____ Helm the boat for a jibe and for coming about.
- _____ Assist with reefing the sails.
- _____ Assist with deploying and retrieving an anchor.
- _____ Was familiar with most nomenclature for Level III.

Signature(s) of Skipper and/or First Mate doing check-outs:

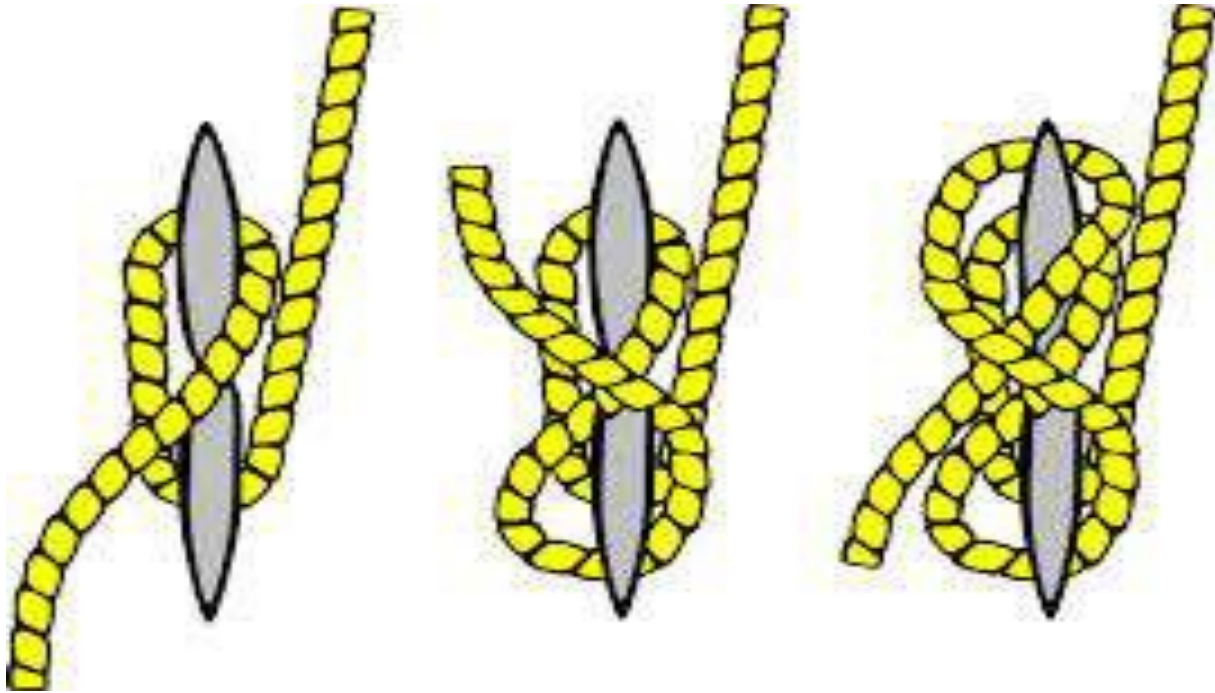
_____	_____	____/____/____
Signature	Printed Name	Date
_____	_____	____/____/____
Signature	Printed Name	Date

When competed, send a copy of the checkout sheet to; basicskills.sos.org@gmail.com
You should check the website under "My Profile" to verify the listing of your completed skills.

Basic Parts of a Sailboat



Cleat Hitch



Square or Reef Knot

**Square Knot
or
Reef Knot**



Clove Hitch for Fenders

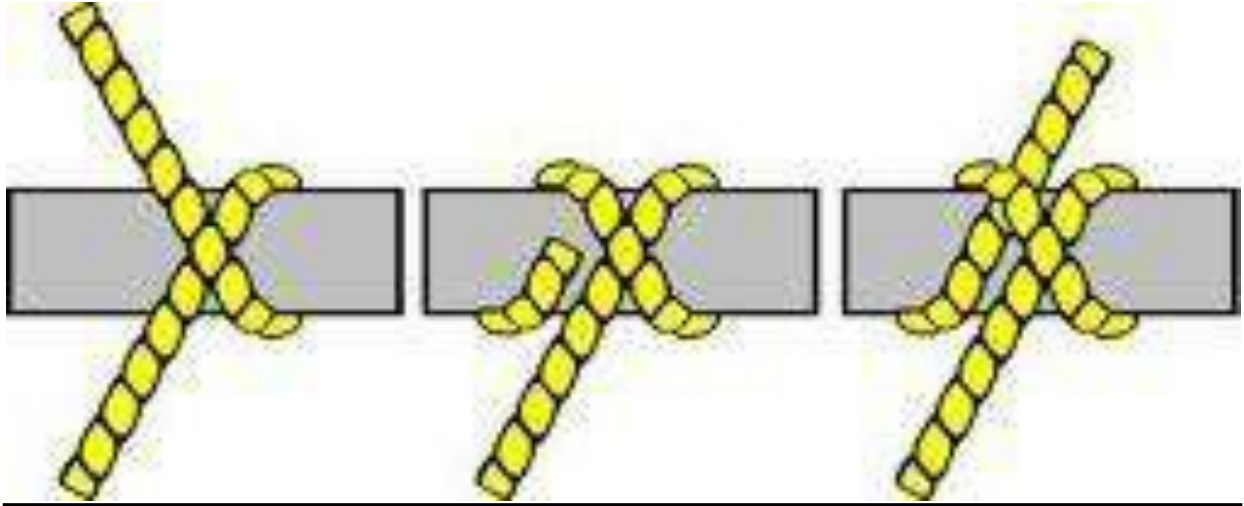
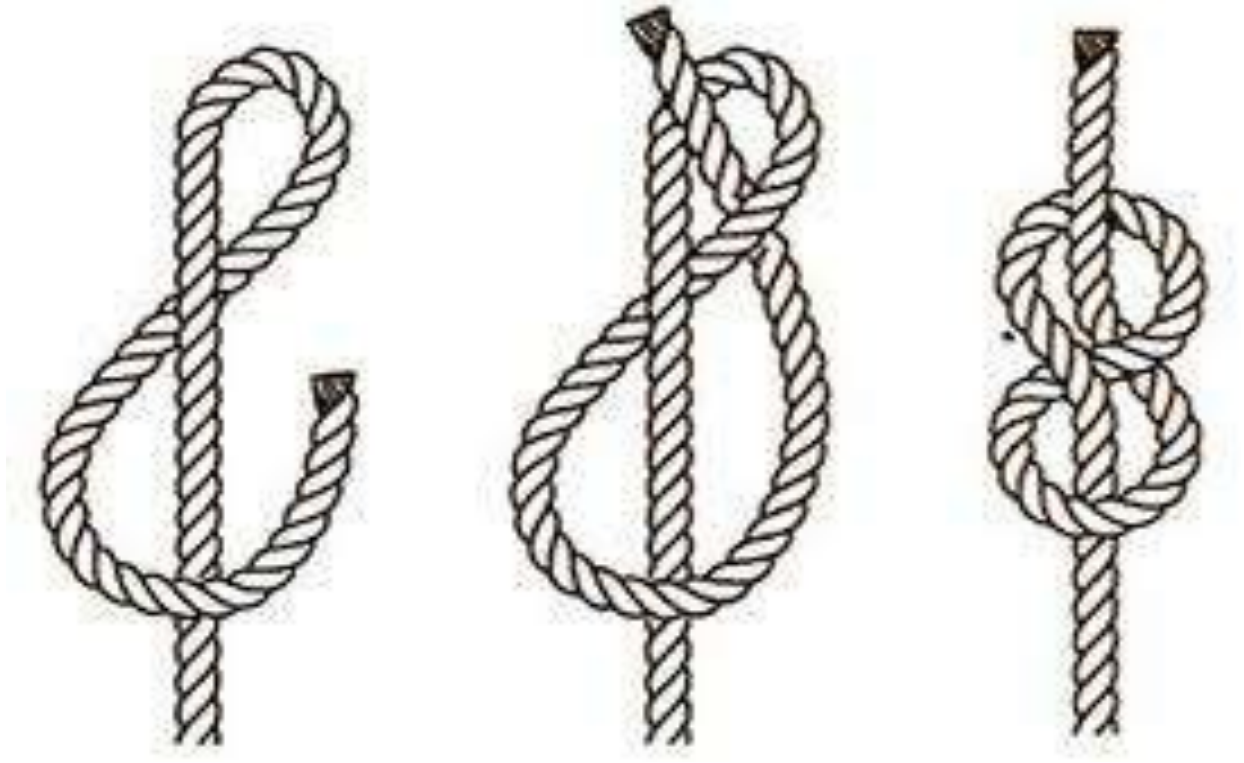


Figure Eight or Stopper Knot



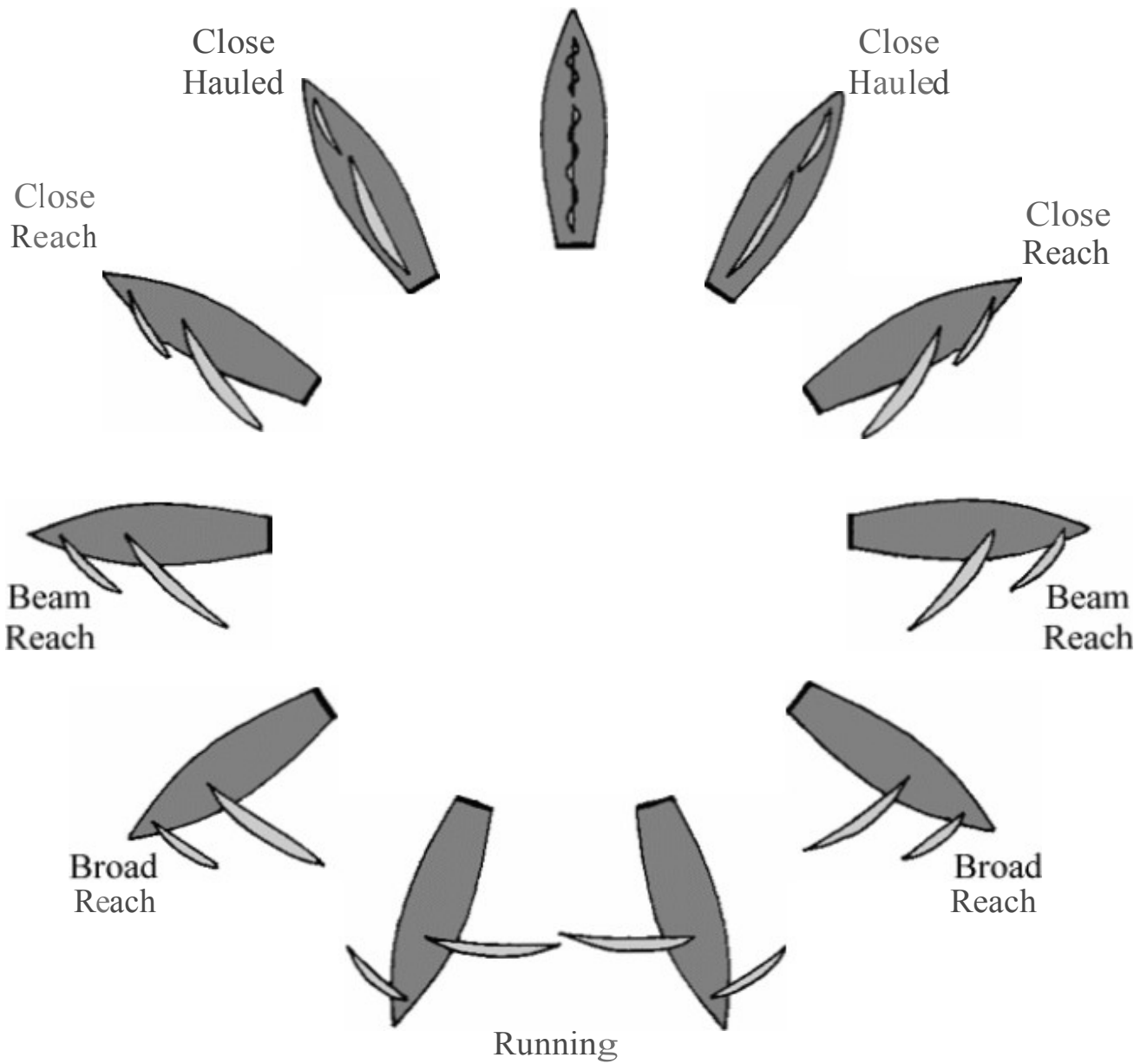
Bowline Knot



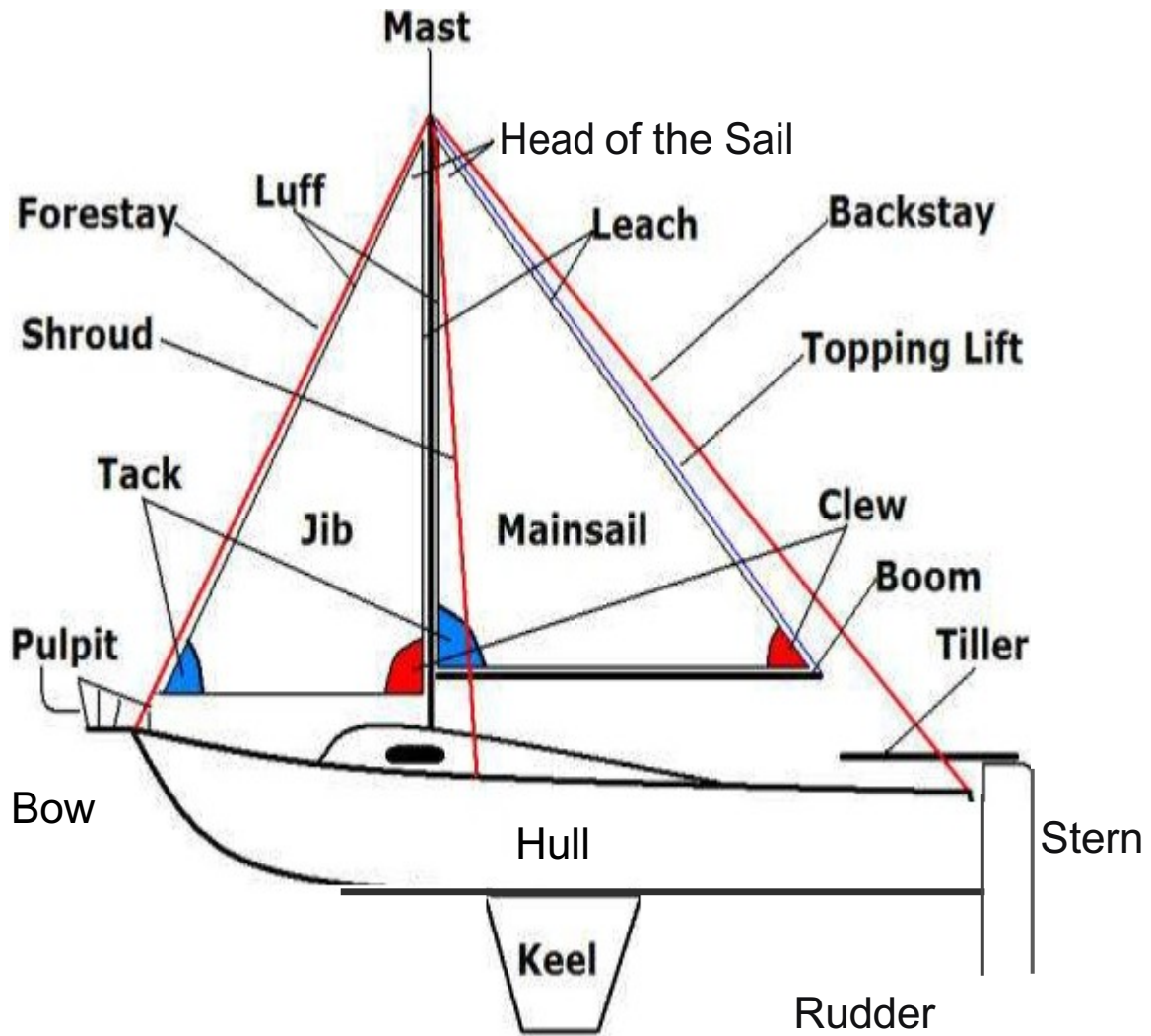
Points of Sail

Wind Direction
↓

In Irons
(Into the Wind)



Sail Parts and Rigging





Passing Line Safety – Standard Operating Procedures

Good seamanship is the essence of being an anchor boat, and a properly set anchor is essential to the safety of the raft. Passing lines are **not** a substitute for these essential skills, but they do provide important assistance. While passing lines are an important part of building a raft quickly and safely, their use is not without hazard. The fact of two significant incidents within two years requires additional precautions, and a standard operating procedure guide.

Precautions when using a passing line.

1. **All members of the crew must be trained before handling a passing line** (or any other line under tension for that matter). **Understand the purpose** of using a passing line **and the procedures**.
2. **Do not** wear any jewelry.
3. **Do not** wrap any lines around your hand or body parts to get a better grip – you can't let go!
4. **Do wear sailing gloves** to protect your hands.
5. Be **consciously prepared** to simply **let go** of a suddenly taut passing line.
6. Avoid tangles in the line:
 - a. **do not** coil the line or flake it on the deck – 150 feet invariably get tangled.
 - b. flake it into a bucket or bag for storage.
 - c. let the forward motion of the boat do the work of pulling it out of the bag while you guide it.
 - d. if you run into a tangle, **stop the boat until the tangle is cleared**, or let it go.
7. **Do** use a winch to provide mechanical advantage when controlling the passing line.
8. **Do not** attempt to use the passing line to stop the motion of the boat (there is simply no contest between your flesh and 5 or more tons of boat mass). Instead, when you approach the last 50-foot mark, **let the skipper know** so that the skipper can stop the boat before running out of line.
9. **Do not** use the passing line to pull the boat back into the raft. **When directed by the skipper**, pull in the line, applying moderate tension to control lateral alignment and guide the boat back toward the raft, while keeping slack out of the water (keep at least one wrap on the winch).

Understanding the purpose of using a passing line.

In order to understand the purpose of using a passing line, it is essential to understand some of the physical dynamics involved in positioning and setting an anchor in relation to a raft. SOS rafts typically anchor in 10-15 feet of water (plus 3-5 feet of freeboard at the bow). Proper scope requires approximately 100-150 feet of rode and chain to be deployed (SOS boats typically have approximately 200 feet of rode and chain).

In most cases, an anchor is sized to provide holding power for an individual boat; in the case of a raft, the demands on the anchor involve holding more than one boat and most anchors thus have limited utility. As a result, **it is absolutely**

essential that the skipper of the anchor boat ensure that the anchor is properly “set” by cleating the anchor rode and backing under power **until the backing motion is arrested** by the set anchor. (This should be done with a minimum of 50-70 feet of chain and rode deployed to prevent the anchor from skating or dragging instead of digging in.)

If the backing is done in line with the desired radial from the raft, and the boat’s backing motion is stopped by the set anchor, **most boats will typically then “prop walk” (or be blown) laterally**, away from the desired return radial. (If it can’t go back because the anchor is set, it will move to the side in a circle around the anchor. Note as well, the boat has lost its “steerage” or maneuverability. **It is at this point, and under the direction of the skipper, that the passing line is used to re-align the boat along the desired radial back to the raft.** Do not unclean the anchor rode until the boat is realigned.

Procedures for use of the passing line.

The passing line should be at least 150 – 200 feet in length with **length markers every 50 feet**. However, 150 feet of any line is going to have a tendency to become tangled, especially if the line has been coiled or laid out on the deck. To avoid tangling, the line should be flaked into a bag or bucket for storage, so that it will come out of the bag smoothly when needed.

Preparation for use involves pulling out 40-50 feet of line, feeding the loose end out through a fairlead or chock at the stern and around, outside of the lifeline, to a crew person mid-ship on the presenting side of the boat. This mid-ship crew person should be prepared to pass it to the receiving boat already in the raft, similar to passing a stern line. The receiving boat will take the end and either secure it to a mid-ship cleat, or wrap it around one horn of the mid-ship cleat for easy release if necessary. After the receiving boat has made the line fast, wrap one turn of the line clockwise around a winch in the same way you would a jib sheet, with the line from the bag on top.

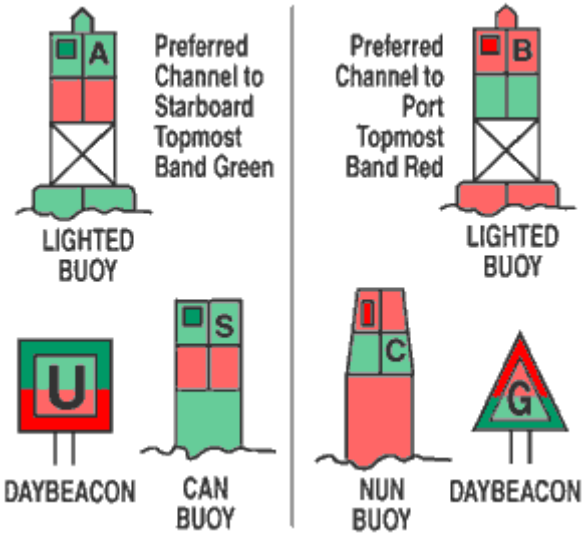
The anchoring boat then moves **slowly** ahead (slow-idle) along the desired radial toward the anchor point, and the passing line is smoothly pulled out of the bag by the forward motion of the boat, while you guide the line, much like letting out a jib sheet **using the winch to control it**.

Keep a close watch on the line as it is payed out. **Immediately notify the skipper when the last 50-foot marker appears.** The boat should **come to a dead stop when 100 -120 feet have been let out and there is only about 50-30 feet of line left** at the stern. The anchor is then deployed from the bow, which, including the additional 30 feet of the average boat, is approximately 100-150 feet from the raft.

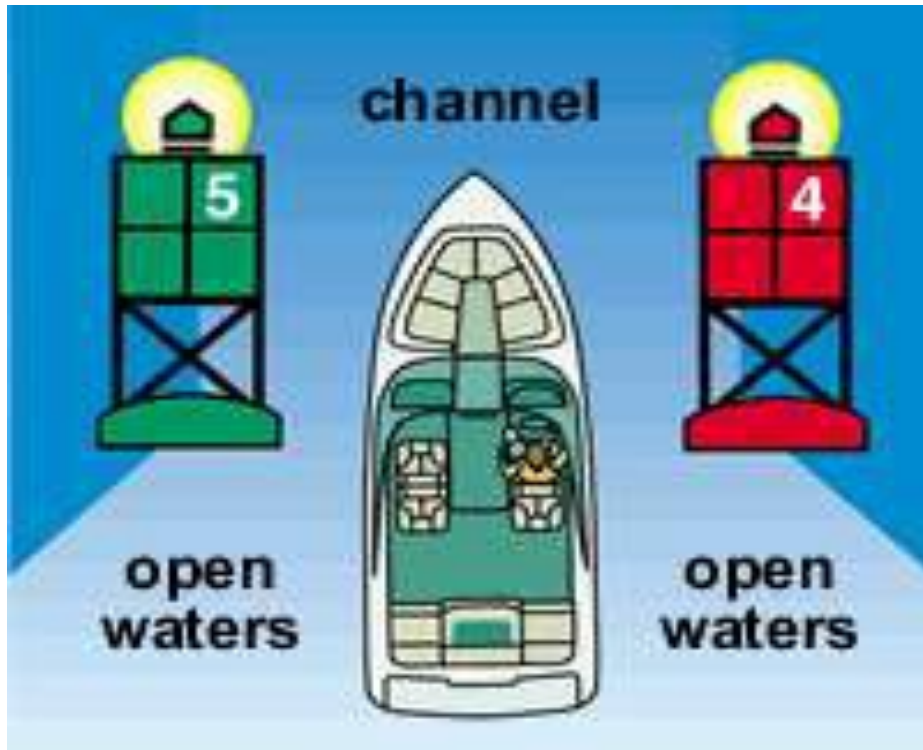
If the anchoring boat has **not** stopped moving forward at the 100-foot mark, **you are at the point where you will run out of passing line. Do not** attach the bitter end to a cleat to stop the boat. **Do not** attempt to stop the boat by simply holding the line; **LET IT GO!** You may quickly add a wrap around the winch, but even with a wrap around the winch, there is significant safety risk when the line suddenly becomes taut. If you come to the end, **LET IT GO!** It is better to be embarrassed than to lose a finger!

After the anchor has been deployed and set, **at the direction of the skipper**, pull in on the passing line to re-align the boat along the desired radial back toward the raft. Once the boat is lined up, **at the direction of the skipper**, the anchor rode is uncleaned and allowed to run as the boat backs toward the raft, **guided in part by pulling in and maintaining sufficient moderate tension on the passing line to prevent lateral drift**, and to take up any slack in the line to keep it out of the water. This is especially helpful if the boat is backing into a 3 or 9 o’clock position with the wind or current on the beam. Note that the passing line is not being used to pull the boat back into the raft; rather it is being used as a guide for a boat maneuvering under power.

Channel Markers



Returning to Slip



Heading Out

