

Blue Water Foundation Safety Program

I. Purpose

A major goal of the Blue Water Foundation is to take school students sailing on San Francisco Bay and beyond. The Safety Program ensures that all captains and crew are well trained in a consistent manner in all the operational skills and procedures necessary to handle a sailboat competently and safely on San Francisco Bay and the Gulf of Farallones. The Safety Program also specifies information for unskilled volunteers, teachers and advanced students to ensure they understand the safety requirements and responsibilities while sailing with Blue Water.

The goals of the Safety Program are

- A. Establish consistent, objective procedures for all aspects of boat management and training on each boat.
- B. Establish clear skill sets, certification process and guidelines for crew and captains on each boat.
- C. Allow routine modification and improvement of procedures as required over time with a clear process for communication and retraining as appropriate.
- D. Ensure well shared knowledge among crew and captains for each boat as to skills, procedures and expectations to minimize confusion during sails.
- E. Ensure optimal safety and instruction for students during sails while remaining consistent with the goals of BWF.

The intent of the program is to develop competent crew with a consistent and shared approach to sailing the boat safely. It is not to create paper work or bureaucracy.

II. Training and Certification

Volunteers certify at one or more skill levels which correspond to different responsibilities and experience when sailing BWF boats. Certification at each level is required before achieving certification at the next level. The levels currently defined are

- A. Volunteer Crew: all people who sail for Blue Water, regardless of sailing experience.
- B. Senior Crew: people with sailing skills for handling routine sailing tasks.
- C. Captain: certified for skills and by the BWF Board to command a boat during a sail on San Francisco Bay. First Captains have been recognized by the Captains and the Board as fully capable and experienced for command. A First Captain shall be on board on all sails. Second Captains have been recognized by the Captains and the Board and have demonstrated all captain skills but need to accrue experience or gain command confidence.
- D. Blue Water Captain: certified by the BWF Board to command a boat for a sail on the Gulf of Farallones.

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For each skill level, checklists of skills and knowledge are used for certification (See Appendices). Candidates for certification must acceptably perform each skill and be certified by a Captain. When all skills are completed the Volunteer is eligible to be certified at that level. All Captain certifications require a 2/3 consenting vote by the Blue Water Board.

The Captains and Board recognize that a person who wishes to be Captain must master the requisite sailing skills. They further recognize that Blue Water Captains additionally need command confidence, communication and organizational skills, and familiarity with the complexities of keeping kids safe and happy before they are ready to be fully in charge of the entire vessel with children and non-sailors on board. The best way to practice and acquire these skills is to be a Captain. The role of Second Captain allows qualified sailors to be Captains while accompanied by a First Captain. This gives Second Captains sufficient time on the water in the Blue Water sailing environment to learn the non-sailing skills required of a Captain.

Records of all training and certification, in the form of checklists for all applicable skills, are kept for each individual on a per boat basis in the Training Log book which is kept on that boat. All “on the water” skills are specific to each boat and must be certified on each boat separately. During certification, records in process for each Volunteer are kept in the Training Log book. When certification is completed, one copy of the record remains on the boat in the Log book, one is kept in the BWF files and one is given to the Volunteer. Some skills and knowledge are general and apply to sailing on any Blue Water boat.

III. Operation

All sails with students have at least two certified Captains aboard, one of whom is designated to be “in command” prior to start of the sail. A First Captain must be on all sails..

All students, teachers and accompanying persons will attend a “safety talk” given by crew member designated by the captain in command prior to boarding the boat for a sail. This talk will cover normal safety and operations for the sail including wearing of PFD’s, basic commands, safe behavior while sailing, etc. Captains and crew will ensure all students and accompanying persons are properly attired for warmth and footwear and have their PFD’s properly fitted and secured.

During sails a captain or designated crew member will always be at the helm or directly monitoring the student or other passenger who is at the helm.

Training can take place during sails with students but passenger and boat safety take precedence over training while students are aboard. Candidates training and certifying at all levels may sail with students as part of their training and certification.

During sails the captain in command has ultimate authority and responsibility. The

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Safety Program and its procedures exist to establish “best practices” for procedures under a variety of conditions. Ultimate responsibility for directing the operation of the boat rests with the captain during the sail. The captain must use his/her best judgment under actual conditions when making decisions.

IV. Revisions

First Captains and Blue Water Captains are responsible for establishing the guidelines for any procedure which needs specific details enumerated to avoid ambiguities or disagreements on how to carry out the procedure. Once established, the guidelines are to be followed by everyone until further modified by the First and Blue Water captains. This will maintain the appropriate authority on how to sail the boat while allowing procedures to be improved as needed over time. Disagreements about procedures, certification or competency will be resolved by the First and Blue Water Captains.

From time to time the First Captains, the Blue Water Captains and the Board will review the Safety Program to assure it is meeting its goals and that a high standard of performance is being maintained. Changes may be made to the Program from time to time to keep it on track and adjusted for changing circumstances, new boats or new requirements.

V. Appendices

- A. Guidelines and Responsibilities for all Volunteers
- B. Senior Crew checklist
- C. Captain checklist
- D. Blue Water Captain checklist
- E. Certification card (front and back)

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Appendix A: Guidelines and Responsibilities for All Volunteers
(All volunteers read and sign this list prior to sailing with Blue Water, regardless of experience or skill level. Revised: June 2, 2003)

Guidelines and Responsibilities

Personal Conduct

- All BWF sails have 2 Captains on board, at least one of whom is a First Captain and is designated “in command” for the duration of the voyage. Know who the Captain in command for each sail is. The decisions and orders of the Captain in command are final. A sail may be canceled at any time at the Captain’s discretion if there is a safety or behavioral problem which can not be successfully resolved.
- All BWF crew are role models of responsible adults to the students. They are expected to conduct themselves accordingly.
- No tobacco or alcohol may be used during a sail by BWF volunteers under any circumstances. Illegal substances are obviously never acceptable. Prescription drugs which can impair physical or mental performance (anti-histamines, muscle relaxants, etc.) may not be taken during a sail nor before a sail if their influence will extend to the period of the sail.
- Do not use walkmen, radios, gameboys, etc. during a sail with students.
- All Crew will wear properly fitted PFDs (Personal Flotation Devices) at all times on board. Proper footwear for sailing must be worn on board.
- If you go in the water, stay calm. Don’t try to swim back to the boat; it will tire you out sooner. Wait for the boat to return to you.
- Know how to get on and off the boat while at the dock.
- Know boat safety basics, including “one hand for the ship,” staying on the high side, proper footwear, watch out for the boom, etc.
- Periodically check for traffic on the water and confirm the helmsman is aware of nearby vessels.
- Know the meaning of basic commands which alert everyone when the boat is maneuvering: ready about, helm alee, etc.

Conduct with Students and Teachers

- Monitor students to keep them safe, including ensuring they have good hand holds, are alerted when the boat is maneuvering and are wearing properly fitted PFDs.
- Assist students and teachers to get on and off the boat while at the dock.
- Ensure students have adequately warm jackets and proper shoes. Open toed footwear or slippery soles are not allowed and may result in a student being unable to sail. Consult the Captain in command if uncertain about a student’s attire.
- Check and adjust student and teacher PFDs as required.
- Keep students clear of running rigging and winches.
- Understand heeling of the boat, normal boat motion, etc., and be prepared to explain it to students and teachers if necessary. Sailboat motion may be utterly unfamiliar to them.

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Appendix B: Senior Crew Checklist
 (Senior Crew are certified as having correctly and ably performed the skills on this checklist. Revised: June 2, 2003)

Senior Crew Skills Checklist

Candidate:	Vessel
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On Water Skills		Date completed	Certified by
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handle jib sheets for tacking and gybing.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handle jib sheets for adjustments to new point of sail.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Line handling to moor and unmoor the boat from its home dock.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiar with all procedures to prepare the boat for departure, including cabin prep, deck prep, covers and hatches, running rigging, stowage.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Line handling to moor and unmoor the boat from a guest dock.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raise and lower the main sail while under way.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Steer the boat under way, maintaining a designated course, under sail and motor power.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advise and direct a student who is steering the boat on holding a given course.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear an override on a winch.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handle mainsheet for sail adjustments.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handle the mainsheet (and preventer) where installed, for gybing.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Steered the boat throughout entire man overboard drill.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic knowledge of VHF equipment and procedures, including procedure for calling Coast Guard on channel 16.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ability to reef main and jib.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be a lookout for other vessels and obstructions, e.g., logs in water.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reef and unreef sails.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handle other running rigging specific to particular boats (running backstays, preventers, topping lifts, etc.).		

Knowledge and Experience		Date completed	Certified by
<input type="checkbox"/>	Skills certified by a Captain		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical first aid training (first responder) completed.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge of location and use of fire suppression equipment.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has attended safety talks by Captains given to students prior to sails		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic knots, e.g., bowline, half-hitch, clove-hitch, coil & stow line		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge of sailing terms.		

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Appendix C: First and Second Captain Checklist
 (Captains are certified as having correctly and ably performed the skills on this checklist.
 Revised: June 2, 2003)

First and Second Captain Skills Checklist

Candidate:		Vessel	
On Water Skills			
		Date completed	Certified by
<input type="checkbox"/>	Start and stop engine and related systems, including emergency engine stop. Refuel engine.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Battery management, including check for low charge.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leave, approach and moor at home dock under power.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leave, approach and moor at guest dock under power.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handle all boat maneuvers under power including, traffic avoidance, narrow channels, turning, backing, slow motoring with strong side wind, etc.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate understanding of tides and currents in actual sailing conditions.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate mastery of VHF equipment and procedures.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate mastery of all instrumentation available, including compass, depth meter, speed and direction instruments, wind indicators, etc.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine point of sail based on wind, water and sailing conditions.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set course based on wind, water and waves, tides and currents, time available for sailing.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Command while tacking.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Command while changing point of sail		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Command while gybing.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Familiar with all running and standing rigging and can operate or direct operation of each as required.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Command while raising and lowering sails.		

Knowledge and Experience			
		Date completed	Certified by
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trained to command in emergency systems including fire, man overboard, emergency crew evacuation, vessel disabled, abandon ship.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Certified Senior Crew, with at least 4 sails with students after certification as Senior Crew		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read and interpret tide and current tables.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local knowledge of tides and currents in the areas designated for student voyages		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated mastery of all limited visibility procedures and guidelines		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated knowledge of Rules of the Road in all situations.		

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Mastery of basic navigational skills, including chart reading, local knowledge of San Francisco Bay navigational aids, water depths in channels.		
Final Certification			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved by the BWF Board of Directors by a 2/3 vote after all skill certifications are completed.		

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Appendix D: Blue Water Captain Checklist
 (Captains are certified as having correctly and ably performed the skills on this checklist.
 Revised: July 7, 2003)

Blue Water Captain Skills Checklist

Candidate:	Vessel
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	On Water Skills	Date completed	Certified by
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engine management and repair.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anchoring in harbor, cove or open water.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge and ability to use electronic navigation systems and instruments on board.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge and ability to plot courses and navigate in poor visibility conditions.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge and ability to identify other vessels by their lights showing and plot converging courses.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge and proficiency with radio systems and communication.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mastery of boat handling in ocean conditions. This includes, but is not limited to, running in heavy swells, gybing in heavy swells, reefing in strong winds, night sailing, managing seasick crew, etc.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated experience and judgment in real sailing conditions with students		

	Knowledge and Experience	Date completed	Certified by
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coast Guard "six-pac" certification for vessels of at least 13 tons		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local knowledge of off shore waters, aids to navigation and known hazards from Bodega Bay to Monterey.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thorough knowledge of agreed upon safety practices for ocean sails with students.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thorough knowledge of agreed upon boat management in stormy conditions at sea.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thorough knowledge of agreed upon procedures for critical emergency situations including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessel disabled • Night time man overboard • Sinking • Collision • Emergency evacuation of crew (illness or injury) 		

Final Certification			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved by the BWF Board of Directors by a 2/3 vote after all skill certifications are completed.		

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Appendix E: Certification cards

(All volunteers receive this card when they sign the Guidelines and Responsibilities.
Certifications for skill levels, when achieved, are added as endorsements on the back of
the card. Revised June 22: 2003)

Volunteer Card (front)



bluewater foundation
Volunteer Crew

Name: _____

This is to certify that the named bearer is certified to serve as Volunteer Crew on Blue Water sails on San Francisco Bay.

155 Montgomery Street, 12th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
415-392-2018
www.BlueWaterFoundation.org

Certified by: _____

Volunteer Card (back)

Certifications

	Certified by	Date
Senior Crew	_____	_____
Captain	_____	_____
Senior Captain	_____	_____