



Vessel Operating Procedures

Skippers must be paid club members and must be approved by the committee after demonstrating competence, to two existing Skippers, in the knowledge and skills required as per Falmadair Vessel Operating Procedures and Skipper Assessment.

Responsibilities

1. The Skipper has & accepts overall responsibility for;
 - The safe operation of the vessel
 - The safety of &, in the event of sea sickness or an individual's unpreparedness for the weather, the condition of all persons onboard
 - The compliance of any applicable rules & regulations (COLREG, passage plan, safety equipment, monitoring VHF 16 & communications)
 - The secure berthing/ mooring of the vessel and the condition in which it is left on return including safe storage of equipment that does not remain onboard
2. Mate (definition of)
 - An experienced crew member who, if required, supports the Skipper in maintaining safe practices when new or inexperienced members are onboard

Forecasts & weather limits

1. An up to date marine weather forecast, relevant to the plan area, must be obtained at the passage planning stage. Further updates must be monitored until departure
2. For vessels over 18 foot LOA,
Departure must be cancelled if wind strength is force 7 or above (28 - 33 knots)
3. For vessels under 18 foot LOA,
Departure must be cancelled if wind strength is force 6 or above (22 - 27 knots)

Pre-departure checks

1. The Skipper must check the seaworthiness of the vessel;
Condition of hull. Condition of rigging. Are fixtures & fittings suitable/ secure?
2. The Skipper must check that all safety equipment is aboard and ready for use;
Oars, anchor tackle, knife, VHF, grab bag with nav' equipment, first aid kit, flares, rescue quoit & line/ lifebuoy/ floatation aid, fuel if required, spare/ tow line, local chart (presence of a safety boat when local chart is unavailable for day sail)

Boarding

1. Skipper or delegated person must ensure that all persons have completed a membership form and donned a lifejacket before embarking the pontoon or a boat
2. A safety briefing must be conducted prior to departure highlighting key features & hazards specific to the boat & rig + what safe practices to remember, for example; Control of the yard & block, stay inboard of the sheet before hoisting, don't stand on thwarts, beware of flapping metal sheet eyes when tacking
3. Crew members should be advised on the safest boarding method whether it is from a pontoon, harbour steps, shore, dinghy, a vessel secured alongside or other and be advised where to sit initially to prevent an excessive list

Communications

1. Every vessel must monitor VHF channel 16 at all times.
2. Coastguard, harbour authority or designated person ashore (whichever applicable) must be contacted with a short description of the passage plan (port/ safe haven of departure & of arrival + ETA, or in the case of local day sails, notification of return when ETA is not applicable)

Berthing, un-berthing, mooring, letting go mooring

1. Done under sail, motor or oars as judged safe & appropriate for the conditions
2. Crew must be briefed on the planned manoeuvre and confirm that they understand/ are happy with their role if they are assisting
3. Upon return, lifejackets must stay on until safely ashore/ away from the water
4. Boats must be left properly secured

Sail handling (hoisting, lowering, tacking, gybing, reefing)

1. Crew must be briefed before handling the sail to ensure;
 - Safe hoisting & lowering
 - No knots or hitches to be used for halyard or sheet
 - Safe handling of the tack, block and sheet
 - How to reef the sail (on deck or under sail in a controlled manner)
 - Safe tack & gybe procedure

Log keeping & reporting

1. A log entry for each passage will be made including POB, a brief description of the passage & departure/ arrival info
2. Defective equipment must be taken out of service immediately & committee notified
3. In case of accident, details must be recorded, committee to be notified asap & corrective action taken if any lessons learned

Longer passages & night sailing

Longer/ overnight passages will require approval by the committee depending on the Skippers experience and qualifications (RYA or other appropriate maritime training + experience of longer/ overnight passages on similar sized vessels under sail)

Minimum crewing requirements

Minimum crew required onboard depends on many variables.

It is the Skippers responsibility to judge the safe manning requirement considering;

- Purpose & distance of boat movement (inner harbor movement, mooring, beaching)
- Means of propulsion (oars or sail – motor cannot be relied on to reduce manning)
- Weather conditions
- Fitness, ability and experience of crew member(s)

No boat will be underway if there is any doubt as to the safe manning of it.

Beaching for maintenance between tides

The proposed beaching area must be surveyed at low tide prior to beaching to identify any underwater obstructions and ensure that;

- The shore is suitably flat/ hazard free and won't cause any damage to the boat
- There is safe access to the beaching area from ashore
- The boat can be secured ahead from the bow and anchored astern

The boat must be checked daily between tides to ensure that it remains secured to the shore and that it doesn't drag the stern anchor(s)

Adverse Weather Precautions

Masts should be lowered to reduce windage and heeling when winds of force 9 or higher are forecast (41+ knots). As a precaution, masts should be lowered when boats are moored for longer periods, especially in the winter months when access by dinghy/ tender may not be safe by the time stronger winds are forecast.