



Skipper Guide 2026

1. About the Skipper Certification Test

The Skipper Certification Test evaluates your readiness to safely captain a club boat. This is a pass/fail test that may take up to six hours. You must successfully complete all items to pass. If you don't complete certain items, you can retest for only the missed items at a later date.

Not passing on your first try is common and perfectly okay. This test is designed to be educational. Your examiner will give you specific written feedback on what to work on. Take it to heart, practice, and come back when you think you're ready. Most candidates who don't pass need improvement in 3 key areas:

- a) Crew overboard knowledge and execution
- b) Motoring/docking/undocking
- c) Raising/Lowering sails

2. Skipper Guide

This guide provides answers and explanations for each test question.

In addition to the questions in this section, Skipper Test examiners will often ask ad hoc questions to evaluate how a candidate reasons through situations they may be encountering for the first time. Examiners are looking for sound thinking, not a scripted answer.

When you take your certification test, you must bring along the following.

- 1. Handheld VHF radio – Any marine radio will suffice.
- 2. Chart of NYC harbor or Navionics or similar charting app for NY Harbor – Obtain a chart that is large enough to read, but that you can take with you sailing on a daily basis.
- 3. Current Eldridge tide book. This does not need to be purchased each year.

A. Local Conditions

1. Open chart of harbor and identify for examiner: wreck in the harbor, reef, Red buoy and Green buoy.

- a) The examiner is looking to see if you know the identifier for a wreck on your chart. There are a few wrecks south and west of the statue and in the Bayonne area. Make sure you scan for these before the test and know what they look like. Same for reefs, know the way your chart identifies them. There are reefs south of the statue.
- b) There are various red and green buoys throughout the harbor. Make sure you understand the nomenclature on the buoys, color, number, flashing period, sound.
- c) A bell buoy produces a single, deep, repetitive tone. A gong buoy produces a distinctive multi-toned sound.

2. Explain how to determine if the chart is in fathoms or feet.

Check the top right corner or legend of the chart. A fathom equals 6 feet. It is likely in feet which is important as all the soundings (depths shown) will be in the unit of measure.

3. Calculate the distance from Verrazano Bridge to Battery and how you arrived at this.

Each line of latitude (1 degree) is broken into 60 minutes. One minute of latitude equals 1 nautical mile. Using dividers would be more accurate, but a marked piece of paper can be used too. You will be asked to show this on a chart. The distance is approximately 6.5 NM based on the latitude lines on the side of the chart.

4. Identify the worst reef in the harbor.

There are several reefs south and west of the Statue of Liberty. The most dangerous reef is the shallow one approximately half a mile south of the Statue of Liberty. There are also submerged, unmarked pilings in the northern area of the Willy Wall cove, north of where the Arabella moors. These pilings are a hazard during low tide.

The J/24 draws 4 feet. Avoid any areas on the chart with 5 feet or less depth, even at high tide. Depth on the chart is generally measured at mean lower low water (MLLW). Bridge clearances are referenced at mean high water (MHW).

5. Identify normal traffic lanes for Staten Island Ferry, NY Waterway Ferry, Liberty Landing Ferry, Statue Cruise, Circle Line & cruise ships.

You will need to identify these on your NY harbor chart.

Here is what to watch for:

- a) Staten Island Ferry: Two primary routes between St. George Terminal and Whitehall Terminal — Northbound generally runs close to Governor's Island, Southbound generally closer to the Statue of Liberty. These large orange ferries run frequently (every 15–30 minutes) and move fast. Give them plenty of room.
- b) NY Waterway: These are blue-and-white high-speed catamarans and monohulls operating out of several New Jersey and New York docks. They will generally outmaneuver and avoid sailboat traffic, if you hold your course when close. The two important routes are the ones closest to the club and our sailing grounds. One runs from behind Surf City to/from Paulus Hook, back and forth in Morris Canal. The other operates from Paulus Hook to Brookfield Place (NYC), just north of Morris Canal.
- c) Liberty Landing Ferry: Small yellow (wrapped white for World Cup) ferry between Liberty Landing Marina (Liberty State Park, Jersey City), Warren Street (Jersey City), and Brookfield Place Terminal (NYC). These ferries can be an obstacle from prop wash when docked at Warren Street, and from limited visibility when crossing or exiting the marina in Morris canal from our docks. Main thing to know is that this ferry runs from Brookfield to Warren, to Liberty Landing, **back to Warren** and then back to Brookfield.
- d) Statue Cruises: There are ports — from Battery Park in NYC and from the Railroad Station Terminal in Liberty State Park. These are large white vessels with frequent departures throughout the day. From The Battery (NYC), they travel to the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and return to The Battery. From Railroad Station Terminal, they travel to Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty, and return to Liberty State Park. Understanding this route is vital as we often take sails down in the cove (where the Willie Wall is) and we have to look all the way back to the statue to make sure we are clear before motoring right past their Railroad Station dock.
- e) Circle Line / Sightseeing Cruises: Large tour boats departing from Pier 83 (W. 42nd St) traveling up and down the Hudson and circumnavigating Manhattan. They almost always go to the Statue of Liberty.
- f) Cruise Ships: When you see one coming, give it a very wide berth — they cannot maneuver. Departure points include Manhattan Cruise Terminal (Piers 88 and 90, West 48th Street), Brooklyn Cruise Terminal (Red Hook, Brooklyn, across from Governors Island in Buttermilk Channel), and Cape Liberty Cruise Port (south of the Statue of Liberty in Bayonne).

6. Identify which way to leave buoys when entering and leaving a channel.

Red Right Returning, Green Right Going applies for NYC Harbor.

7. Explain the meaning of 1 horn, 2 horns, 3 horns, and 5 horns from another vessel.

You must:

- a) Interpret their intent: Horn blasts in NY harbor communicate what the signaling vessel wants you to do. This is different from the normal, textbook meaning of what the signaling vessel is going to do.
- b) Assess and Respond to the situation: Check surrounding traffic, confirm you have room to maneuver, and look for other vessels and objects that may be affected. Move with clear and decisive action.

The tricky part: When two boats face each other, their port is your starboard. This is the single biggest source of confusion for new skippers. Practice will make this easier over time.

Their Signal: One (1) Short Blast

- a) Interpret: "I [Signaling Vessel] want you on MY [Signaling Vessel] port side."
- b) Assess and Respond:
 - Am I Crossing or head-on? Stay or move to their port side. In general, this is a move to your Starboard when safe.
 - Am I being overtaken? Stay or move to their port side. While you may think you are the stand-on vessel, horn blasts generally come from the Staten Island ferry or larger ships in NY Harbor and you must move in the direction their signal requests, move to your port when safe.

Their Signal: Two (2) Short Blasts

- a) Interpret: "I [Signaling Vessel] want you on MY [Signaling Vessel] starboard side."
- b) Assess and Respond:
 - Are they Crossing or head-on? Stay or move to their starboard side. In general, this is a move to your Port when safe.
 - Am I being overtaken? Stay or move to their starboard side. You must move in the direction their signal requests, move to your starboard when safe.

Their Signal: Three (3) Short Blasts

- a) Interpret: "I [Signaling Vessel] am going in reverse."
- b) Assess and Respond: Where is the vessel relative to you and your intended course? Steer clear or proceed with caution.

Their Signal: Five (5) Short Blasts

- a) Interpret: "Danger" / "I don't understand your intentions" / "Your maneuver is unsafe."
- b) Assess and Respond: What is the immediate threat? How to avoid it based on any restrictions they may have? Unfortunately, 5 blasts does not give us much information as to what the signaling vessel wants us to do. If they have given us 1 or 2 horns prior to the 5 blasts, we should move in the appropriate direction based on the previous signal. If the situation makes it obvious what action is necessary, you should take immediate action to avoid an incident. In general you should avoid getting into a situation where another vessel feels it necessary to signal with 5 blasts. If necessary, use your motor to get out of the way of the Staten Island ferry or barges well in advance.

Their Signal: One (1) Prolonged Blast

- a) Interpret: "I am leaving my dock"

- b) Assess and Respond: Is the vessel's path going to intersect with yours? Steer clear or proceed with caution.

Their Signal: One (1) Prolonged Blast + Three (3) Short Blasts (which may sound like 4 shorts)

- a) Interpret: "I am leaving my dock in reverse."
- b) Assess and Respond: Is the vessel backing into your path or channel? Steer clear or proceed with caution. We hear this most often from the Statue Cruise at the Railway.

8. According to club rules, which vessels should our sailboats give way to?

Commercial traffic shall have the right-of-way over all club boats. Any skipper found to have interfered with any type of commercial traffic may have their privileges suspended.

9. Explain the sail-to-sail rules: port-starboard, windward-leeward, and overtaking.

See: ASA 101 Book Chapter 5. Rules 12 - 17. Understand these rules and practice them every time you are on the water.

10. Explain when a sailboat is considered a powerboat.

A sailboat is a powerboat whenever the motor is running and in gear. But be mindful that with our engines it is very difficult for another vessel to know if the engine is running, so if the engine is down, assume they think you are a powerboat.

11. Explain the fundamental power-to-power rule: danger zone or passing port-to port.

See: ASA 101 Book Chapter 5. Rules 14 – 17. Understand these rules and practice them every time you are on the water.

12. Explain how to determine high and low tide in the Eldridge Tide Book. Determine the next and most recent high and low tide.

To determine high and low tide times from the Eldridge Tide Book, use the High & Low Water tables listed for The Battery, NY Harbor at the southern end of Manhattan. Dog-ear the current month's page for quick reference.

In the current month, find your date by scrolling down the Day of Month column on the left. Read across that row to find the times and heights for each High and Low tide listed for that day.

13. Calculate and explain the method for determining the direction of current at The Battery and when it will next change.

Calculate from the most recent High or Low Water and New York Bay Currents Charts. You'll be required to show this method as part of your test:

- a. From the example above, take the most recent high or low tide for The Battery and determine how many hours it has been since.
- b. Flip a few pages past the High & Low Water for The Battery, NY Harbor to the charts titled New York Bay Currents.
- c. These charts show changing current flows at both High and Low Water, along with hourly increments after those times.
- d. Example: the most recent high water was 3 hours ago. To find the direction and flow of the current at The Battery, reference the chart "3 Hours after High Water at The Battery." That chart shows a southerly current of 1 knot at The Battery.

14. Describe a sailing plan for the next 6 hours based on weather conditions.

Check tide, currents, wind speed and direction. Determine where one could sail to and return from within 6 hours. The average speed of a J/24 is about 4 to 6 knots.

Pay attention to the weather forecast and potential changes in weather, wind speed, current and future tide, and the chance of thunderstorms developing. If there is a chance of a thunderstorm during your sail, use the Eldridge guide to ensure that for each hour that you are out, the current will bring you back to Morris Canal. If you cannot do this, consider sailing in and out of the Willie Wall cove. Whenever there is thunder, return to the dock immediately.

15. Explain the dangers when passing into the lee of a large fixed object when wind and current are moving in opposite directions.

Currents in the harbor can be very strong and can quickly cause loss of control of the boat when getting close to large fixed objects like the Willy Wall, steel buoys, or anchored barges. Do not pass close to these objects when the current is pushing you into them. When passing these objects in their wind shadow you have to be doubly sure of which way the current is moving. When the current is moving in the opposite direction of the wind, passing into the lee will cause your wind to stop and the current will then drag you right into the object. Do not let this happen!

B. Safety Consciousness

1. Demonstrate proper method for filing a float plan.

Before you sail, clearly and legibly file a float plan in the office logbook. Include: skipper, full crew names (member/guest), boat number, cell phone, type of sail, sailing location, and estimated return time.

Upon return, note any unusual events and sign the form. File a Repair Report (<https://myc.org/repair/>) if you observe any issues with the boat.

2. Check vessel's safety gear before sailing including lifejackets, fire extinguisher, flares, anchor, sound device, Type IV PFD, bucket, pump, lazarettes, fore hatch, and nav lights.

Be able to identify and operate all of the above listed items on the boat.

- a) Store the anchor and anchor line in the upper starboard side cabinet in the cabin. The anchor is for emergency use only, e.g., the boat is disabled and cannot return to the dock.
- b) Store the bucket and bilge pump in the lower starboard side cabinet. Remember to check the bilge for standing water.
- c) Store flares in the upper starboard side cabinet. Check expiration date — expired flares are considered inoperable and may result in Coast Guard fines.
- d) The fire extinguisher is mounted on the wall on the starboard side. A fire extinguisher is for electrical (electric system) and oil (gas tank) fires. Check expiration date — expired extinguishers are considered inoperable and may result in Coast Guard fines.
- e) Store lifejackets in the back starboard berth after sailing. Verify the boat has 5 blue life jackets, or at least one for everyone who requires one.
- f) The emergency fuel tank goes in the port cockpit lazarette. No other equipment should be kept in either lazarette. Check the lazarettes to make sure dirt does not clog up the drain holes, which drain into the bilge. You can unplug them with a narrow screwdriver.
- g) The battery case is under the table in the cabin. This is to power the navigation lights, forward and aft, that must be turned on at sunset or reduced visibility.

If any of these items are missing, defective, or expired, report to the office and seek a replacement before sailing. If none is immediately available, do not sail faulty safety equipment and file a Boat Repair Request.

3. Describe how inflatable PFDs work and how they can be checked for readiness.

Inflatable Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) contain an air bladder and a compressed gas cylinder, typically carbon dioxide (CO₂). They can be inflated in two ways. Manual activation is performed by pulling a jerk cord that triggers a pin to puncture the CO₂ cartridge, rapidly inflating the bladder. Automatic activation should occur upon submersion in water, when a water-soluble component (like a bobbin or tablet) dissolves, releasing a spring-loaded firing pin to puncture the CO₂ cartridge.

To check inflatable PFDs for readiness, perform a visual inspection for any rips, tears, or excessive wear that could compromise the air bladder. If wearing a “Inflatable” or “hybrid” PFD, (Types I, II, III, or V), make sure the air canister is locked, armed, and showing green; these canisters need to be replaced periodically. This confirms the CO2 cartridge is properly installed and has not been previously deployed.

4. Describe how the fire extinguisher works.

The club boats carry B and C rated fire extinguishers, which are designed for flammable liquid fires (Class B, such as gasoline from the fuel tank) and electrical fires (Class C, such as the boat’s electrical system). These are dry chemical extinguishers that work by discharging a fine powder to smother the fire and interrupt the chemical reaction.

On the boat, position yourself between the fire and your exit (the companionway) so you can retreat if needed. Stand approximately 6 to 8 feet from the fire when discharging. A typical marine extinguisher will discharge for approximately 10 to 15 seconds, so aim carefully and use short bursts.

To operate:

- a) Pull the pin at the top of the extinguisher. This releases the locking mechanism and allows the handle to be squeezed.
- b) Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire, not at the flames. Directing the agent at the base cuts off the fuel source.
- c) Squeeze the handle to discharge the extinguishing agent.
- d) Sweep the nozzle side to side across the base of the fire until it is out.

After the fire appears out, continue to monitor for re-ignition. Never use water on a Class B or Class C fire — water can spread flammable liquids and conduct electricity.

5. Describe how to correctly use a flare in an emergency.

Handheld road flares, or fuse flares, are pyrotechnic devices that work through a simple chemical reaction to produce a bright, intense light for signaling in an emergency.

To activate, remove the cap to expose a scratch-sensitive igniter head (similar to a match head). Strike the igniter head against a rough surface on the cap to create a spark.

Only ignite flares in an emergency when bright light and smoke will aid in detection and recovery. Only use on deck, away from anything flammable.

How to hold a handheld flare safely:

Position your body:

- Stand on the leeward side of the boat
- Face into the wind so smoke and sparks blow away from you

Hold the flare:

- Fully extended at arm's length, slightly angled downward (~30–45°)
- With your downwind hand if possible, keeping the other hand free for balance or bracing
- Over the lifelines if possible, away from the hull, sails, lines, and fuel
- Steady — do not wave or move it

Do not hold the flare:

- Above your head — molten slag can fall on you
- Close to your body
- Straight horizontal — sparks travel

Flares will last 10–30 minutes depending on their rating.

8. Demonstrate how you would secure the boat for foul weather

Secure both lazarettes, block the companionway with the weather board, drop the sails and secure both with sail ties. Always know where your weather board and sail ties are! Standard practice is to keep the

weather board under the starboard cushion and the sail ties neatly rolled in the traveler cross beam. If the traveler cross beam is solid wood, put them in the sail box.

9. Demonstrate how to use the VHF radio to call for help in the harbor.

In an emergency, such as critically injured crew. Select Channel 16, press and hold the mic button.

- a) Say "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday"
- b) Say "This is Manhattan Yacht Club Boat [boat number]" 3 times
- c) State your location. Use large landmarks such as the Statue, the Intrepid, Governor's Island, etc. and state your position relative to the landmark. "Location is one-half" mile south of Governor's Island". Sailboats are relatively easy to see because of their sails, if your sails are down, let them know.
- d) State the nature of your emergency. "Crew is unresponsive"
- e) State the number of people on board and that they are wearing pfd's. "5 people on-board, all wearing pfd's"
- f) State a description of your boat. "Boat is a 24 foot sailboat with sails up/down"
- g) Say "Over" and listen for a response. Answer any questions that come back.

This is to be used only for a true emergency.

Note that in NY harbor you can also use 911 on your cellphone to get emergency help.

11. Explain where the control panel is and what each switch operates.

The control panel is below deck on the port side just after the bunks on the wall of the port upper cabinet. It contains switches for the cabin lights and running lights. Each is labeled.

12. Demonstrate how to obtain a weather forecast for NY Harbor on a VHF radio, and on your cellphone.

WX1, Channel 1 for the VHF. Use MyRadar, Weather.com, Accuweather apps for cell

13. Explain how to get emergency weather updates while sailing.

Monitor the weather channel on the VHF radio. You can also set VHF to weather alerts. There are various smartphone weather apps that can provide radar and alerts, including AccuWeather, MyRadar, and Weather Underground.

14. Crew prep, this is not on the test, but will factor into other items on the test

- a) Understand the skills of your crew, ask them how much sailing experience they have and if they feel comfortable moving around the boat. Consider which crew member you want to go to the forward when raising and lowering the sails. This is often the examiner.
- b) For newer or mixed experience crew, you may want to assign roles for specific key tasks before leaving the dock and train the crew on those items, e.g., raising and lowering the mainsail, releasing and re-attaching dock lines.

C. Sailing Skills

1. Demonstrate correct wearing of PFD.

Make sure the PFD is properly fastened. If wearing a "Inflatable" or "hybrid" PFD, (Types I, II, III, or V), make sure the air canister is locked, armed, and showing green; these canisters need to be replaced periodically.

2. Demonstrate knots: figure eight, square knot, bowline, clove hitch, cleat hitch, coil, and slip.

See: ASA 101 Book Chapter 5, near the end. Remember to start the cleat hitch with the load around the distant horn.

3. Explain the purpose of cunningham, outhaul, boom vang, and traveler.

- a) The cunningham controls the tension on the luff of the sail. On our boats be sure to not over tighten the cunningham as it may cause the main sail to come down along with the boom.
- b) The outhaul controls the tension on the foot of the sail. When in doubt, set the outhaul tight before hoisting the main — it is easier to release than tighten.
- c) The boom vang controls the tension on the leech of the mainsail and keeps the mainsail and boom from rising. Tightening the boom vang will also flatten the lower third of the mainsail. The boom vang keeps the boom from rising downwind or on a reach and disturbing sail shape. The boom vang can also be used upwind to control the main while easing the mainsheet to spill air and lose power — without the boom vang on, easing the mainsheet will cause the boom to move to leeward and up, which usually opens the leech too much.
- d) The traveler adjusts the position of the boom relative to the centerline of the boat. In strong winds, you can move the traveler leeward to depower the mainsail.

4. Demonstrate proper winch usage and use of the winch handle, including storage.

Generally, you will want to have two wraps of the jib sheet on the winch. Wrap the winch with the palm of your hand with the thumb pointing up to avoid mashing your thumb.

Store the winch handle in the sleeve located at the forward end of the cockpit, handle down.

5. Demonstrate how to safely add wraps to a winch.

While applying tension on the sheet, add wraps over the top with your thumb pointed up. Another way is to hold the tension against the winch with your palm while adding wraps over the top.

6. Explain how to clear an override on the winch.

In order:

- a) Pull the jib sheet counter clockwise high on the winch. Keep pulling around until the override is cleared. This will clear about 95% of overrides.
- b) Feather up into the wind, thus relieving pressure on the sheet, allowing the trimmer to clear it.
- c) Use another line to tie a rolling hitch on the wrapped sheet, then lead the line over to the opposite winch to release tension so wraps can be freed.
- d) Cut the sheet. If it can be done safely, cut it near the knot, otherwise wherever you can cut it safely.

It is important to note that you never want to tack or go completely head to wind with an overridden jib sheet, especially if you are using the genoa. Overrides happen much more frequently with the genoa and when the wind increases in velocity, backwinding the genoa can be catastrophic in this situation, necessitating cutting the jib sheet as quickly as possible.

7. Explain correct sail selection for various wind conditions (0-12 kts, 12-20 kts, 20-25 kts, 25+).

Always sail within your ability and your crew's — accounting for crew size, experience, and the reality that in a COB situation, those remaining on board must be able to control the boat and execute the maneuver. Remember, over 25 knot winds, gusting or sustained, is the club's upper limit; your personal upper limit may be lower.

- a) 0–12 kts: Mainsail and genoa. If gusting higher, you may want to switch to the jib.
- b) 12–20 kts: Usually jib.
- c) 20–25 kts: Mainsail only.
- d) Over 25 kts: Gusting or sustained, MYC boats do not go out. If already underway, return to the dock immediately.

8. Select the correct foresail for weather conditions and crew. Explain your choice.

Practice this under different conditions and changing conditions. As a general guideline, consider using the genoa below 10–12 knots and switching to the jib above that range. If you have novice crew, use the jib. Be ready to defend your choice.

9. Personally rig the foresail.

It is recommended to lay out the foresail on the deck with the tack of the foresail at the bow and the clew of the foresail toward the stern. For the jib, the sheets run inside the shrouds and through the jib blocks. For the genoa, the sheets run outside the shrouds. They are attached to the foresail with bowlines. It is recommended to attach the tack of the foresail first, then work your way up the hanks along the forestay, clipping on the jib halyard once complete.

10. Explain how the vent cap on the fuel tank works and why it should be open at all times.

The vent cap allows air to enter the fuel tank as the fuel is consumed. If you do not open it, a vacuum will form which will prevent fuel from flowing into the engine, causing it to stall.

11. Demonstrate how to fill the engine's fuel tank.

Fill the engine with fuel before each sail. Fill to about 1 inch from the top.

12. Demonstrate ability to start an outboard engine.

The best way to get used to starting the engine is to practice starting as many times as necessary to feel comfortable **before** the test day. If the engine doesn't start on 3 pulls, you should try troubleshooting.

Here is a list of items to check if the engine doesn't seem to start:

- a) Push the choke in if you've been trying with it out. Pull out if you've been trying with it in. Sometimes the engines need the choke when coming in, even if it is a hot day.
- b) Kill switch. Must be engaged for the engine to start. It should never be removed, but if it is, the engine will not start.
- c) Vent on top of the fuel cap must be open. If the engine repeatedly starts, runs and then dies, the vent may be blocked. Make sure it is open, you can even remove the cap for a few seconds to be sure, then replace the cap before starting.
- d) You may have flooded the engine. Remove the kill switch clip, pull the start cord 5-10 times, replace the kill switch clip and try to start the engine with the choke in.
- e) External/Internal tank switch. Located on the port side of the engine at the back, should always be in the down position (unless you are on a red boat with an external tank).

13. Demonstrate test for forward and reverse.

With the engine running at the lowest possible throttle and with the bow and stern lines still attached to the boat and dock, switch the gear into forward — you will see a small amount of prop wash behind the boat. Shift back into neutral before shifting into reverse. You will see the dock lines tighten as the boat moves backwards.

14. Make sure boat and crew are ready to leave the dock.

Make sure the jib and main halyards are clear. Make sure the jib sheets run clear and through the proper blocks for the foresail. Make sure the main sheet is untied and ready to use. Push the hanks on the foresail down as far as possible to make it easier to see from the helm. Make sure the boom vang is released and the cunningham is not on the deck.

The crew should be prepped for any normal maneuvers you will need them for.

15. Demonstrate the ability to back up from slip in a straight line.

Put the engine in reverse and slowly back up. Use an appropriate amount of throttle based on wind conditions. In normal conditions back up slowly and in a straight line. In high wind situations it is necessary to use more throttle to control the boat and you will need to protect the bow from being blown into the other boats, which may require moving the stern away from the wind to compensate for the bow being blown by the wind.

16. Demonstrate the ability to operate tiller and engine in unison.

Hold both and turn simultaneously in the same direction. This provides the best control over steering and the ability to make tight turns. When undocking, be sure to have the bow pointing up our channel before shifting into forward. If you shift into forward while still facing our boats you have very little time to correct any problems you run into. If the boat is facing up the channel, it gives you significantly more time to deal with any issues.

When motoring up our channel, do so with caution, having your crew watch for boats backing out without looking. You should be at the engine, ready to do a U-turn or shift into reverse if something gets in your way.

Once in Morris Canal you can use more throttle if the way is clear. The most hazardous area to motor is by the fuel dock and past where the Liberty Landing ferry crosses Morris Canal. **If this area is clear**, proceed through it as quickly as possible and safe. Be sure to keep way to the right in Morris Canal, allowing other, faster boats to pass you safely. Also, ensure the engine is straight, if there is pull on the tiller, the engine is not straight and if you lose your focus the boat may veer into oncoming traffic. The tiller should require little to no force to keep straight.

17. Demonstrate how to hoist sails by directing crew.

18. Set appropriate luff tensions.

19. Demonstrate proper storing of halyards while the sails are hoisted

Find an appropriate place to raise the sails, it should be clear of other boats and provide sufficient runway to give you time to get both sails raised. While raising the sails, continually evaluate the area and reposition as necessary. Never raise or lower sails in Morris Canal, make sure you have room to stay on the NYC side of the green can if raising in that area. Prepare to raise the main, remove the sail ties and position two crew at the mast.

Raise the main first, keep the boat head to wind and use the engine to quickly correct for any wind direction changes, this is especially important in strong winds. Watch the mainsail as it goes up, if it moves to starboard, move the tiller and engine to starboard to get back head to wind. The same for port. Loosen the mainsheet when the sail is 80% up and if possible, raise the back of the boom to help the person hoisting raise the main fully. If the mainsail is not fully raised, the boom will be lower during the sail and may cause injury. While raising the main there should be only 2 people standing on the boat and forward, no one should be standing in the cockpit area, except maybe yourself.

Once the main is raised, you should:

- a) Have the crew tighten the boom vang and snug the cunningham.
- b) Adjust the mainsheet so the boom doesn't swing, but be aware of any heeling while accomplishing the following tasks and let the main out to keep control of the boat.
- c) Remove the topping and attach to the shock cord, ensuring it is not through the bridle. We should always remove the topping so that it doesn't chafe the leach of the mainsail.
- d) Know where the sail ties are, if possible roll and place in the cross bar under the traveler.
- e) If there is sufficient wind to sail, stop and raise the engine. Always raise the engine before tilting it, bring it up 2 notches, then ensure it is in forward and tilt it up until it clicks into place.
- f) Have one of the crew that raised the main come back and bring the halyard, have them loosely coil it and stow it below.

Now have the remaining forward crew raise the foresail. You should still be head to wind, but go on a slightly starboard tack, this will ensure the sail and sheets will move away from the person hoisting as they raise the sail. Have the cockpit crew put a wrap on the port winch, but instruct them to not tighten

the foresail until it is fully raised. A tight sail will put pressure on the hanks which will make it much more difficult to raise.

Be sure to keep control of the boat while the foresail is being raised, do NOT allow the boat to heel, protect the person raising the foresail and warn them of any wakes or chop.

When the sail is fully raised, have the crewmember return to the cockpit with the jib halyard, loosely coil it and stow it below.

20. Demonstrate the ability to safely tack and jibe the boat.

There are many theories on how best to tack and jibe a J24. You'll probably hear various different methods from different skippers you sail with. The examiner is looking for you to safely maneuver the boat ensuring the safety of your crew, not a particular method. Be consistent, execute the maneuver the same way each time. For tacking, be sure all crew have indicated they are ready. For jibing, "racing" jibes are acceptable, but are not recommended for new skippers. For a "safe" jibe, be sure you are not moving at the same time that the mainsail is switching sides.

21. Demonstrate proper techniques for all points of sail.

Be sure you know your points of sail. Don't forget to communicate to your crew.

22. Sail oblong course while performing successful tacks and jibes including giving correct commands.

Follow the directions of the examiner. Communicate to your crew.

23. Identifying a lee shore and explain why it is dangerous.

Find a shore that the wind is blowing onto. A lee shore is dangerous because if you get stuck on it, it is very difficult to sail off of it.

24. Steer the sailboat by the lee without jibing.

Let out the main all the way and turn downwind until the jib comes across. This is a dangerous maneuver as you are very likely to accidentally jibe, make sure your crew are not in vulnerable positions. This shows your ability to control the boat, but should not be done on normal sails.

25. Demonstrate how to slow or stop the boat in order to allow another boat to pass.

To slow the boat, let the mainsail out. To stop the boat, steer into the wind and let the sails luff. You can also slow the boat with the mainsail trimmed by pinching and heading more into the wind, this allows you to keep more maneuverability while slowing progress.

26. Explain the first things you do if a crew falls overboard.

- a) Shout "Crew Overboard!"
- b) Assign a spotter whose job is to keep the COB in line of sight, point to the COB, and give verbal directions to the helmsman. Make sure this is NOT your trimmer.
- c) Begin the recovery maneuver as soon as possible, get to the beam reach.

27. Demonstrate crew overboard recovery technique.

See ASA 101, Chapter 4 near the end, and practice, practice, practice. Know at least the Figure 8 method, this is the method most known to your crew.

28. Demonstrate how to start the engine.

Find an appropriate place to lower the sails, it should be clear of other boats and provide sufficient runway to give you time to get both sails down with a little buffer for trouble you may encounter. Never lower or raise sails in Morris Canal, if you want to lower sails in that area, make sure you stay on the NYC side of the green can for the entire douse.

Un-tilt the engine and put it in neutral, this will prevent it from kicking up if you are moving quickly through the water. Lower the engine. Even on hot days, the engine may need to be choked in order to start it. See #12 above in this section for ways to diagnose an engine that won't start. Once started, put the engine in forward. As skipper, you should be able to control the boat and start the engine unassisted. If you are having engine issues or dealing with strong weather, ask a crew member to hold the tiller while you attend to the engine.

29. Demonstrate the ability to lower sails by directing the crew.

For safety, only one crew member should go forward to the mast. Use the motor to get to a slightly starboard tack which moves the foresail and jib sheets away from the crew. Have the trimmer release the jib sheets and you should position the boat so that the foresail is luffing above the port side front of the boat. Have the forward crew release the jib halyard. They may have to walk to the bow and pull the hanks down to the deck.

- It is very important to have the forward crew move the foresail away from where they will be standing to lower the main. This is vital if the genoa is being used.

Now have the forward crew come to the port side of the mast. It is important to protect the crew during the lowering of the mainsail in moderate to heavy wind. The problem is that the mainsheet needs to be loose in order to uncleat the main halyard, but tight so that the crew can use the boom to lean on and hold onto while attending to the mainsail. Here is one possible sequence for lowering the main:

- a) Ensure the boom vang is uncleated and cunningham disengaged and the hook is attached to the boom. This can be done before lowering the foresail.
- b) Attach the topping to the boom. This can be done before starting the engine.
- c) Ensure only one crew is forward of the cockpit and all cockpit crew are sitting.
- d) Head to wind, you should see the mainsail luff. Loosen the boom and tell the forward crew to take the bolt out of the slot and release the halyard from the cleat, but hold the halyard not letting the sail down.
- e) When the forward crew has released the halyard, tighten the mainsheet as much as you can, make sure traveler lines are tight and cleated. This stabilizes the boom.
- f) Have one cockpit crew stand to help make the pocket (or taco).
- g) Tell the forward crew to make a pocket and drop the sail.
- h) Tie the mainsail to the boom using sail ties. Before accelerating the boat, make sure everyone is sitting down or holding on.
- i) Head toward Morris Canal, remember to keep to the far right in Morris Canal.

30. Demonstrate under engine power ability to turn the boat "on a dime"

Adjust the throttle to a lower speed. Using both hands, with one on the engine throttle and the other on the tiller, move both in unison to starboard or port to get a tight turn. Hard to port (turning the boat to starboard) is more difficult as that is the place you are sitting for engine control, but be sure to practice this direction as the examiner may specify which way they want you to turn. Remember, the boat steers by moving the stern, so don't get too close to anything before starting your turn.

31. Pretend the engine is not functioning and demonstrate how to propel the boat by rocking.

Instruct the crew to go forward to the mast, place their hands on the mast with their backs against the shrouds. Alternately rock by shifting weight from side to side in order to create forward motion. The movement of the keel through the water in this manner will propel the boat forward. Moving the tiller back and forth will create forward motion too. Steer the boat with the tiller to complete the circle.

32. Demonstrate ability to safely dock a boat.

Make sure you square off the turn into our channel from Morris Canal, this makes it easier to proceed up Morris if a jet ski is out of sight until the last second. It also gives your lookout up near the bow, the biggest sight advantage possible.

After the turn, make note of where your foresail is. If it is on the spring line side of the boat, ask the crew to move it to the other side. Especially if the genoa is being used.

As you proceed down our channel:

- a) Assign your most competent crew to the spring and have them position themselves up by the mast on the proper side. Make sure they know to step outside the lifelines holding onto the shroud as they approach the dock. You don't want them jumping over the lifelines at the last second. Make sure they know that their job is to stop the boat.
- b) Assign someone to handle the bow lines, make sure they know to just sit on the boat and not put out any limbs to stop the boat if coming in fast...and certainly don't jump over the lifelines at the bow.
- c) Make note of the wind direction and ascertain how the wind will affect your docking procedure.
- d) As you approach the dock, if the conditions are wet or dewy, inform the spring line person that the finger docks get extremely slippery in these conditions and be careful. Watch for boats departing our docks without looking and be ready to take evasive action. If a boat is docking in front of you, give them some space in case they need to back out.
- e) Position any additional crew on the leeward side of the boat to help fend.
- f) If you decide you won't be able to dock and need to go around or back out, the earlier you make this decision, the easier it will be to make a successful maneuver. If you decide to go around or back out, communicate to your crew.
- g) If wind conditions are light to moderate, you should be able to slowly coast into the slip in neutral. However, if wind conditions are very strong you may need to approach the slip at a faster speed and use reverse. By far most docking should NOT require the engine.
- h) Your job is to get the spring line crew to the finger dock, if they can't reach the finger dock, or if they have to jump to the finger dock and can't reach the boat, you have failed.
- i) Be sure the spring line crew knows that they need to stop the boat, secure the spring correctly, and hand the bow lines to the crew who is patiently sitting on the boat.

33. Demonstrate proper dock line tie up.

- a) Spring line crew should run the spring line under the stanchion support and through the loop in the spring line. Crew should say "spring made".
- b) When the spring line is connected the stern of the boat will move away from the direction of the spring, you must fend so your boat does not touch the boat next to you.
- c) The spring line crew will then proceed to the bow, handing the crew on the foredeck the bow lines through the chocks. One at a time they place the looped line over the center bow cleat until both are secured. Instruct the crew to say "bow made" once secure.
- d) When you exit the boat, get in the habit of checking to ensure your spring lines and bow lines are made correctly.

34. Demonstrate ability to roll mainsail and fold or roll foresails and store properly in the forepeak.

Stowing the Foresail – Jib

- a) Lay the jib on the dock.
- b) Fold the sail in half, bringing the head down to the tack along the hanks.
- c) Roll from the folded middle toward the combined foot and head.
- d) Slide the rolled sail into the sail bag clew first, so the next crew can easily find the tack.
- e) Store in the forepeak.

Stowing the Foresail – Genoa

- a) Lay the genoa on the dock.
- b) Position one person at the tack and one at the clew. Stretch the foot between you.
- c) Flake the sail in 2- to 3-foot lengths from the foot, sliding the head of the sail toward your position.
- d) Once fully flaked, fold the sail from the clew side toward the tack side in 3-foot lengths.
- e) Place in the sail bag and store in the forepeak.

Stowing the Mainsail

- a) Start with the mainsail draped to one side of the boat.
- b) Stand with a helper on the opposite side of the boat from the sail.
- c) Gather the center-top of the mainsail up and down the length of the boom to find the 2nd batten from the top, it is closest to the ® on the Mount Gay Rum logo.
- d) Fold the top of the mainsail from that batten away from the boom toward the rest of the sail.
- e) Pull the folded section over the boom a few inches down to the side you are standing on.
- f) Use the boom to smooth the sail as you roll upward.
- g) Secure the rolled sail with two slip knots, placed one-third and two-thirds down the boom.
- h) Place the mainsail cover over the mainsail and boom. Secure each end with an overhand knot to allow for easy untying. Fasten the bottom clips, ensuring all sail ties and sail are neatly stowed.

35. Demonstrate proper coiling and stowing of all sheets, halyards, and lines.

- a) Store jib sheets, spinnaker sheets, twings, and the winch handle in the rope locker.
- b) Coil and hang all halyards properly.
- c) Flemish all fixed lines on the deck.

36. Demonstrate cleaning all garbage from cabin, reordering life jackets and washing down the boat.

- a) Check the cabin, port and starboard shelves, cooler, rope locker, and deck for any remaining items.
- b) Remove all personal items from the boat.
- c) Remove all garbage from the boat and dispose of properly.
- d) Replace the companionway cover and close the cabin hatch to close off the boat.
- e) Wash the exterior of the boat with fresh water from the dock hose.

D. How Club Operates

1. Explain what times a boat can go sailing.

Sailing hours are from 9am to dusk. All boats must be returned to the dock before dark — no exceptions. During summer months (April through October), typical sailing hours are approximately 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM, but always check actual sunset times for your sail date. The club calendar and website list current operating hours and any special restrictions. Reservations are made through the club booking system, and skippers should arrive early enough to complete pre-sail checks.

2. Explain in what weather conditions a boat can go sailing.

Club boats may sail when wind gusts are at or below 25 knots and there is no lightning, thunder, or severe weather in the forecast. Check both wind speed and gusts before departing. If conditions deteriorate while sailing, return to the dock immediately. The club's wind limits exist for good reason — our J/24s become difficult to handle above 25 knots, and the harbor traffic makes maneuvering in heavy weather especially risky. Always check radar apps (like RadarScope or MyRadar) and NOAA forecasts before sailing. When in doubt, don't go out.

3. Explain the penalty for not getting a boat back to the dock before a thunderstorm, squall, or darkness.

Violating safety rules is taken seriously. Returning a boat late, sailing in prohibited conditions, or failing to return before dangerous weather may result in suspension of sailing privileges. Violations may result in disciplinary actions such as, but not limited to, suspension or revocation of skipper privileges. These penalties exist to protect everyone — you, your crew, other sailors, and the club's fleet. If you realize you cannot make it back safely, call the office immediately at 212-786-3323 and seek the nearest safe harbor.

4. Explain where to find the club rules.

These are found on the club website.