

TASS Texas Association of Social Sailors



TASS SKIPPER'S HANDBOOK

Revised June 2023

Skipper Handbook Overview	Page 2
Skippers' Responsibilities	Page 3
Sailing Protocol, Safety, Flags, Weather Conditions	Page 7
Sailing Parameters and Boundaries	Page 8
Skipper's Meeting	Page 10
Skipper's Bag Equipment	Page 10
General Advanced Sailing Preparation	Page 10
Charter Company After Docking Check Out List	Page 12
Addendum: - Legal Waiver – download from web Form	Page 14
Skipper After Sail Documentation Completion to Box.com	Page 14
Charter Boat Preparation Form	Page 15

TASS Skipper Handbook

The TASS Skippers Handbook gives our certified skipper's written guidelines and information to help skippers plan for sails, required operational procedures, and tools for safety and pleasure on the water.

This document contains the role and responsibilities of skippers, helpful instructions, procedures, and forms needed for the skipper to successfully execute the sail, from scheduling their date with the Fleet Director, promoting and gathering a crew, and boat preparation from the dock to the return of the sail.

To assist our skippers, this document provides the suggested content of your skipper bag (required) and aids for different sailing situations, which will be handy to have, including first aid needs.

The required crew waiver form and boat check-out forms are provided in this handbook, which skippers need for each sail, and shall be returned to the treasurer per instructions on the form.

Being a TASS skipper is a gratifying and fun experience. It does come with responsibilities, and every skipper must read and understand the contents of the skipper handbook. Last but most importantly, you are encouraged to have fun and enjoy your sails as the skipper in command. Treat our TASS members and guests with gentile hospitality, invite guests to become members, and encourage people at our meetings to register for your sail and bring friends.

Thank you for being a TASS Skipper

The Board of TASS

Skippers Responsibilities

Skipper is Responsible for the following:

1. The safety of the crew and vessel
2. Proper management of all vessel operations
3. Knows and follows regulations and maritime laws
4. Trip planning
5. Crew communication
6. Pre-sail briefing
7. Shipboard harmony
8. Sign up early for sails and monitor registration levels on the calendar
9. Communicate with Fleet Director if the waitlist develops and facilitate the accommodations of the waitlist crew – an increase in boat size is possible, or crew cancellation is imminent
10. Upload charter contracts and waivers into BOX.com
11. Promote and fill sails
12. Planning and check-out procedures of new applicants for a skipper, including pre & post follow up

Crew is responsible for:

1. Listen to and act on the skipper's commands
2. To act safely while on board
3. Knowing where all safety equipment is and how to use it
4. Telling the skipper of any health or mobility issues
5. Asking questions, if unclear
6. Sharing the work
7. Controlling and keeping their space tidy and safe

Days Before the Sail

Sails are promoted through the weekly **BLAST** Bulletin and email announcements as part of our social media reach. Try to attend 1 or 2 meetings before the sail to recruit crew for your sail. If you cannot attend, ask the Fleet Director or another board member attending a weekly to advertise for you.

As Skipper, you can recruit personally for your sail by reaching out to members that consistently sail with you to let them know you have an upcoming sail.

You also have the capability through our membership system to email and invite members from the contact.

Members' email addresses are on the web under **Member Services** [be sure you are logged into your account to have access]. The webmaster can help you learn how to send group emails.

1. Call and/or email the crew the day before the sail. Ensure that everyone has received your communication. Remind them of the following:
 - a. Read the FAQ document – the link always describes the event where they registered.
 - b. When are they to arrive for the sail – be specific on the time
 - c. Reinforce the meeting location, give the Charter Company's address, dock #, and boat name, and ensure they know how to get there.
 - d. Weather, advice on how to dress, a reminder about boat shoes
 - e. Ask to bring a snack to share and drinks for themselves
 - f. Leave jewelry at home on all sails

Before the sail on the Day of:

1. Arrive at the dock one hour before the sail to check the vessel; use the checklist.
2. Sign for the vessel at the charter company. Get an update on weather and water conditions.
3. Raise the TASS flag – Skippers should all have a personal TASS burgee.
4. Ensure everyone signs the 'Waiver form' or 'Liability Release form.'
5. Tell crew where to stow gear
6. Collect Sailing Fees from anyone who still needs to pay when they sign in. Make the payment notation on Waiver Form. The list of who paid is in your registered guest list online.
7. Perform risk assessment
8. Perform weather assessment
9. Confirm crew is competent to perform their tasks successfully
- 10. If there is no experienced crew on a sail to ensure the safe operation of a sail, the skipper, at his discretion, may solicit another skipper's assistance at no charge.**

Crew Briefing On Board

Have the Handy Laminated Briefing Card Handy

1. Introduce yourself (skipper)
2. Explain what your responsibilities are for the day
3. Tell a little about your sailing background and experience
4. Why do you enjoy TASS, and why should they join or remain members –
 - a. **You are a TASS salesman**
5. Swimming ability
6. Appoint a second in command should something happen to the skipper
7. Have the rest of the crew tell a little about their sailing background and experience
8. How the crew wants to participate in the sail for that day, such as learning how to sail (position), deck lizard, etc.
9. What are their [crew] swimming abilities?

10. Any concerns or medical issues – this can be given privately to the skipper if more comfortable for the crew member.
11. The skipper should inform the crew of weather and water conditions and the sailing goals for the day, sailing course, expected return to dock time, etc.
12. Advise crewmembers to drink water and to stay hydrated, especially if drinking alcohol.
13. Ensure every crew member knows how to use the head and demonstrate if necessary.
14. Remind the crew not to put anything that did not go in the mouth (paper, etc.) down the commode.
15. Remind crewmembers always to have one hand for the boat when moving around, how to go below, etc.
16. No trash is ever thrown overboard; point out trash bags and bins on board, in the head, and onshore.
17. Show or tell where the PFDs are located.
18. Give the man an overboard procedure. Instruct crew to remain calm and quiet and to follow orders immediately.
19. Ensure there is a designated at the helm in case the skipper is incapacitated.
20. Explain casting off procedures and assign tasks.
21. No one unties a line without the direction of the skipper
22. When leaving the dock, all lines are to be doubled, and everyone on board when departing
23. No one pushes a boat away from the dock or jumps onto a moving boat
24. Arms, legs, fingers, and toes are not to be used to prevent damage to the boat
25. Explain weapons, drug, and alcohol policy.
 - a. No illegal drugs ever under any circumstances
 - b. No weapons under any circumstances are allowed on sails.
 - c. Confirm that TASS sails are non-smoking at all times on the boat, including when docked.
26. Skippers must comply with “Boating while Intoxicated Laws.”
 - a. Consumption of alcohol in moderation is acceptable, but the skipper will refrain from drinking until back at the dock.
 - b. The sail may be terminated at any time if safety is compromised due to the impairment of anyone on the boat.

During the Sail:

As a skipper, you are also the Social Director. Many crew members will do some of the work others may want to be “deck lizards,” attempting to accommodate all crew attendees.

1. Have fun with the crew and take the opportunity to teach others how to enjoy sailing. Share your knowledge and pleasure of sailing.
2. Encourage participation by all crew members.

3. Be specific in assignments and give clear instructions to the crew for all activities. Any maneuvers, including tacking or jibing, must be communicated by the skipper and/or person at the helm and preceded/accompanied by clear commands with crew feedback.
4. Get the crew involved in performing the necessary maneuvers, raising or lowering sails, and handling sheets and winches during tacking and jibing. You may need to demonstrate how these are done.
5. You must pay constant attention while the inexperienced crew is at the helm.
6. While others are at the helm, keep watch for other boats and possible collision courses, accidental jibes, and other dangerous situations.
7. Keep vigilant regarding the swinging boom – an accidental jibe can be very dangerous to you and the boat. Be in control.
8. If necessary, politely but firmly admonish any crewmember who decides to play skipper and give orders to others. There can be only 1 skipper!
9. If any crewmember becomes disruptive, a safety hazard or bad weather occurs, the skipper has the right to terminate or shorten the sail. The offending crewmember may be asked to go below (the equivalent of the “brig”)
10. Safety is the ultimate concern for all crew members. Recommend that individuals who are handling lines use sailing gloves.
11. Keep hands and fingers away from winches and lines under load; I
12. When running downwind or on a very broad reach, keep control of the boom
13. Lock down the traveler
 - a. maintain control of the mainsheet and be prepared to take in the mainsheet to control its motion and/or momentum
 - b. use a boom break or rig a preventer as needed
14. Everyone has a say in the overall safety of the voyage
15. Mention any issue you feel may adversely affect crew or boat safety
16. Report any smell of fuel or exhaust fumes

Before Docking:

1. Start your engine before taking down the sails and generally before entering the channel
2. Brief the crew on docking procedures and make docking assignments
3. Take down all sails
4. Have all lines and fenders ready to dock

If the vessel breaks down during a sail:

1. Contact the Charter Company for recommendations
2. Make any minor repairs you feel comfortable to repair.
3. Note all repairs made and report to Charter Company and Fleet Director

4. The Charter Company must authorize a tow (Tow Boat US).
5. For safety and expediency, you should have both the charter company and Tow Boat US contact # in their phone AND their skipper bag

Sailing Protocol, Safety, Flags, Weather Conditions

If Burgees are flown, they should appear in the following order (top to bottom):

American flag
Texas flag
TASS Skipper flag
Club Burgee
Commodore
Vice Commodore
Fleet Director
Treasurer
Purser
Social Director
Secretary
Webmaster

If Pre-Sail Conditions Change

1. If the assigned vessel is unavailable, the Fleet Director should be informed, or if the crew is larger or smaller than anticipated, the Fleet Director can make a charter adjustment to balance the cost of operations.
2. If the weather appears questionable or the channel appears to be too shallow:
 - a. Discuss with the charter company (we will only cancel the sail if we are not charged)
 - b. If there is a small watercraft warning, hopefully, the sail will be canceled.
 - c. Notify all crew members of the change.
 - d. If the assigned vessel is missing gear:
 - e. Obtain gear required from Charter Company
 - f. Do not leave the dock without the required gear.

Safety

Safety should be first in a skipper's decisions on TASS sails. TASS skippers shall always set an example of safety on the water.

1. A skipper must comply with "Boating While Intoxicated" laws.
 - a. TASS skippers in charge of the vessel shall set an example for sail participants and not consume any alcohol during the sail. After the boat has been secured at the dock, it is acceptable for the skipper to consume alcohol in moderation.

- b. TASS skippers, not in charge of the sail, can consume alcohol in moderation but shall refrain from consuming enough alcohol that might impair their ability to assume safe command of the vessel should it be required because of the incapacity of the skipper in charge.
2. A skipper has the right to terminate any sail at any time for any reason.
3. If serious weather approaches
 - a. Reduce sail
 - b. Have the crew wear PFDs
 - c. Secure hatches and cockpit door
4. Skipper Health
 - a. Each year, all skippers should personally assess their current health and physical capabilities to determine their ability to continue as a skipper. A statement as to their continuing capabilities should be provided to the Fleet Director.

Sailing Parameters and Boundaries

Day Sails

1. Sail within customary cruising areas
2. Handle the boat within the comfort zone of the crew
3. Assign and maintain a constant lookout for obstructions

Moonlight Sails

1. Sail to channel and back

General Advanced Sailing Preparation

Crew Training:

1. Review the crew training outline for the level you are teaching
2. Give feedback to the crew as to whether they should retake the course or proceed to the next level
3. Materials for training are stored in the BOX.COM system and shared among all skippers.
4. Updates and changes in training materials should be coordinated with the vice-commodore to maintain consistent training materials.

Skipper Checkout Sails:

Skipper Applicant & Skipper in Charge would prepare & Plan for the check-out sail in advance of the sail. As part of this planning, they should discuss in advance which

procedures and maneuvers on the checkout list the skipper might request the skipper in training to perform.

Follow skipper checkout guidelines

1. Make the check-out a learning experience
2. The skipper in training should keep their check-out list up to date and have the skipper of the check-out sail sign the check-out performance sheet.
3. Skippers in training should turn in this sheet after each check-out sail to the Fleet Director or Vice Commodore (only)
4. Discuss the candidate with the Fleet Director and the Vice Commodore
5. Do not discuss the negative aspects of any skipper's checkout with the crew. This is to be done, in confidence, with the vice commodore
6. Refrain from undermining the authority you place on the skipper being evaluated by not contradicting their commands; however, remember you are ultimately in charge should a problem arise.

Skipper Day Sails

You can consult the skipper roster on the website for a list of skippers. In the menu bar under CONTACTS – Skippers, a list with bio and contact for all TASS SKIPPERS.

Skipper checkout for Night Sails:

1. Any qualified night skipper may conduct a Night Sail Checkout of a potential new skipper. (Currently Mark Langley, Bill Brown, Jay Leggett, Urs Rathgeb, Gavin Gerondale)
2. Checkout sail is required to include familiarization with the ATON system of lighted buoys, beacons, ranges, lighthouses, and fixed structures
3. Observe requirements for sailboat navigation lights, steaming lights, sound, and light signals
4. Demonstrate special orientation, including situation awareness and additional safety precautions

Skipper Catamaran Checkout:

Charter company policies will determine the qualification to skipper large catamarans. Currently, this includes ASA 101, 103, 104, and 114 and a one-on-one captained day charter checkout.

At the charter company's discretion, for skippers with significant previous chartering experience on large catamarans, a group skipper checkout may be arranged with the Fleet Director.

See Addendum 1 for a list of skippers

Weekend Trips:

1. Have at least one reliable crew member onboard.
2. Do not go through the pass south of Redfish Island; use the marked channels.
3. Do the necessary chart work before the trip.
4. Make your sail plan carefully, including predicted arrival times, anchorage areas, and alternate locations if needed.
5. Ensure that food and water are sufficient to last the weekend.
6. Ensure fuel and water tanks are adequately filled before departure.
7. Check your anchor before you leave and ensure sufficient dock lines are on board.
8. You may need an electrical cord if you plan to tie up at a local yacht club. Check with the Charter Company before taking one off the dock.
9. Ensure proper operation of heads.

Offshore Trips:

Tips to follow for an offshore sail

1. Do not go offshore without a working radio
2. Verify compass accuracy before leaving
3. Jack Lines and tethers are to be used offshore at night
4. Harnesses are to be worn at night.
5. There are sufficient offshore-rated PFDs

Skipper's Meeting

From time to time, the Board of Directors will call a mandatory skippers meeting or sail to improve skipper skills or discuss skipper issues.

Failure to attend may result in disciplinary actions, including suspension or revocation of the skipper's flag.

New skippers should get systems instructions from either the Fleet Director, vice-commodore, or the web admin.

New skippers will be asked to provide a short bio approximately 100 words or less], along with a photo for the Skipper Contact List on the website. This will include an email and phone number contact.

Skipper's Bag Equipment List

TASS skippers are required to have the following items when skippering. Any additional items are optional and at the skipper's discretion.

Mandatory

TASS Skipper Flag (So the crew can identify the TASS boat) provided when you earn your TASS Skipper Certification

1. Waiver Forms
2. Cell phone
3. VHF handheld radio (borrow from another skipper if necessary)
4. USCG Navigation Rules (all boats over 40 feet must have) or app for it on phone/iPad/electronic device
5. GPS or iPhone/iPad electronic device with an appropriate current app.
6. Flashlight
7. Extra Batteries for any electronics used (GPS, flashlight, etc.)
8. Rigging knife
9. Multi-Tool or
10. Regular and Needle nose pliers
11. Phillips and Flathead screwdrivers
12. Tape – duct and electrical
13. 25 ft. ½ inch line (minimum)
14. 100 ft. Polypropylene line with weight (tennis ball attached) – heaving line
15. First Aid Kit
16. Meat tenderizer
17. Whistle
18. Q-Beam for night sails

Suggested

1. Chart of the intended sailing area – nice to show the crew where you are
2. Charting equipment (parallel rulers, dividers, etc.)
3. 10-gauge wire
4. Baling wire
5. Binoculars
6. Large and small adjustable jaw pliers (channel locks)
7. Large and small adjustable wrenches (crescent or socket wrenches)
8. Water and fuel key (overnight sails)
9. Hacksaw or Bolt cutters
10. Assortment of wood plugs
11. Harness
12. Extra Flares
13. Extra air horn
14. Winch handle
15. Zip-ties
16. Bungee cords
17. Bonine (seasickness preventative)
18. Paper towels, trash bags, ice

Charter Company After Docking Check Out List

Windward Sea Ventures Charter Boat Return Instructions

See the Addendum 2 document provided by the charter company for the updated checklist.

TASS skippers must personally DO/check ALL items on this list to ensure they are correctly done. Your crew can help, BUT you MUST also check yourself.

- Secure all docking lines
- Check all dock lines for proper wraps on all boats and dock cleats.
- Coil or otherwise tidy up dock
- Wrap the jib sheet around the winch and into the self-tailing portion, coiling the remainder around the winch
- Tidy up all lines on the boat
- Replace the sail cover on the boom and companionway hatch cover if there is one
- Take down all flags and burgees
- Remove all garbage and trash, and put it in the dumpster.
- The crew should remove all personal belongings
- Be sure all ports and hatches are closed
- Put all cockpit cushions back on the sole of the main salon, on the edge
- If the anchor & chain has been used, hose off all mud and secure the anchor
- Put instrument cover back on instruments if there are any
- Attach shore power cord(s), ensuring they are correctly inserted into the socket and properly locked. If a ring is attached, tighten it.
- Turn the power on the at dock box
- Turn all breaker switches off on the 12-volt DC panel EXCEPT the BILGE PUMP switch, and on the 110-volt AC panel, leave the MAIN breaker and BATTERY CHARGER switches in the on position.
- Pump all toilets to clear standing water; if any do not pump dry, please let Charter Company know.
- Put ignition key in navigation station on all boats
- Check floors, counters, refrigerators, or coolers for left-over food particles. Clean up
- Hose down the cockpit and/or deck if anything was spilled or had mud on it. The Charter Co. will hose down the exterior
- Report and make careful notes of any damages, losses, or gear malfunctions to the Fleet Director and/or Charter Co. (if not on dock 281-467-2279)

Waiver for TASS Sails

Skippers can retrieve the current Waiver form(s) on the TASS website, **Home>Library>Skipper Documents** located in **Document Resource Library for Skippers**, or by following this link: [Document Resource Library for Skippers](#)

You should log into your membership account to reach these documents. They are NOT available to the public to download.

TASS Home Home Sailing Center Join Us Calendar Social TASS Shopping 

[TASS Home](#) > [Library](#) > [Skipper Documents](#)

This document library is the main resource for our TASS skippers. Critical information and required forms can be found here, and are available for skippers and board members only to download. Should a skipper require information not found here they should contact vice-commodore@sailtass.com. It is the skippers responsibility to ensure you use the most current document.

Thanks for being the best Skipper Group on the Bay

Document Resource Library for Skippers

[Skipper Application 3-1-2018.pdf](#)

[Skipper Equipment Bag List 1-2019.docx.pdf](#)

[TASS Skipper Certification Day Skills Evaluation Form](#)

[TASS Waivers and Boat Checkout Form Rev 2020-06.pdf](#)

[TASS Skipper Handbook - REV 2020-01.pdf](#)

TASS - Texas Association of Social Sailors - PO Box 27050 - Houston, TX 77227-7050

Texas Association of Social Sailors (aka TASS) is a 501(c)6 non-profit organization.

Please do not use old, outdated forms!

When your Sail is Complete – WAIT! You are not done yet.

After your sail, you are responsible for uploading 2 documents – the Charter Company Agreement & the TASS Crew Roster document. These documents are important as they are a liability waiver signed by the crew and a reconciliation document for the treasurer to pay charter company invoices.

There should be 2 documents uploaded

1. The Charter Company Agreement

**WINDWARD SEAVENTURE
CHARTERS, L.L.C.
281-467-2279**

**BAREBOAT CHARTER
AGREEMENT**

Charter Fee	\$600.00
Sales Tax 8.25%	\$49.50
Overnight	\$0.00
Dinghy Rental	\$0.00
Motor Rental	\$0.00
Total	\$649.50
Damage Deposit:	Credit Card on File

2. The TASS Crew Roster, with all signatures.

Skipper: Urs Rathgeb Boat Name Mystic Winds
 Charter Co: WSV Date 4/8/2023
TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL SAILORS – Boat Waiver
 - www.sailtass.com
 1. Purpose: The purpose of this document is to shift any legal burden or responsibility, which may arise, from the Texas Association of Social Sailors (hereinafter called "TASS") to the undersigned patron of TASS.

Where are they uploaded?

BOX.com is a shared document repository for uploading required documents.

All skippers have access.

www.box.com - user name is – social@sailtass.com - password is -- Wesail123.

DO NOT change the login or password; contact the webmaster if you need assistance.

Locate the Folder titled **Windward Sea Venture** or **South Coast Sailing**, depending on the charter company.

Scan your documents and upload them to the folder.

New skippers will be trained or can ask existing skippers how to proceed.

TASS Charter Boat Preparation	Skipper	Charter Co.	Boat Name
Day(s) and Dates of Sail: _____ / _____ / _____			
General			
Check weather report	Weather:		
Give Cell phone number & Sail Plan to Charter Co. or Others	Done:		
Down Below			
Boat Documentation on board?		Location:	
Fire Extinguishers* – Check pressure gauges	Number:	Location:	
Visual distress signals expiration date:	Number:	Location:	
First Aid Kit – check contents	Okay?	Location:	
Supplies – Paper towels, trash bags, ice/refrigeration	Okay?		
Bilge and electric bilge pump	Bilge Dry?	Pump OK?	
Water tank/ Water pressure	Level?	Pressure?	
Holding tank	Level?		
Head – Check operation, cleanliness, toilet paper	Clean?	Operable?	
Down Below to be moved to or checked Top Side.			
VHF radio – familiarize, move to helm if handheld available	Done:		
Horn or Sound device (move to helm) Bell?	Operable?		
Boat Hook		Location:	
Navigation Lights: Bow ___ Stern ___ Steaming ___ Anchor Light ___			
Engine - *optional for day trips (normally checked by the charter company)			
*Engine coolant/ *Engine oil/	Okay?	Okay?	
*Fan Belt – check tension and wear	Okay?		
Batteries and battery switch	Okay?	Location:	
*Propeller Shaft Packing Gland	Okay?		
Top side			
Emergency Tiller		Location	
One Type I, II, III PFD for each person	Number:	Location:	
One Type IV PFD in the cockpit or life sling (throwable cushion/horseshoe)		Location:	
Manuel Bilge pump and handle		Location:	
Existing Damage to Boatboat? Notify Charter Co. before sail sailing.			
General overall safety check – note any concerns.			
Running and standing rigging Check for damage and wear.	Notes		
Winch handles	Number:		
Anchor & rode	Secured?		
Fenders	# Port:	# Starboard:	
Check fuel level	Level:		
Preparing to Leave			
Shut off AC Power and UNPLUG AC shoreline	Done:		
Unplug any other dock lines (Cable TV, Telephone, Anode)	Done:		
Remove the sail cover, other covers, and stow below	Done:		
Close hatches	Done:		
Run engine, check exhaust/water pumping	Okay?		
Check Transmission shift (forward and reverse)	Done:		
Check Steering & Rudder operation before casting off.	Done:		
Crew Instructions			
Crew Experience Established and Introductions Made	Done:		
Crew Swimming ability established	Done:		
Crew Sailing Fees collected, if any	Done:		
Drug Policy Explained	Done:		
Head Operation Explained	Done:		
Location of First Aid kit	Done:		
Trash/Water Balloon Policy Explained – Nothing Overboard	Done:		
PFD Locations disclosed to Crew	Done:		
Man Overboard procedures Explained	Done:		
Give Crew Specific instructions on Cast-off Tasks and Preparation	Done:		

*Fire Extinguisher Requirements - Boat Length: 26-39 ft 2-B1 or 1-B2 Boat Length: 40 – 65 ft 3-B1 or 1-B1 and 1-B2
Pre Sail: Note missing or damaged equipment. Inform the charter company before leaving.
Post Sail: Note needed repairs and/or damages or injuries. Also, note any unusual events of the sail.