



Fleet Captain Program: Policy on Participation & Conduct

Program Purpose

The Fleet Captain Program is designed to bring members together through shared experiences on the water. Volunteer Skippers generously offer their time, skill, and leadership to create opportunities for members – regardless of background or experience level – to participate, learn, and enjoy the camaraderie of sailing. The success of the program depends on a mutual commitment: Skippers provide safe, welcoming, and well-managed sails, while crew members contribute through reliability, respect, and a willingness to engage as part of a team. The following expectations are intended to support a safe, inclusive, and rewarding experience for everyone involved.

Guiding Principles

- The Fleet Captain Program exists through the generosity of volunteer Skippers. Their safety, enjoyment, and willingness to participate are essential, and must be supported to ensure the long-term success of the program.
- The program is open to all members and does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, cultural background, or personal circumstances. Diversity of experience and perspective strengthens the community and enriches the sailing experience for everyone.
- All participants – Skippers and crew alike – should feel that their time on the water is safe, enjoyable, and respectful. Every member contributes to maintaining this standard through their actions and interactions.

Minimum Crew Participation Requirements

1. Foundational Sailing Knowledge

- Crew members should have a basic understanding of sailing principles and onboard safety.

- Completion of ASA 101 (Basic Keelboat Sailing) or an equivalent introductory course is strongly recommended.
- Individuals without formal certification may still participate at the discretion of the Skipper or Fleet Captain, provided they demonstrate a willingness to learn and follow instruction.

2. Physical Readiness

- Crew members should be **reasonably capable of participating in typical onboard activities**, which may include:
 - Moving safely about the vessel
 - Handling lines and basic equipment
 - Assisting with docking and sail handling as directed
- All activities can be adapted where possible, and crew are encouraged to communicate any limitations in advance so that roles can be assigned appropriately.

3. Safety Awareness

- Crew must be willing to follow all safety instructions provided by the Skipper or Fleet Captain.
- Use of required safety equipment (e.g., life jackets when directed) is mandatory.
- Situational awareness and attentiveness while underway are expected at all times.

4. Communication & Teamwork

- Crew members are expected to:
 - Listen actively and respond to instructions promptly
 - Ask questions when unsure
 - Communicate clearly and respectfully with others onboard
- A collaborative, team-oriented mindset is essential to safe and effective sailing.

5. Temperament & Conduct

- Crew should demonstrate:
 - A calm and cooperative demeanor
 - Respect for the authority and decisions of the Skipper or Fleet Captain
 - Patience, particularly in dynamic or unfamiliar situations
- Maintaining a positive and composed attitude contributes to both safety and overall experience.

6. Respect, Inclusion & Club Culture

- The Manhattan Yacht Club is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment.

- All crew members are expected to:
 - Treat others with dignity and respect
 - Support an environment free from harassment or discrimination
- Be mindful of differing backgrounds, experience levels, and perspectives
- Every participant plays a role in creating a safe and enjoyable space for all.

7. Willingness to Learn

- Especially for newer sailors, a genuine openness to learning is highly valued.
- Crew should be receptive to guidance and eager to develop their skills over time.

8. Commitment to Reservations

- Crew members are expected to honor their confirmed sailing reservations.
- If you are no longer able to attend, you must remove yourself from the reservation at least 24 hours before the scheduled sail. This allows waitlisted members adequate time to adjust their plans and participate.
- Members who cancel within 24 hours of the sail, or who do not arrive before the scheduled departure time, will be charged a fee of \$25.
- Consistent reliability helps ensure fairness and access for all members.

Handling Concerns & Issues

- Maintaining a safe and enjoyable sailing environment is a shared responsibility among all participants. Both Skippers and crew members are encouraged to raise concerns when they arise.
 - Skippers should report any situations where a crew member's behavior may impact safety, teamwork, or the overall experience to the Fleet Captain Committee.
 - Crew members should report any concerns regarding safety, conduct, or onboard experience to the Fleet Captain Committee.
- The Fleet Captain Committee – comprised of experienced Skippers appointed by the Club – will review all concerns in a thoughtful and balanced manner. The Committee's role is to support a positive experience for all participants while recognizing the practical realities of a volunteer-led program.
- Depending on the nature and frequency of the concern, the Committee may take one or more of the following actions:
 - Provide guidance or clarification on expectations
 - Recommend participation under specific conditions (e.g., particular boats or weather conditions)

- In cases of serious or repeated concerns, suspend participation in the Fleet Captain Program
- The Fleet Captain Committee holds final authority on participation decisions. The Commodore remains available as a point of appeal if needed.

Supporting Volunteer Skippers

- Skippers are responsible for the safety and overall experience of each sail and have the authority to make reasonable, real-time decisions to support those goals. This includes the discretion to decline or remove a crew member if they believe that individual may not be able to meet the expectations necessary to maintain a safe and enjoyable environment onboard.
- Participation as a Skipper is voluntary. Skippers may step back from the program at any time if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or that the experience is no longer positive.
- The Fleet Captain Committee will maintain regular communication with Skippers to ensure the program remains supportive, constructive, and rewarding for those who volunteer their time and leadership.

Review & Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Fleet Captain Committee and the Flag Officers to ensure it continues to support the mission of the Club, foster inclusivity, and protect the volunteer spirit of the program.

Closing

These expectations are intended to support a high standard of safety, teamwork, and mutual respect on the water. They are not meant to exclude, but rather to ensure that all participants are prepared to contribute positively to a shared and rewarding sailing experience.