

(Letter to BTS Editor): Where's source info that U.S Sailing says no sailing allowed above 5-15 kts?

The May 2018 BTS says SC now has "wind guidelines". BTS says SC's affiliate organization, U.S. Sailing, states that skipper status "qualifies a skipper to sail in not more than 15 knot winds". I feel this is a dubious statement, as a search of U.S. Sailing shows no reference to this.

The U.S. Sailing certification series textbook, "Basic Keelboat", clearly states how "5-15 kt winds" apply to skipper performance WHILE undergoing EVALUATION. (See textbook: Appendix.)

The U.S. Sailing certification process cites "5-15 kt winds" so as to fairly evaluate a candidate's boat handling, performance, & command, on the water. See, Appendix: "stronger prevailing" winds "are acceptable if the candidate can safely control the boat, & be aware of "limitations" in these conditions.

BTS says "don't sail in winds above 15-kts", & "If the wind rises to 20 knots or more, head back to the mooring immediately."

As a SC & U.S. Sailing member, I have not located the source of this info. This source info should be provided to SC members via BTS.

Presenters at SC's annual meeting said that boat damage was caused by "contributing factors", and wind speed was 1 of those. However, only "wind guidelines" are now prescribed to address boat damage. "Contributing factors" is an amalgamation. The root cause may not be "winds".

Our SC sailing school has its mission statement to educate: "to offer quality instruction in sailing and boating safety". SC needs to educate sailors about ALL factors of boat damage.

Here's 3 thoughts about reducing boat damage:

Nbr-1) SC could provide superb education & publish all boat incidents, in a manner to inform, not to blame. Sailors learn all "contributing factors", not "just" a possible one. "Sail" magazine prints articles of sailors who find themselves in "bad" situations, & describes what didn't work, as well as what went right.

Nbr-2) This 5-15 kt "wind guidelines" factor doesn't address damage from operator error. Skippers can stall a boat in all winds & not have steerage. Situational awareness needs to be taught to SC students, & tested of SC skipper candidates. Should SC Board's boat damage guidelines include the review of "skipper card" granted by a class instructor, or rather by a separate 'check-out' instructor, who has a new set of "evaluating" eyes? Does SC need a goal to get "more skippers", or "proficient skippers"?

Nbr-3) The SC Board's boat damage guidelines should possibly include SC "skipper card renewal". Maybe an on-the-water renewal every 2-3 years, & show adequate performance. Many licenses, like for driving a car, have start/stop dates. Should SC skippers demonstrate performance to renew?

The May BTS also says SC "does not offer classes in 'heavy weather' sailing. So, what does SC do?

SC Educates. It has developed programs where you can: Learn to 'Solo' sail; Learn to sail across Lake Michigan; Learn passage making; Take lessons, Basic thru Skipper Prep; Learn how to fly a spinnaker; & Learn how to race.

SC educates how to sail under control- - -and therefore safely. BTS says "those wishing to learn" Heavy Weather Sailing "should find another organization".

As a Sail Chicago member, I say that members should NOT find another organization. Rather, stay, - - - and make this one better.

David Kelpas, Member. (Please help these views spur dialogue.)