

Important checks for the Novice Sailor

What are the two most important things you should do before going sailing?

1. Your clothing - for the day.
2. Your boat - Safety checks, (Bungs, Battens and the boat).
 - Fittings secure? (Shackles, pins, screwed fittings?)
 - Rigging safe?

Tightness of the rigging for the days wind speed.

Set and tension of the sails for the day.

Can I adjust the set of the sails while afloat? (Important).

How do I reef the sails if I need to.

Consider the use of a smaller set of sails as apposed to reefing.

Other considerations.

Have I checked the forecast?

Do I understand the wind strengths that are safe (and comfortable) for me to sail in?

What do I understand about; A north westerly? (blustery, little wind close to the shore, but strengthens further out with unpredictable gusts.

An easterly wind, (cold, penetrating but steady in direction.

A south westerly, warmish but could turn wet.

A southerly wind, a good direction for a steady wind but can produce steep waves in winds of over force 3.

- If you own or crew in a two handed boat:

Who is the most important person in the boat. The helm or the crew?

Both are important.

The Helm steers the boat, knows the rules of sailing, understands how to rig the boat and adjust the sails for tension.

The helm gives the orders or directions to the crew, and works out the best course, and to come alongside the pontoon, or slipway, and from which direction.

The helm may decide if adjusting the sails for tightness is necessary (in the event of the wind speed making helming the boat difficult) or the helm may decide to reef, if that is possible afloat, or maybe make all speed for the shore.

The Crew should know where the main and jib halyards tie off on the bottom of the mast, and must know immediately which halyard to loose if the main or the jib has to be dropped in a hurry. The crew **must** know how to tie knots and how to safely attach the painter to a cleat on the pontoon. When coming to a stop at the pontoon, the crew should be able to lasso the cleat or be able to throw a rope to a person on the shore waiting to assist you. When coming onto the slipway **it has to be** the crew who jumps out first to hold the boat, while the helm lowers the sails. The crew should know how to raise and lower the centre or dagger board when asked to do so.

The crew must use their weight to balance the boat so as to enable the helm to stay in their sailing position. This may require the crew to move left and right across the boat as required. The crew must also know how to back the jib when asked to do so, (see accompanying handout).

It is the responsibility of the crew to keep a sharp lookout at all times and note and inform the helm of any boats that may cause a collision.