

DSC Skipper Requirements and FAQ

Last update 3/9/2017

A Downtown Sailing Center (DSC) Skipper must, in addition to adhering to the responsibilities outlined in the 'Skipper Liability Form', demonstrate competency and ease in performing a prescribed Person-Overboard Rescue in a manner that is in accordance with US Sailing Basic Keelboat guidelines AND demonstrate competency and ease of sailing to- and from- the dock, which includes departing and docking, rigging and derigging. Additionally, DSC Skippers must show mastery of safety procedures and knowledge of safety requirements when operating a sailing vessel 22' - 26' in length.

The Downtown Sailing Center uses the *Skipper Checkout Form* to serve as a template and guide for skipper checkouts.

Requirements, In Order of Importance:

- DSC Skippers must competently **demonstrate an approved Person-Overboard Rescue**, which are limited to the **"Figure-8 Rescue"** and the **"Quick Stop Rescue."** The object representing the Person-Overboard (POB) may be picked up on either side of the boat and the boat may be head-to-wind or in "safety position," but the vessel must be moving at minimum control speed or slower.
 - Persons who miss the POB on the first attempt must successfully demonstrate competency by picking up the person in the next two subsequent attempts without a miss.
 - Persons who choose to perform the Figure-8 Rescue will be walked through the Quick Stop Rescue.
 - Persons may be asked to perform the POB Rescue on both tacks and/or from different initial headings.
- DSC Skippers must competently **demonstrate appropriate safety protocol** and **demonstrate appropriate safety knowledge**.
 - Please see the skipper checkout form for more information
- DSC Skippers must competently demonstrate ability to **rig and derig** a daysailing keelboat appropriately, without assistance, and demonstrate good seamanship while doing so.
- DSC Skippers must competently demonstrate ability to **depart safely and dock safely without auxiliary power**.
 - The mainsail must be hoisted and lowered with the bow into the wind
 - Sails must be lowered when the boat is docked in the slip (bow and stern line attached)
 - DSC vessels are strongly recommended to make approach to dock with only one sail up at a time when docking.

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- DSC Skippers must competently **demonstrate the ability to tack from close hauled to close hauled courses**
 - Skippers are very, very strongly encouraged to tack facing forward toward the bow and to change sides only after the boom crosses over the centerline to the new tack.
 - DSC skippers are not required to use the tiller extension, though DSC skippers should know that tiller extensions are standard permanent equipment on DSC boats.
 - Tacks of up-to 110 degrees are acceptable, but should be in the 85 - 100 degree range for the large majority of tacks.
- DSC Skippers must competently **demonstrate the ability to Gybe (jibe) from a broad reach to a broad reach**
 - Skippers must demonstrate the ability to center the main when sailing downwind in preparation for a controlled “safety jibe”
 - Skippers should change sides before jibing during the checkout process.
- DSC Skippers must competently demonstrate the ability to **avoid accidental jibes** when sailing downwind.
 - Only 1 accidental jibe is allowed per skipper per skipper checkout.
- DSC Skippers must competently **demonstrate the ability to depower the sails through the use of sail controls *or* reefing**, though it is recommended that skippers be competent in all methods of depowering a vessel.
 - For reefing, the skipper is expected to heave-to before reefing
 - For sail controls, the skipper should know how to adjust the outhaul, the jib halyard, the cunningham, the vang, the jib leads, the backstay, and how to use the traveler.
- DSC Skippers must competently **demonstrate the ability to sail the following points of sail: close hauled, close reach, beam reach, broad reach.**
- DSC Skippers must demonstrate their competence in seamanship, which includes answering questions about **Basic Right-of-Way principles, channel markers, and basic weather-related decisions**, such as when/when not to sail.
- Skippers should, at a bare minimum, **be able to perform these skills and knowledge checks for all wind conditions in 5 - 15 knots of breeze.**

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Skipper Checkout Process

After scheduling your checkout through the office with a Programs Director, a skipper candidate should prepare for the checkout process outlined below:

1. Sign a liability waiver if not already accomplished.
2. **SKIPPER CHECKOUTS MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED IN 5 - 15 KNOTS OF WIND** - normal sailing conditions.
3. Don an appropriate fitting life jacket using appropriate protocol and begin rigging the assigned boat.
4. Use appropriate courtesy language, such as "permission to board," "stepping on/off", etc. when maneuvering around the boat.
5. Check the standing and running rigging for issues or damage.
6. Check for appropriate required USCG safety equipment.
7. Remove sail cover, hank jib, and prep running rigging.
8. Orient vessel with bow into wind.
9. The skipper will feed the mainsail into the slot.
10. The skipper will give departure plan, which should avoid "sailing in the slip," to the crew.
11. The skipper will helm the vessel during all maneuvers.
12. The skipper departs. If performing a downwind departure, the skipper must demonstrate the ability to steer the boat backwards.
13. Sail away from the docks, establish full hoist on both sails if that has not already been accomplished, and demonstrate ability to sail on a beam reach, close reach, and close hauled course.
14. Tack from close-hauled to close-hauled for a few tacks.
15. Jibe from broad reach to broad reach a few times.
16. Perform a Person-Overboard Rescue, typically from a beam reach or close reach course.
17. Perform a second Person-Overboard Rescue from the opposite tack.
18. Demonstrate ability to depower vessel, which may require a heave-to maneuver
19. Return to the dock and dock appropriately.
20. Derig the vessel appropriately. There will be a debrief after derigging.
21. Skippers will be given one of three results based on their skill and familiarity with the boats and the waterways:
 - a. Plan of Improvement (POI) - the skipper candidate needs more practice
 - b. Pass with limited sailing range, typically to the Canton Turning Basin
 - c. Full Pass, with sailing range limited to the Key Bridge