



DRAFT 4/24/2020

Covid 19 Regatta Precautionary Measures

With the guidance and support of DEM, Sail Newport has put together the following draft document to use as protocol for the gradual reopening of recreational activity in RI. We do this with the understanding that the authority for this lies with DEM, the Governor's office and the Newport Harbormaster. As we receive guidance from the state and the city, these protocols will be adjusted accordingly.

The purpose of this document is to outline the various groups of individuals involved in running a regatta and how their personal interactions can be minimized in order to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19. Sail Newport prioritizes the health and safety of our staff and visitors above all else, but we also believe that with strong policies and procedures, we will be able to safely host regattas when restrictions eventually begin to ease.

Most of the policies and procedures of regattas outlined below can be used by regatta managers throughout RI. (Some of the items identified below are unique to the regattas that Sail Newport runs at its base in Fort Adams State Park. i.e. the dockage and launching procedures are unique to our facility)

People attending a regatta can be broken down into 3 groups:

- Participants
- Venue Staff, and
- Regatta Volunteers.

It is the opinion of Sail Newport that we can inform and educate these groups with new policies that will allow us to continue hosting sailing regattas on the water while minimizing risk from the spread of COVID-19. **Cleaning/ Disinfecting:** Regatta organizers will follow strict CDC-recommended protocols with guidance from our state and local health agencies for cleaning surfaces, personal hygiene and to prevent the spread of the virus. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

Regatta organizers will follow the most current Rhode Island protocols on the wearing of gloves/masks and social distancing guidelines.

Social Distancing:

One of the most critical regulations that will determine our planning will be the number of people allowed in a group setting. Regatta type and size can vary greatly and it will be important for venues to adhere to these regulations before moving forward with specific events. Some regattas are for small dinghy sailboats which have 1-2 people per boat that

launch from beaches and ramps while others are larger keelboat regattas which can have anywhere from 3-15 people per boat.

Often times these regattas have no social interaction while others have larger parties and gatherings after racing has ended and competitors have returned to shore. The range is so wide that placing all regattas under one umbrella could negatively impact many events that could be held under safe conditions that follow social distancing guidelines. Sail Newport will not be allowing post race social events as long as State regulations dictate social distancing.

Venue Guidelines

It will be vital for venues to address the safety planning and communication of each regatta on a case-by-case basis in order to ensure compliance with the government's guidelines at the time of the event. We believe that a majority of the regattas / marine events can be managed safely and get people back out and enjoying Narragansett Bay.

- When planning regattas, we will use the maximum group size allowed by the State of Rhode Island to determine the size of keelboat (and therefore the number of crew aboard any one boat) that will be allowed to compete.
- For example, some classes that are invited to the Newport Regatta that Sail Newport is scheduled to host in July have 7, 8 and even 15 sailors on one boat. If the regulations at that time state that no groups or gatherings of more than 5 people could be held, the classes with more than 5 people would not be allowed to compete.
- As "keelboat" and "dinghy" regattas have slightly different policies given that their boats will be kept in different locations at the beginning of racing each day and again at the end of the day once they return to shore.
- Likewise, using the example of no more than 5 people congregating in one area, Sail Newport will address how the groups of people (staff, volunteers and competitors) would be able to safely limit interactions on land and on the water and still have a safe and successful event.

Staff

Sail Newport staff during regattas will primarily be focused on monitoring the venue to ensure government regulations are being met and that all questions from competitors and volunteers can be answered. We want to be there to support everyone who comes to Sail Newport to provide them with the information they need to keep themselves protected and those around them as well. Docks, boat ramps, and beaches will be staffed to ensure we are following all guidelines and regulations.

Keelboat Regatta Competitors

For a keelboat regatta, the boats will either be kept on private moorings or at the Alofsin Piers in Fort Adams State Park. Sail Newport would create specific docking locations for the boats requiring dockage and would create marked lines on the dock to keep each boat in their designated area. We would also staff the docks each regatta day to ensure that guidelines were being followed, no groups were gathering and that each boat was in her designated spot. The Alofsin Piers have two ways to enter and exit. Similar to grocery stores, we would designate one location as the entrance and another as the exit to eliminate traffic in the

opposite direction. This will help create a single direction flow of people that our staff would monitor at each location. Prior to the event, competitors would get outlined details of the changes to the site and regulations to follow while on site. We would utilize all of our communications tools to continuously inform sailors of any changes or to send reminders about safety regulations.

Dinghy Regatta Competitors

For a dinghy regatta, all boats are kept in fields and parking lot areas at each venues that use ramps or beaches to access the water. In the case of Sail Newport, we utilize a large field that can be used to store hundreds of boats at a time for some of our larger regattas. In those cases, we used temporary posts and line to mark “parking spots” for each boat to keep the field organized. We can manage the field in the same way but increase the distance between boats to meet social distancing requirements. This would give sailors the space they need to safely get on and off the water each day. Even with the increased social distancing space, we anticipate having plenty of space for competitors as we are not hosting any major events this summer.

Launching and Hauling at Dinghy Regattas

While the sailors would be able to get to their boats safely and get ready, we also need to consider the boat launching process. Sail Newport staff would be on site at the field to aid in a “single file” boat launching process. Boats would launch in order of their storage spot to the launching ramp with 6-10 feet between each boat. This is a process that we normally implement to create order in the launching process, so we have a strong procedure for managing this aspect already. Once their boat is launched, they would return their boat dolly (trailer) to the field area. The flow would be circular to eliminate person-to-person interaction in the opposite direction. An image below shows a general aerial photo of how this process works at Sail Newport. With 3-4 Sail Newport staff members, we would be able to effectively maintain social distances between competitors during the morning and afternoon times when boats are getting ready to leave to go racing and also when they return to Sail Newport at the end of the day.

Race Committee Volunteers

Race committee (RC) volunteers are vitally important to the success of all regattas. While most venues have full time staff that manage the planning and preparation, the race committee volunteers are the “game day” stars who make sure the on-the-water racing is safe and successful. On average, Sail Newport depends on between 15-20 “RC” volunteers per regatta to ensure the safety of competitors and successful racing. They are divided up based on skills sets and their roles and responsibilities to different boats. There is a primary boat called the “signal boat” which can be compared to the home plate umpire of a baseball game. This boat contains about 5 team members and manages the flow of events throughout the day. There are also 2-3 “mark boats” who drop inflatable marks in the water for the competitors to sail around. Each mark boat has 2 team members on board. These boats do not change personnel and are basically isolated in their role all day. Under the regulation of having groups of 5 people or less, we would be able to manage the regatta on-the-water aspect successfully

and safely. All volunteers would be required to follow State mandated protocols for masks/gloves.

Sail Newport staff would provide each boat with proper cleaning supplies so that the volunteers would be able to clean the boats each day as well. The race committee boats would be docked under the same guidelines as the keelboats- with proper distance between them and no gathering on the docks before or after racing.

Before and after racing our volunteers generally gather at Sail Newport to discuss the day and enjoy time together. This is without question something that would need to change in order for us to safely host regattas at this time.

Conclusion:

The Covid 19 Crisis is a fluid situation and as such, Sail Newport will continue to work with DEM and the Governor's office to ensure that our operations limit the spread of the virus. The health and safety of our staff, our volunteers and the members of the boating community is our highest priority.

While we likely cannot have post race gatherings, we do still believe that on-the-water racing is a realistic goal that we can accomplish safely and effectively. Sailboat racing is the lifeblood of so many in this community and although the socials are normally part of regattas, they are not vital to the regatta itself. We see professional sports leagues considering the idea of hosting sporting events with no fans in the stands to reduce person-to-person interaction. Removing large social aspects from regattas is a similar idea.

