

Northern Lights Sailing Club Captains Guidelines

Congratulations! You have been selected to captain on a NLSC sailing trip. Your selection and acceptance of that position incurs certain responsibilities and understandings that are outlined here.

1. You have been asked to be a captain based on your desire to be a part of the sailing trip. You have not been asked to captain because it is a condition for going on the sailing trip. Therefore if circumstances dictate, you may be asked to perform a different function. A good captain is a good crew.
2. As Captain you have been given authority to keep your crew and vessel safe from damage and harm.
3. You should sail your vessel in such a manner that all crewmembers are comfortable, i.e., you should avoid sailing beyond the "queasy" level of the crew. You need to be aware and sensitive to the needs of your crew.
4. If the weather is such that the safety of the crew or vessel is diminished markedly, then the best sail plan may be to wait until weather conditions improve before venturing out or continuing on.
5. You are expected to attend, and be on time for, all meetings designated by the trip chairperson and/or charter facility.
6. It is a good idea to ask for and accept an operational checkout on your boat. Every boat is different.
7. Check your holding tank, fuel tank, water tank, batteries, oil, running gear, ground tackle, etc. Do not assume the Charter Company has done it all. They are human, too, and their error is only compounded when you fail to check your boat's systems. Report all problems immediately to the Charter Company and to the trip chairperson.
8. It is a good idea to have members of your crew help you with equipment checkouts: This familiarizes others as to the location of equipment.
9. The trip chairperson is in charge of the trip and that person's instructions should be followed unless the safety of your crew or vessel would be compromised.
10. Communication with the trip chairperson is vital and important. Advise the trip chairperson via radio when you have left harbor, reached a destination, or have taken any action that would leave the trip chairperson uninformed as to your location or status of your vessel. You should set up pre-defined radio check times with all vessels.
11. You are on a group trip and you are expected to sail, tie up and share the social activities with the group. To take your crew off sailing on your own agenda is not acceptable. Most people go on cruising sailing trips for 75% social activities and 25% sailing.
12. All damage deposits are collected by the trip chairpersons prior to the trip.
13. It is important to keep a happy ship. Try to let everyone have an opportunity to take the wheel and share other tasks as they feel capable. Half-hour shifts on the wheel (or other techniques) can insure that everyone has equal opportunities.
14. Proper instruction is necessary and a clear understanding of what is to be done is important. If a crew person does not do something to your expectations then in most cases it is a communication problem. Instruct what is to be done before doing it.
15. You should have at least one crewmember who is an experienced sailor (first mate). Try to arrange that you or your first mate is on watch to know what the vessel is doing at all times. This precaution will avoid having an inexperienced crewmember misunderstand directions.
16. Do not make any changes as to the arrangements of the trip unless approved by the trip chairperson. Do not switch crew, boats, etc. Keep the trip chairperson informed and ask first.
17. Make suggestions to the trip chairperson if you feel an action would improve the trip. You will be asked for suggestions and opinions and will be expected to contribute. Remember: suggestions are appreciated; demands are not!
18. Racing is not encouraged on a cruising sailing trip. If you and all others decide it would be fun to do a little competition, remember that everyone in the crew must continue to participate in taking the helm and other sailing tasks. You may lose the race because your crew is inexperienced. So what!

19. There will be no drinking of alcohol prior to or during motoring or sailing on any NLSC trip. At the end of the day, the consumption of alcoholic beverages by you and your crew must be kept to a minimum. Your life may depend on you and your crew's solid judgement when the weather turns bad. This will be particularly critical during the night hours.
20. The use of an illegal or controlled substance is not allowed on any trip. If such an incident occurs, contact the chairperson immediately and arrangements will be made to have the offender removed from the trip.
21. Rooms or rooming (including the cabin and cockpit of a sailboat) will be nonsmoking. The deck of a sailboat will be nonsmoking unless there is complete agreement of all occupants that smoking will be allowed only on the downwind portion of the deck. Cigarette butts should not be thrown overboard.
22. If the weather changes during the night it is a good idea to have your crew wake and alert you. It is very easy for your boat to swing and for the anchor to release and not reset itself. Better to be awakened and alerted than to find yourself up on the rocks or some beach.
23. It is the captain's responsibility to know how to obtain emergency medical assistance and to get completed medical forms from each crewmember. These must stay in sealed envelopes for each person. Medical forms get returned to each crewmember upon completion of the trip.
24. It is the captain's responsibility to review MOB drill with all crewmembers at the beginning of each trip.
25. It is the captain's responsibility to monitor weather reports and act accordingly.
26. Remember: keep your crew happy, keep your vessel happy, keep your chairperson happy, keep yourself happy and we will all have a pleasant, well-organized, memorable and successful trip. Happy Sailing!