



## WEALDEN SAILABILITY

# SAILING HELM ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### Overview

This set of criteria is designed specifically to provide the WS Trustees with an objective measurement of helm competency in order to address the practical needs of Wealden Sailability (WS) operating at Chipstead Sailing Club. It is based on the RYA National Sailing Scheme, Better Sailing and Seamanship Skills syllabi but it strips out that material that is not relevant to WS. It is then further adapted to cater for the additional requirements specific to the operating characteristics of the Laser Stratos, RS Venture, Drascombe Lugger, and Drascombe Longboat.

The assessment will be done by an ongoing process of evaluation with feedback from all Trustees and any currently qualified helms. Final sign-off will be given when at least 2 Trustees have confirmed that the helm has demonstrated the below competencies.

Assessment records will be kept by the WS Secretary.

### Syllabus

#### 1. Boats and Equipment

- Can fully rig and prepare the boat including the proper set up of the keel tie down, rudder tie down, reefing lines, Cunningham (downhaul), outhaul, kicking strap and masthead buoyancy.
- Can fully prepare and rig the Spinnaker (optional. Only if they know how and wish to use).
- Is familiar with the radio, location and use, and the need for a radio check with the Safety Boat at every launch.
- Boat rigging checks **MUST** be carried out by every helm each time they commence a “turn” in a boat.

#### Additional responsibilities as Stratos /RS Venture / Lugger/ Longboat Skipper:

- Understands that as designated skipper, they will be fully responsible even if not directly helming.
- Responsible for total numbers and seating positions of all on board in order to maintain proper trim and balance and in accordance with agreed loading limits.

#### 2. Boat Handling Skills

##### Can Do:

- Leave and return to all pontoons in all wind directions and strengths that are within WS operating parameters. Consideration to be given speed of approach and ensuring that there is sufficient room on the pontoon. Also, Lee Shore approaches.

- Always sail the boat in a flat (as possible) position and in all permitted weather conditions. Ultimately it is the skipper's responsibility to keep the boat flat, as the designated crew and other people onboard may be restricted in their ability to move.
- Efficiently sail to windward with a full understanding of the No-Go Zone and proper use of the Jib tell tales.
- Heave-to / Lye-to
- Come alongside a moored boat ending in a stationary position alongside.
- Be towed by a powered vessel (alongside or astern).

Additional responsibilities as Stratos / Venture / Lugger/ Longboat Skipper:

- Efficiently sail downwind; understands the risks of an accidental gybe associated with Goose Winging and agrees to adopt the *Training Run* principle (i.e. both sails on the same side) for all downwind sailing.
- Perform a safe and controlled gybe, with reference to:
  - Pulling boom and sail away from shroud.
  - Understanding the need for centralizing the tiller as the boom crosses the centerline during a gybe.
  - Keeping the boat balanced all the way through the maneuver.

Understands How To:

- Get out of irons, push / push, pull / pull, or backing the jib.
- Method for sailing backwards.
- Proper use of rudder.
  - Fully applied rudder is a brake, so ideally never more than 45°.
  - Only works when boat is moving.
- The need to be aware of changing conditions and possible requirement to return to pontoon as a result.
- Understand how the boat they are helming normally behaves when capsized and or swamped (helm, crew and passengers must stay with the boat) and that they must immediately inform the safety boat and return to the pontoon as soon as possible if able.

Additional responsibilities as Stratos / Venture / Lugger/ Longboat Skipper:

- The Helm must **NEVER** stand up whilst helming the boat, particularly when tacking or gybing, to avoid contact with the boom or to unbalance the boat.
- In all conditions, helm must always helm on windward side, or center line of the boat.
- Method to efficiently recover a person overboard using the Lying-To position (head to wind).
- Sailing with a spinnaker (optional but subject to suitable training).
- Understands when to reef (before going afloat if in doubt).
- Understands how to reef. Noted that reefing or un-reefing must **NEVER** be carried out whilst out on the water (helms will come ashore or request the help of the safety boat).
- The Helm must understand how to use a VHF radio correctly and be fully conversant with the emergency CODE RED procedure.

**END**

Reviewed and Revised 05/04/2019 by DM/ST to include Drascombe Longboat.

Reviewed and Revised 24/10/2019 by DM/JK/ST Radio check with Safety Boat in lieu of Pontoon.

Reviewed and revised 21/01.2021 by DM,NL/ST. 1. Boats and Equipment-Rigging Checks added, Understands how to section reefing removed, Additional Responsibilities section- must never stand up, no reefing on water added.

Reviewed and revised 08/02/2021 by NL. Minor typos and consolidation

Wealden Sailability Policy Document A3 - Sailing Helm Assessment Criteria - Rev 19.03.2026

Reviewed and revised 31/03/2022 by DM, NL, ST. Includes VHF radio and CODE RED.

Reviewed and revised 22/02/2023 by JB, NL, ST, HF, MM, PC no changes.

Reviewed 04.03.2024 BY JB/ST. No changes.

Reviewed 22.02.2025 BY NL. Amended following Wheelyboat MAIB report.

Reviewed 19.03.2026 BY NL. Amended with new dates.