

## RACE COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT TIPS

### Getting started

- Read the current MSC Sailing Instructions (on the MSC Web Site under “Racing”).
- Read the MSC Committee Manual (on the MSC Web Site under “Racing”).
- Read the rule book – “Racing Rules of Sailing” (Free to US Sailing members; or order from [www.ussailing.org](http://www.ussailing.org)).
- Another good pamphlet to read: “Join the Race Committee Team.” Order on-line from US Sailing ([www.ussailing.org](http://www.ussailing.org)).

### Safety first!

- Postpone or abandon if thunderstorms.
- Do not race if very windy (generally 18 mph or greater – solid whitecaps) and/or very cold and/or cold water and/or lack of experienced sailors or, more importantly, rescue boat personnel. If you need two rescue boats and only have one, you are asking for trouble!

### Setting the course

- Determine the mean wind; set windward mark accordingly.
- Use Windward-Leeward courses on windy days or for variety (more strategic).
- Use a different colored mark as the “offset” mark to eliminate collisions at the windward mark.
- Goal: 45 minutes for the first boat to finish.

### Setting the starting line

- SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING!
- Set it perpendicular to the wind.
- Make it long. Rule of thumb: 150% of the combined length of all boats starting.
- Postpone if the wind shifts OR all the boats gather at one end

### Signals and Flags

- See the inside back cover of the Racing Rules of Sailing for the sound signals to be used when each flag is raised AND LOWERED. (General recall, Individual recall, Postpone, etc.).
- Have Postpone, General recall, and Individual recall flags ready to hoist. The Warning Signal should be raised one minute after the Postpone flag is lowered.
- Hit five or more short blasts within 15 seconds (no later!) of the Warning signal.
- Eliminate “flag clutter.” Do NOT fly the MSC burgee, the RC flag, etc. during the starting sequence. You can put them up before and after, but not during.

## RC personnel

- Day steward = Principal Race Officer (PRO): The PRO's word is law.
- Recorder (2)
- Timer – DEDICATED PERSON WITH NO OTHER JOB. Keep 2 watches running.
- Signaller (flags and horn). ONLY THE VISUAL SYMBOLS ARE OFFICIAL.
- Line sighter
- Mark setters and rescue boat personnel

## Wind conditions

- Do not start in a drifter (less than 3 mph).
- Summer wind may not fill in until 11:00 or 11:30.
- Shorten course if the wind dies. You do NOT need to give advance warning (before the boats round the last mark before the finish).
- If light and fluky, don't wait for steadier wind – just go with what you got.

## During the race

- Think ahead!
- If you intend to sail races back-to-back, have everything ready for Start #2 right after Finish #1.
- Offer stragglers their current position or estimated time.
- Offer tows to the starting line or back to the dock if no wind.

## What can go wrong?

- Error in the starting sequence: Postpone and restart the sequence (for visuals only, not the horn).
- Marks drift: Abandon.
- Big persistent wind shifts: For most club races, let it go. For major regattas, abandon.
- Wind dies: Shorten course.

## Communication with racers

- General rule: No talking! Exception: new people who really need help.
- All official information is visual only.
- Standard reply: "Thank you!"