



# Sailing Club of Washington

## Flying Scot Skipper Information File

Adopted by the board: February 10, 2019

### 1 Safety First!

Safety around the marina and on the water is the priority and responsibility for skipper and crew. Rules, regulations, experience and good judgment all contribute to a safe and enjoyable sailing experience.

### 2 Introduction

This Flying Scot Skipper Information File (SIF) sets forth the skipper responsibilities and SCOW procedures for the use of the club's Flying Scot sailboats. This SIF supplements the SCOW Skipper Requirements and Boat Use Policy, which contain general procedures for the use of all club boats. Skippers are required to be familiar with and follow these documents before operating the Flying Scots.

This SIF is intended only to emphasize important procedures for using the Flying Scot. It is not a sailing instruction manual. Each skipper is responsible for being completely capable of launching, rigging, sailing, docking and retrieving the Flying Scots. This SIF is not a substitute for training and experience.

### 3 Expectations of all Flying Scot Skippers for Care of the Vessels

Take pride in our boats by leaving them better than you found them after you sail. Remove all trash, wash inside and outside of the hull, and remove scuff marks. Stow equipment in the appropriate locations on the boat and in the sail locker. All Flying Scot Skippers are expected to participate in scheduled maintenance days.

### 4 Failure to Follow Club Rules

Skippers who repeatedly fail to follow SCOW rules will have their skipper privileges suspended or revoked.

### 5 Misuse of the Vessels, and Consequences for Damage

The skipper will be held responsible for deliberate misuse or misconduct, and will be expected to reimburse SCOW for repairs to correct the damage.

### 6 Reporting Damage/Accidents, and Taking Appropriate Action

If the boat is damaged or people are injured while you are skipper, you must take appropriate action.

**Minor Repairs:** If the skipper feels capable and knowledgeable, they can make simple repairs with supplies and tools found in the sail locker. Note the repair in the log book. Report all repairs and maintenance issues to the maintenance director at [scotmaint@scow.org](mailto:scotmaint@scow.org), and notify the bosun at [boatname@scow.org](mailto:boatname@scow.org) (ex: [selkie@scow.org](mailto:selkie@scow.org)).

**Out-of-Service:** If an issue requires the boat to be taken out of service, note it in the log book and notify the bosun at [boatname@scow.org](mailto:boatname@scow.org) (ex: [selkie@scow.org](mailto:selkie@scow.org)), and the Flying Scot Maintenance Director at [scotmaint@scow.org](mailto:scotmaint@scow.org). In the SCOW reservation app, identify the next skipper who has the boat reserved and notify them. Do not attempt larger repairs unless authorized by the bosun or Flying Scot Maintenance Director. Professional repair may be necessary.

**Neglect/Damage by Previous Skipper:** If the previous skipper left the boat in poor condition that suggests a failure to follow SCOW policies, notify the Skipper Director ([skipper@scow.org](mailto:skipper@scow.org)). Examples include sails not properly stowed, boat left unlocked, and boat not left in the dry slip. Describe the issues in the email so the Skipper Director can address the problem with the offending skipper.



## 7 General Rules and Regulations

The skipper is responsible for operating the club's boats safely and in accordance with the Inland Navigation Rules, other legal requirements, and SCOW's policies.

- a) Minimum age restrictions: skipper: 18, crew/guests: 5.
- b) Mandatory U.S. Coast Guard-approved PFD (Type III, Type V or auto-inflating) use applies for:
  - Dates from October 1 through April 30
  - Winds exceeding 15 knots
  - Children under 13 years of age
  - Non-swimmers
  - Single-handed skippers
- c) We are governed by codes, ordinances and rules from a variety of overlapping jurisdictions and agencies:
  - National Park Service
  - U.S. Coast Guard
  - Arlington County
  - District of Columbia
  - Washington Sailing Marina (see the link to *Marina Rules and Regulations* at end of this document)

## 8 Scheduling and Reservations

The *SCOW Reservations* app ([https://scowreg.herokuapp.com/user\\_session/new](https://scowreg.herokuapp.com/user_session/new)), is also accessible from the SCOW website ([www.scow.org](http://www.scow.org)). If the reservation will be the same day or within a few days, check the weather forecast first. Weather links are on the SCOW website and below in section 21, *Resources and References*.

### 8.1 Scheduling Periods

Normal usage periods are daily:

- 8 AM to 12 Noon
- 12 Noon to 4 PM
- 4 PM to Dusk (until 10PM May 1 – Sept 30)

Flying Scots can be operated (whether under sail, being paddled, at anchor, or being towed) after sunset only under the following conditions:

- Sailing is in the WSM lagoon (north of the boat ramp that's adjacent to the floating docks).
- All aboard must wear PFDs.
- The boat must have a working flashlight, VHF, and a U.S. Coast Guard-approved visual distress signal (SCOW prefers an approved electric S-O-S distress light over a signal flare).

During the week (Monday – Friday), not including Federal Holidays, Flying Scots may be reserved across back-to-back scheduling periods.

Scheduling priority is given for club activities, such as maintenance, training, social sail and racing. These reservations will be made by the respective SCOW director for each activity, or by a designated representative. Refer to the Boat Use Policy for more details.

During Social Sail, each excursion is limited to 20 minutes, and the boat must remain in the lagoon.

### 8.2 Scheduling Rules

- a) The skipper need not reserve for the entire slot, but a usage period must fall within a single slot.
- b) Enter the skipper name, cell number and email address in the *SCOW Reservations* comment box.
- c) Cancellations must be made in the *SCOW Reservations* as soon as possible so the usage period can be available for others.



## Flying Scot Skipper Information File (SIF)

- d) A skipper may not reserve a boat in 2 consecutive usage periods. If, after the boat has been returned to the dock, the skipper checks the *SCOW Reservations* and finds that no other skipper has reserved the boat for the next usage period, he or she may reserve it and continue sailing.
- e) Two skippers sailing together may reserve two consecutive usage periods (one reservation per skipper), and sail together without returning to the dock between reservations.
- f) The boats must be secured in the SCOW dry slips when not scheduled.

## 9 Marina and Sailing Area

The Flying Scots are located in reserved dry slips. Our boats are launched and retrieved via the three small cranes, and we use the adjacent floating docks for rigging, casting off and docking.

### 9.1 Sailing Area Boundaries

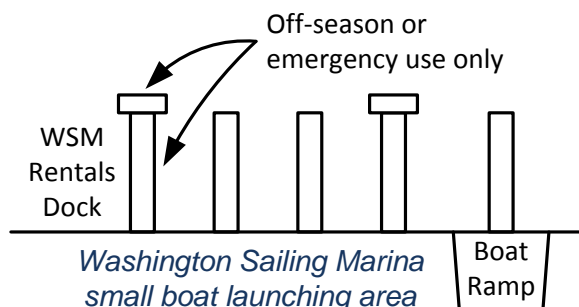
- Up-river: Railroad Bridge on the Potomac River, adjacent to the 14th Street Bridge
- Up-river: bridge near the end of the Washington Channel
- Up-river: first bridge (Frederick Douglass) on the Anacostia River
- Down-river: Wilson Bridge
- Lagoon: The boat must remain in the lagoon when Social Sail guests are aboard.

Be cautious near bridges - heaving-to, luffing or loitering near bridges may arouse suspicion and draw the attention of the harbor police.

### 9.2 Prohibited Sailing and Docking Areas

Prohibited areas include, but are not limited to:

- Under bridges
- Between any docks, anywhere
- Shallow areas (rudder depth)
- Restricted/prohibited military waters/docks
- Within 100 yards of a U.S. Naval vessel
- Areas with ice cover



## 10 Personal Gear Checklist

The following items range from convenient on some days to essential on others:

Two winch cranks	First-aid kit	Sun screen, Chapstick
Dry bag	Cell phone	Hat, hat keeper
Sun glasses (w/floatable lanyard)	Marine VHF/weather radio	Jacket
Flashlight	Small line assortment	Insect repellent/After-Bite
Multi-purpose tool/knife	Chart of the local river	Yarn for tell-tales
Carry-on bag	Snacks	Water
Children's PFDs	Sailing gloves	Boating safety certificate
Whistle for each person		

The two winch cranks are required gear – the second crank ensures that sails can be lowered if the first crank breaks or is lost. A dry bag provides moisture protection for wallets, phones, cameras and key fobs. Several dry bag sizes are available at outdoor/sporting goods retailers. A zip-lock bag can be an acceptable substitute. Soft-sole, non-marking sturdy shoes are a requisite for our boats. Sandals and open-toe shoes present an opportunity for injury.



## 11 Pre-Launching Procedures

### 11.1 Before Arriving

- a) Obtain the current weather conditions and forecast.
- b) Obtain the times of high and low tides (also available in the log books).
- c) Advise guests what to expect and how to prepare for their excursion on the water (some of the *Personal Gear Checklist* items will apply).

### 11.2 At the Marina and Sail Locker

- a) Go to the launching area and observe the sky, wind and wave conditions.
- b) Inspect the boat and trailer for any problems that would prevent or delay operation (e.g., flat tire).
- c) Open the SCOW Flying Scot sail locker.
- d) For the reserved boat, check the previous log entry for faulty equipment or cautions, verify any repairs, and cancel the reservation if necessary.
- e) Fill in pre-sail weather/tide information and crew manifest in the log sheet.
- f) Have non-members read and sign the SCOW liability waiver.
- g) Pick up the boat safety kit (boat registration, radio, first aid, etc.) for the boat you have reserved.
- h) Sails with battens are stowed in the boats. If you will be using the spinnaker, check for required gear: spinnaker, spinnaker basket, lines, and spinnaker pole. Spinnakers should only be used by skippers who are familiar with the sail, and in appropriate winds (usually less than 10kts).
- i) Secure the locker and move the dials away from the combination setting.

### 11.3 At the Dry Slip

- a) Remove the drain plug, ensure that it is securely attached to the boat by a small line, and clear debris from the drain.
- b) Pivot the boat/trailer up to drain any water.
- c) Secure the drain plug in the drain hole. Reduce the chance of line fouling by pointing the clip up.
- d) Inspect the standing rigging (shrouds and forestay) for tension and wire fraying. Check chainplate connections, taping, clevis pins, ring pins, and cotter pins. Check the forestay and jib tack extension wires at the bow plate passage.
- e) Inspect the hull for damage.
- f) Inspect the tiller, rudder and hull attachments.
- g) Unhook the bungee cords securing the cover. You may find one or more passing under the hull.
- h) Have a crew member stand on the tongue of the trailer and remain there as a counter-balance while another crew member climbs onto the boat at the bow or next to a shroud. The crew member in the boat must be forward of the trailer axle to avoid pivoting the boat and trailer.
- i) Untie the cover at the mast.
- j) Roll back the cover (one person on each side of the boat), fold it, and place it at the back of the dry slip.
- k) Keep the wheels chocked.
- l) Check for required gear (stowed aboard):
 

6 Adult PFDs	Type IV throwable cushion	2 paddles	Boat hook	Reefing line
Anchor and rode	Bailer	Whistle	Throw line	
- m) Place the boat hook on a seat so it will be within reach if needed at the crane.
- n) Retrieve and don PFDs.
- o) Ensure that the centerboard is up and line is cleated.
- p) Ensure that the hoisting bridle is properly placed and secured. The forward end is permanently attached to the stanchion below the mast. The bridle passes over the boom and is attached by a shackle to a tang on the aft edge of the centerboard trunk. Make sure the bridle crosses the boom in a direction to avoid snagging the mid-boom outhaul block. Caution: the aft end of the centerboard trunk is above the axle area of the trailer – remember to keep your weight forward of the axle.
- q) The boom must be in the boom crutch and lightly secured by the cleated mainsheet.
- r) Stow the sail bag and any personal equipment in the boat.
- s) Exit the boat by sliding over the gunwale or climbing down from the foredeck.
- t) Unlock and remove the cable at the bow eye/trailer. The cable can be stowed on the trailer.



## 12 Launching

Certain winds and tidal heights require more caution and effort during launching. Plan and communicate the launching steps, and maintain a safety zone around the seawall for you and the boat.

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Never get underneath a hoisted boat. Keep clear of the space between the boat and seawall.

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There are three cranes, but all do not swing out over the water in the same pattern. The preferred crane is the one with the crane boom pointing to windward. Plan ahead and select the lee side of a windward dock, where the boat will be tied up for rigging. If you use the preferred crane you will not have to warp the boat to windward after it is in the water and risk damaging the rudder by contact with the seawall.

- a) Untie the trailer if it has been tied down, and remove the wheel chocks. Our dry-slips next to the cranes do not have trailer tie-downs.
- b) Move the boat to the preferred crane. Move as quickly as possible while launching if there are others waiting.
- c) Check for electric crane operation. Turn on the adjacent master switch if necessary. If the crane does not work, move to another crane.
- d) Position the trailer with the stern toward the water, and the wheels at the concrete bumper. The boat's boom should be below the crane hook when the hoist motor is near the outer end of its travel on the crane's boom.
- e) Place the hoisting bridle ring onto the crane hook, and raise the hook enough to take up the slack (the boat hook can help you reach the bridle ring). Ensure the bridle is not fouled on the centerboard cap, boom hardware, or furled mainsail.
- f) Un-cleat the crane's boom-control rope and have a crew member tend it on the boom side of the boat.
- g) Lower the rudder (if you prefer not to hang over the stern after the boat is in the water).
- h) Remove the tie-down strap and wrap it around the trailer tongue or other convenient location.
- i) Ease the tension on the trailer winch and unhook the winching rope from the boat's bow eye.
- j) Have a crew member keep control of the bow line (also called a painter).
- k) Lift the boat clear of the trailer and move the trailer a few feet away to allow room along the seawall.
- l) Push the boat over the water until it is clear of the seawall. Keep the mast away from the crane.
- m) Lower the boat to the water. Control the bow line and shroud to keep the boat parallel to and clear of the seawall.
- n) Have a crew member step down into the boat, release the crane hook, and remain aboard.
- o) Lead the boat to the lee side of the windward dock. The crew member aboard the boat will fend off with the boat hook or a paddle. Stop at an area that is well away from the seawall, and leave room for other boats. The end of the dock is only for casting off or landing.
- p) Secure the bow line to a horn cleat. There should be no more than about 18" of line between the dock and boat, and that will enable easier boarding and disembarking.
- q) Return the trailer to proper dry slip without delay, as others may be waiting for the crane. The empty trailer does not need to be backed into the dry slip.

## 13 Rigging

Advise crew members to be cautious while boarding, and watch out for a slippery foredeck. Lightly grasp the forestay or shroud to help maintain balance as you board. While on board, it's much safer to be down in the cockpit than out on the foredeck. Rigging can be divided among crew members, with one on the dock to hank on the jib.

Do not alter or modify rigging. If you rig the spinnaker, secure the rigging to the original positions after docking.

- a) Offer PFDs for all crew to wear.
- b) Lower the centerboard slowly. If the pendant is allowed to run free or is paid out too quickly, the roller bolt can be bent when it stops suddenly at the end of its travel.
- c) Once the centerboard is lowered, raise it slightly and cleat the pendant. If the centerboard strikes a submerged object while underway, the pendant will absorb the shock, and prevent the roller bolt from impacting the centerboard trunk and possibly being bent. (This costs SCOW maintenance time and money to replace)
- d) Lower the rudder (second option if you had not lowered it prior to launching).



## Flying Scot Skipper Information File (SIF)

- e) Slacken the main halyard – insert the winch crank on the starboard side of the main halyard winch (the lower of the two winches), turn the winch slightly clockwise and release the latching pawl (located just below the winch).
- f) Slacken the jib halyard (then pocket your winch crank).
- g) Slacken the boom vang.
- h) Remove the lifting bridle from the aft end of the centerboard trunk and stow under the foredeck on the port side (to keep it clear of the centerboard winch).
- i) Un-coil, un-cleat and slacken the mainsheet. Make sure there's a stopper knot on the bitter end.
- j) Remove the sail ties from the mainsail, and stow in a cubby onboard. Unroll the sail on the port side of the boom. This permits better access to rigging on the starboard side of the boom.
- k) Confirm gentle tension on the outhaul. Stronger winds will require more tension on the outhaul.
- l) Remove the main halyard from the bail on the fore side of the mast (halyard has already been slackened).
- m) Look aloft and confirm the main halyard is clear and not fouled with other lines.
- n) Attach the main halyard to the head of the mainsail.
- o) Insert the mainsail luff bolt rope into the mast channel, and winch it up about one foot, taking care to keep light tension on the halyard so that it spools evenly on the winch.
- p) Place the jib on the foredeck – tack fore and clew/jib sheets aft.
- q) Hank the jib onto the forestay – our jibs have jib snaps. Keep the sail low on the deck.
- r) Remove the jib halyard and secure to the head of the sail. (Look aloft and confirm that the halyard is not fouled)
- s) Secure the jib tack shackle to the jib tack.
- t) Reeve the jib sheets through the jib fairlead blocks and the jib ratchet blocks. The jib sheets stay inside the shrouds. Tie figure eight knots at the bitter ends of the jib sheets.
- u) Release the tiller tie-down.

Keep your winch crank with you. It can easily slide off the sloping foredeck.

Just prior to raising the sails is a good opportunity for a last-minute shore break to the restrooms.

### 14 Raising the Sails and Casting off

If the weather conditions are marginal per SCOW policy or your sailing ability, this is an opportunity to make a go, no-go decision.

The winch crank is an aluminum alloy handle designed to shear if too much tension is applied. If a sail is difficult to hoist, check for a fouled halyard aloft or on the winch spool. Do not apply excessive force. Skippers must supply their own winch cranks, which are available at the marina chandlery. Again – carry two winch cranks in case one breaks or goes overboard.

- a) The Type-IV throwable cushion must be within reach while under way.
- b) Assign crew positions and review the cast-off procedure with the crew. It is vital that the skipper assign a competent person for casting off from the dock (can be the skipper). An improper cast-off can place the boat in the hazard of sailing between the docks or colliding with a docked boat.
- c) Confirm that the mainsheet is un-cleated and slackened – pull out a couple feet of slack to be sure.
- d) Un-spool the entire main halyard to prevent fouling when the sail is hoisted.
- e) Hoist the main – turn the winch crank clockwise. Keep light tension on the halyard to enable proper spooling on the winch spool. As the headboard nears the top of the mast, have a crew member slightly lift the boom to finish hoisting the main. Do not over tension the main halyard.
- f) Un-spool the entire jib halyard to prevent fouling when the sail is raised.
- g) Hoist the jib – turn the winch crank clockwise. Start with light tension on the halyard where it enters the mast. Once the sail is hoisted, adjust the halyard tension to leave a few wrinkles along the luff.
- h) Tension the boom vang.
- i) Ensure the sheets are free and the sails are luffing.
- j) With firm control of the bow line and shroud, lead the boat to the end of the dock. Do not cast off from between the docks.



## Flying Scot Skipper Information File (SIF)

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- k) Once again, ensure that the sails are luffing. Guests may feel the need to pull on sheets or grasp the boom. Advise them to keep the sheets slackened until the skipper issues commands otherwise.
- l) Watch for boat traffic and make sure the area is clear before casting off. Note the wind direction and decide the initial direction and point of sail.
- m) Give the command to cast off. Firmly push the boat toward the open channel and board before it is clear of the dock.
- n) Stow the bow line under the foredeck on the port side to prevent fouling the centerboard line.
- o) Trim the sails and get underway.

### 15 Under Way

- Keep the mainsheet untangled and clear of other lines, equipment, and debris.
- Watch for changing weather, wind direction and speed.
- Be prepared to reef the mainsail or douse sails.
- Consider the river currents and tidal currents and estimate the time to return to the marina. A quick ride to Alexandria on an ebb flow and north wind could mean a lengthy return trip.
- In gusty or strong winds, avoid excessive heeling or capsize by keeping the mainsheet un-cleated and ready to be eased.
- If the weather deteriorates, ensure that all crew are wearing life jackets.
- If the wind builds beyond reasonable limits of boat and crew, reduce sail or douse the sails.
- Return to the marina or seek a safe haven if the weather makes it unsafe to remain on the river.
- Report any suspicious vessels or behavior in or around the sailing area. Contact the DC Harbor Police on VHF channel 16, or call 911.

### 16 Landing and Un-Rigging

The boats must be returned to the slips at the end of the usage period. If another SCOW skipper has reserved time and is at the dock, the boat may be turned over to that person after verification that he/she is an authorized skipper. A skipper can be verified by asking them for the locker combination.

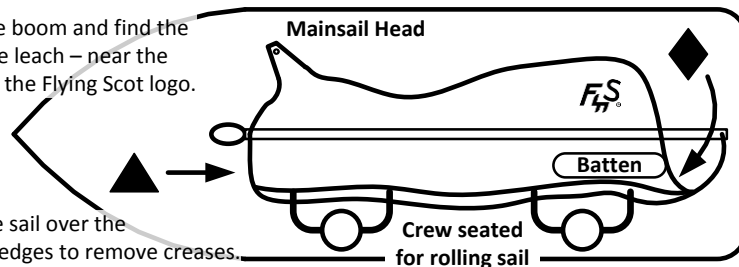
If the wind speed or wind direction indicates a difficult landing, consider dousing the main and approaching the docks under jib power alone. Also, consider dousing both sails while upwind, then paddling to the docks. If you douse the main while under way, place the boom crutch through the hole in the port seat – this permits a full arc of the tiller for steering.

- a) Brief the crew on the landing procedure and what their actions will be regarding sails/docking.
- b) Select a crew member to be prepared to take the bow line and secure the boat at the dock after landing.
- c) Select a dock and advise the crew which side of the boat will be next to the dock upon landing.
- d) Watch for other traffic and approach the selected dock.
- e) Luff the sails, but maintain steerage.
- f) Be prepared to turn away from the dock if necessary. Have a crew member ready to backwind the jib to assist in turning.
- g) Land at an outside edge of the end of the dock. Sailing/landing between the docks is not permitted.
- h) When the boat slows sufficiently, have the designated crew member step onto the dock and secure the bow line.
- i) Walk the boat away from the end of the dock to the lee side and secure the bow line to a horn cleat
- j) Lower the jib sail.
- k) Place the boom crutch through the aft deck fitting.
- l) Lower the mainsail to the starboard side of the boom and have a crew ease the boom into the crutch.
- m) Secure the main halyard to the bail on the mast. Gently crank the slack onto the winch, and latch it.
- n) Un-hank the jib, roll it from head to foot, release the jib tack, pull the jib sail bag onto the sail (tack first), and stow the sail bag onboard.
- o) Secure the jib halyard to the jib tack shackle at the bow. Gently crank the slack onto the winch, and latch.



p) Roll the mainsail to the boom.

- 1) With crew on the port side, reach over the boom and find the triangle at the luff, and the diamond at the leach – near the batten, above the sail number, and below the Flying Scot logo.
- 2) Grab the sail at these two symbols and pull it over the boom. This will create a fold that is parallel with the batten.
- 3) Starting at the fold, roll the sail. Pull loose sail over the boom as you roll. As needed, tug the sail edges to remove creases.
- 4) Secure the rolled sail to the port side of the boom (to keep the sail clear of the hardware on the starboard side).  
Sail ties – one near the gooseneck, one mid-boom, and one near the aft end of the boom.



- q) Cleat the main sheet with light tension only, dress the line and hang it from the boom.
- r) Raise the centerboard, cleat the centerboard line, dress the line and hang it from the centerboard cleat.
- s) Pass the hoisting bridle over the boom and attach to the tang on the aft end of the centerboard trunk.
- t) Secure the tiller to the starboard side of the boom crutch.
- u) Raise the rudder (or wait until after the boat is hauled out and secured to the trailer).
- v) Remove remaining personal gear and trash.
- w) Stow on-board gear out of sight, but keep the boat hook available on a seat.

## 17 Hauling-out and Securing

- a) Position the trailer at the crane, as in launching, but leave enough room for crew movement at the seawall.
- b) Move the boat to the crane. One crew member should remain in the boat to fend off with the boat hook.
- c) Orient the boat so the bow is pointing away from the crane.
- d) Attach the crane hook to the hoisting bridle and raise the hook just enough to reduce slack. Ensure the bridle is not fouled on the centerboard cap, boom hardware, or furled mainsail.
- e) Leave the boat hook on a seat so it can be used later to reach the crane hook.
- f) Have the crew exit the boat and climb up the seawall.
- g) Have a crew member maintain control of the bow line.
- h) Lift the boat out of the water. Control the bow line and shroud to keep the boat clear of the seawall.
- i) Push the trailer to the concrete bumper.
- j) With the bow line, pull the boat over the trailer.
- k) Attach the trailer winch hook to the bow eye and winch it toward the trailer fork, but leave some slack.
- l) Lower the boat onto the trailer while a crew member centers the keel above the trailer's keel rollers.
- m) Winch the boat forward until the bow rests gently in the trailer fork.
- n) Secure the boat to the trailer with the tie-down (aka belly band) strap.
- o) Slacken the crane's chain.
- p) Detach the crane hook and raise it above head height (the boat hook can bring the hook within reach).
- q) Raise the rudder (if you chose not to raise it when the boat was still in the water).
- r) Secure the crane boom line.
- s) Move the boat to a level part of the wash area.
- t) Clean out the interior – remove trash and personal items.
- u) Remove the drain plug.
- v) Wash the decks, topsides and bottom of the hull. Scrub off any hull scuff marks (cleaning kit in the sail locker).
- w) Pivot the boat up if necessary and allow the water to drain out.
- x) Move the boat (stern first) into the dry slip.
- y) Place chocks in front and behind the wheels.
- z) Lock the boat to the trailer.
- aa) Unroll the boat cover over the boom, and secure to the mast and to the eye bolts along the trailer frame.
- bb) Make any simple repairs. Report completed repairs and outstanding maintenance issues/repairs to the Flying Scot maintenance director ([scotmaint@scow.org](mailto:scotmaint@scow.org)) and to the boat bosun.
- cc) If the boat needs to be taken out of service, notify those holding reservations for the boat.
- dd) Return the boat safety kit to the sail locker, as well as any spinnaker and pole.
- ee) Complete the log, including maintenance notes.
- ff) Secure the locker and move the dials away from combination settings.

See *Pre-Launching Procedures* for climbing into the boat





## 18 Shallows and Un-Grounding

The understanding of shallow-water locations is one of the most important components of a SCOW skipper's local knowledge. Our sailing waters become shallower each year as silt settles into this wider and slower tidal portion of the Potomac. The skipper must have constant awareness of shallow areas, particularly at the lower-than-average spring tides that occur around the new and full moons. The aids to navigation mark only a small portion of the many shallow areas in these DC waters.

The shoal next to the main river channel (between the Navy pier and the airport pier) is hard and gravelly, and the centerboard will make noise if you stray into this area at low tide. The shallow area in front of the marina's restaurant also has a hard bottom. Most of the remaining shallows are soft, and there is little or no warning as the boat eases to a firm stop on the muddy bottom.

The Flying Scot's draft is 4 feet with the centerboard down, and 8 inches when the board and rudder are raised.

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Do not exit the boat to attempt an un-grounding. The soft mud may allow you to sink up to your hips, and the suction will prevent an unassisted escape. There are biological and chemical hazards in the water and sediments.

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Quick awareness and reaction can save you from going hard aground. Almost simultaneously you will need to change course, raise the centerboard just enough to clear the shallow, and trim the sails.

### 18.1 Un-grounding from the Windward Side of a Shallow

If you go aground while sailing downwind, the wrong response will put you farther into the shallows and harder aground.

- Luff the sails (head up if necessary).
- Evaluate the conditions and options. As long as the boat isn't moving, you have time. Better to take a minute – or five – than to take the wrong action and make the situation worse.
- Carefully brief the crew on what to do and exactly when to do it. When the centerboard comes up, everything happens quickly.
- If necessary to complete the turn, raise the centerboard slightly – but don't raise it any more than necessary. Once in deep water, lower the centerboard.
- If the bow is close to crossing the wind, backwind the jib to complete a tack away from the shallows.
- If the bow is not close to tacking, luff the jib, and sheet in the main to help pivot and turn the boat.
- As the bow approaches the wind, it may be useful to backwind the jib to help the boat tack.
- If the boat cannot be un-grounded, douse the sails, raise the centerboard further and paddle to deeper water.
- If paddling does not work, and no other vessel is available to assist, try kedging. First, pass the anchor line through the bow eye and tie it to the bridle bolt (where the forward end of the lifting bridle is attached). With great care, throw the anchor toward deeper water. Be very careful to keep the anchor clear of crew and boat. Pull the boat to deeper water, and repeat the kedging as needed.
- If still aground, place the anchor toward deep water and wait for the tide to rise.

### 18.2 Un-grounding from the Leeward side of a Shallow

If you go aground while sailing upwind, it is generally easier to un-ground and sail away.

- Luff the sails (head up if necessary).
- Evaluate the conditions and options. As long as the boat isn't moving, you have time. Better to take a minute – or five – than to take the wrong action and make the situation worse.
- Carefully brief the crew on what to do and exactly when to do it. When the centerboard comes up, everything happens quickly.
- Attempt a turn or tack toward deep water.
- If necessary to complete the turn, raise the centerboard slightly – but don't raise it any more than necessary.
- If still aground, ease the main and backwind the jib (have crew grasp the clew and push it out as far as possible).
- Lower the centerboard once the boat is safely in deeper water.



## 19 Reefing Procedure

Safe sailing of our Flying Scots requires skippers to be able to reef the mainsail. Practice reefing when you do not need to reef so you will be prepared to quickly and safely reef when necessary.

If you are even considering whether to reef before you depart, then reef the main before casting-off. It is much easier to reef at the dock, and you can easily shake-out the reef while underway. If there is the potential of pushing SCOW's policy on wind limits, or pushing your own limits, cancel the reservation.

An alternate reefing procedure follows this procedure.

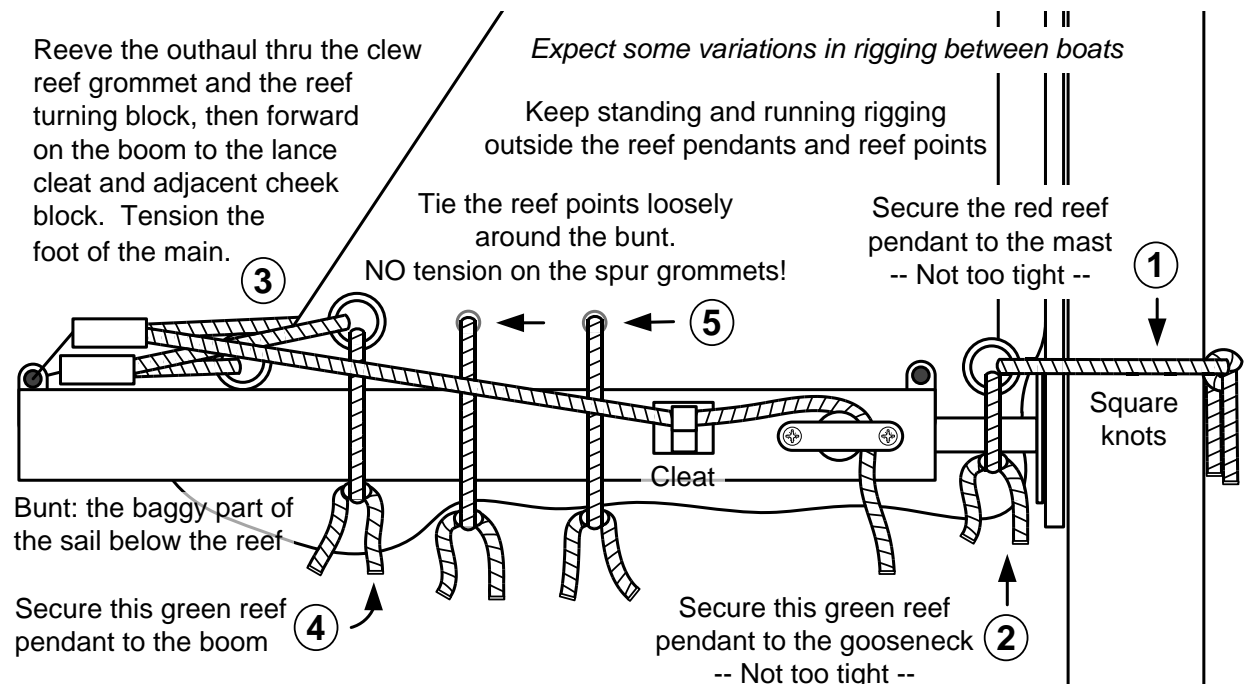
While underway, an alternative to reefing is to douse the mainsail and sail under jib alone.

### 19.1 Prepare the Mainsail for Reefing While Underway

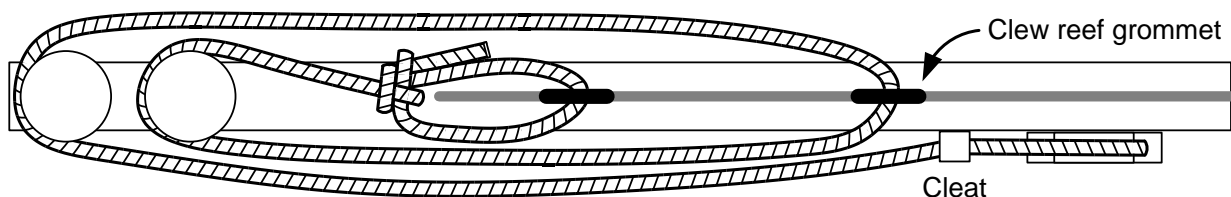
- a) Head into the wind, luff the sails and un-cleat the sheets and boom vang.
- b) Lower the main while supporting the boom, and leave the head in the mast slot; latch the main halyard.
- c) You may sail under jib alone while reefing. This will help maintain control and keep the jib from flogging.
- d) Un-cleat, then un-reeve the outhaul from the lance cleat on the starboard side of the boom. Do not remove the outhaul from the turning block at the end of the boom.

### 19.2 Reefing the Mainsail

The objective is to secure the reef tack forward and down, then the reef clew aft and down, in that order. Pre-rigged reefing pendants are attached to the reef tack and reef clew grommets.



Detail of the outhaul path (from above)



Hoist the main, support the boom, tension and cleat the main halyard, adjust the boom vang, and get underway.



### 19.3 An Alternate Reefing Method for the Clew Reef

- a) The outhaul stays in place.
- b) Secure the reef tack, as in the diagram above.
- c) Retrieve the reefing line from the aft cubby. It will have a loop knot at one end.
- d) Pass the loop end through the clew reef until the knot is just on the other side of the clew.
- e) Pass the standing end through the spare turning block at the end of the boom.
- f) Pass the standing end through the loop, pull aft to tension, then secure with a couple of half hitches.
- g) Secure the green reef pendant to the boom, then loosely tie the reef points.

## 20 Capsize Response

A capsize must be reported per the SCOW Incident Reporting Policy.

To prevent capsize, be prepared:

- Do not sail in winds beyond SCOW policy or your ability (recognize that skipper/crew ability and physiology are not a constant – strength and mental acuity are variable).
- Reduce sail area by reefing.
- Slacken the sheets in gusts, keep the sheets un-cleated.
- Head up (steer to windward).
- Balance the boat by shifting crew weight (to the windward side if necessary).
- Keep the centerboard fully lowered in windy conditions.

In some capsizes, it may be possible for crew still in the boat to right the boat by releasing the sheets and having one person climb over the gunwale and stand on the centerboard. But be cautious of slippery surfaces.

If capsized in a shallow area, do not stand on the river bottom. You can easily get stuck in the mud and drown. This has happened in the local Potomac waters.

Following are general procedures:

- a) Do not attempt to swim for shore!
- b) Stay with the boat and check immediately for the safety of the crew.
- c) Account for all crew members.
- d) Have a crew member retrieve life vests from under the seats and pass them out for all crew to wear.
- e) The Flying Scot mast is designed to float, at least for awhile. If the throwable cushion or a extra life vest is available, have a crew member take it, swim out and place it under the top of the mast. This will prevent the boat from turning turtle (completely upside down). The same crew member may be able to point the bow to windward by pushing on the top of the mast.
- f) Release the sheets. If you don't release the sheets, the boat may sail away from you when it rights. Pull slack in the main sheet to be sure the boom can move freely. Wet lines do not run freely.
- g) Point the bow to windward.
- h) Have a crew member swim around the boat to the centerboard and verbally confirm that they are holding on and ready.
- i) While hanging from the centerboard, apply steady weight and be patient. There may be a lot of water to spill from the sails, and the boat should start to right very slowly at first, then quickly become upright.
- j) When the boat has been righted, crew members can begin re-boarding via the stern ladder.
- k) Check for injuries and apply/improvise first aid.
- l) Bail as necessary. If substantial water has entered the boat, rapid bailing will be needed, and it may take a long time before the boat is ready to be sailed. If you attempt to sail a partially swamped boat, any heeling may allow more water to wash in. It may be necessary to stuff clothing or life jackets in the slot at the top of the centerboard trunk.
- m) Check for damage that would prevent the boat from being sailed, and make/improvise repairs
- n) All water must be bailed before hauling-out at the crane. Do not attempt to haul out if water remains – the load may exceed the limits of the hardware and hull.
- o) Notify the maintenance director of the capsize. Be sure to record the incident in the log.



Use your best judgment if other vessels approach to assist. Safety of the crew is the first priority. If the capsize occurs in a busy channel, a nearby boat may be agreeable to stand on-station to increase visibility of the situation.

A Flying Scot is designed to prevent water from entering after a capsize, if the boat does not turtle. The seats effectively form a barrier, but if crew remain inside the boat, there may be enough weight to submerge the boat enough to allow water to flow over the seat deck.

If the boat capsizes while the centerboard is up, it will turtle fairly quickly. For this case it's important for a crew to take a throwable cushion, swim out to the top of the mast, and place the cushion under the mast.

## Comments and Suggestions

The Training and Skipper Certification Committee welcomes your suggestions for future revisions of this document. Send us an email at SCOW-TSCC@scow.org or talk to us down at the docks.

## 21 Resources and References

Reserve a boat with *SCOW Reservations*: [https://scowreg.herokuapp.com/user\\_session/new](https://scowreg.herokuapp.com/user_session/new)

SCOW boat reservation email (for problems or questions): [reservations@scow.org](mailto:reservations@scow.org)

SCOW Maintenance Director: [scotmaint@scow.org](mailto:scotmaint@scow.org)

SCOW Skipper Requirements, Boat Use Policy, Washington Sailing Marina regulations: [www.scow.org/bylaws](http://www.scow.org/bylaws)

Washington Sailing marina office: (703) 548-9027 <http://www.washingtonsailingmarina.com>

The Flying Scot Company: [www.flyingscot.com](http://www.flyingscot.com)

BoatU.S. VHF Basics: <http://www.boatus.com/boattech/casey/vhf-basics.asp>

Knots: <http://www.animatedknots.com/>

### 21.1 Weather and Tides

NOAA local Potomac River marine forecast: <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS51.KLWX.html>

NOAA forecast, National Airport: <https://www.weather.gov/>, and enter *DCA* for the location.

NOAA forecast: Marine VHF WX channel 5

WJLA weather radar: <https://wjla.com/weather/radar>

Weather Underground: <https://www.wunderground.com/>

Lightning locator: <http://lightning.nsstc.nasa.gov/lma/dclma/>

NOAA local tides at Washington Channel: <http://www.tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/stationhome.html?id=8594900>

River flow at Little Falls:

[https://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/uv?cb\\_00060=on&format=gif\\_stats&site\\_no=01646500&period=7&begin\\_date=&end\\_date](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/md/nwis/uv?cb_00060=on&format=gif_stats&site_no=01646500&period=7&begin_date=&end_date)

National Weather Service marine forecast and tides: 703-996-2200, options 1-2-1-1

National Airport hourly weather observations: <http://w1.weather.gov/data/obhistory/KDCA.html>

National Airport ATIS: 703-419-3917 (includes local wind speed and direction)

Buoy data near National Harbor: <https://buoybay.noaa.gov/locations/upper-potomac>

### 21.2 Navigation

NOAA local river chart: [http://www.charts.noaa.gov/OnLineViewer/12285\\_01.shtml](http://www.charts.noaa.gov/OnLineViewer/12285_01.shtml)

NOAA local river booklet chart: [http://www.charts.noaa.gov/BookletChart/12289\\_BookletChart.pdf](http://www.charts.noaa.gov/BookletChart/12289_BookletChart.pdf)

### 21.3 Other Websites and Apps

Smartphone Apps are generally designed to be easy to use. However, when the wind picks up, it may be difficult to look at your phone and sail at the same time (distracted sailing is like distracted driving). Before you go out, be prepared to complete your sail without using your phone. Besides, your phone may get wet or the battery may die.

Apps to consider: Local weather apps, AeroWeather Light, MyRadar, NOAA Radar Pro, RadarScope, Storm Radar, Navigation and Charts (Navionics), Windy, WindFinder, SailFlow, Marine Traffic, Tide Charts Near Me, TideTrac, Storm Shield, and American Sailing Association.