



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Addendum to

Guidance for Event Organisers of

Offshore Yacht Races

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Disclaimer

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World Sailing (WS) is the world governing body for the sport of sailing recognized by the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

The creation of the International Yacht Racing Union (IYRU) began in 1904, This group went on to adopt a formal Constitution after a meeting at the Yacht Club de France in Paris on 14 October 1907 which is seen as the formation date of the International Yacht Racing Union.

On 5 August 1996, the IYRU changed its name to the International Sailing Federation (ISAF).

On 14 November 2015, ISAF changed its name to World Sailing.

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1. Introduction

In response to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, this Guidance has been produced by the World Sailing (WS) to support event Organisers off offshore yacht races. These guidelines are addendum to *WS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Event Organisers for the Protection of the Health of Sailing Communities (CVGEO)* available at: <https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php> and **should be not** used without following the recommendations provided in the main document.

The postponement of the majority of international large mass gatherings gave the public health authorities, and all sectors involved in the organisation and provision of the events, additional time to mitigate the risks reasoned by and following the evolution of COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, World Sailing is focused on assisting sailing communities in the delivery of planned sailing events safe.

As part of our ongoing efforts to keep our athletes informed on the impact of COVID-19, World Sailing continues to publish all latest updates and health advice on the World Sailing website. It is also recommended to use these guidelines alongside the *World Sailing Medical Action Plan (MAP)* and *World Sailing Medical Response Recommendation for Event Organisers*, also available at <https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php>.

The World Sailing Medical Commission is grateful for all support received from International organizations, agencies, and other various parties in preparation of these guidance.

2. Summary of World Sailing Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Event Organisers (CVGEO)

During COVID-19 pandemic many governments have introduced international, national and local movement restrictions and race Organisers may have little choice but to adhere to these various restrictions due to the serious concerns regarding COVID-19 and the potential risk to public health. However, it is very important for race Organisers to accept responsibility for all members of the entire team (both athletes and supporting personnel), and to manage all suspected cases of infection, as it is difficult to control an outbreak which will endanger others (P6. CVGEO). Human-to-human transmission of COVID-19 is understood to occur primarily through surface contamination and airborne droplets from a person with COVID-19, whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic. When someone infected with a respiratory disease, such as COVID-19, coughs or sneezes, they project small droplets containing the virus into the air, which land on all surfaces surrounding the person, including hands and clothing. Nearby people can contract COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth, thereby transferring the virus to their body via mucosal surfaces. People may also catch COVID-19 if they inhale infected droplets directly. Standard infection prevention and control (IPC) measures emphasise the significant importance of hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette for every person and general hygiene (P.24. CVGEO).

Major international sporting events like the major sailing regattas, consider as a *mass gatherings*. However, lower profile sailing events may also meet WHO's definition of a *mass gathering*. **An event counts as a *mass gathering* if the number of people it brings together is so large that it has the potential to strain the planning and response resources of the health system in the community where it takes place** (*Public Health for Mass Gatherings: Key Considerations, available at: https://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO_HSE_GCR_2015.5/en/*). Before the event, consult with your Public Health Authorities should your event be considered as *mass gathering*

event. Every *mass gathering* requires thorough planning, coordination and communication event organizer's medical support team and host country Public Health Authorities need to be informed and prepared in advance. (P.11. CVGEO)

Until the officially announced end of the COVID-19 outbreak, event Organisers are advised to provide all participants with general information on COVID-19 and its preventive measures and implement pre-event and during-the-event screening and mitigation measures (P.22. CVGEO). Pre-travel and pre-event health checks for all incoming participants and local organizing crew are highly encouraged (and may be mandatory) to ensure exclusion of those with potential additional risks to COVID-19 (such as co-morbidities, medications, age above 65 years). All participants should provide a filled in sample of the pre-event Athlete Location Form (PLF). The purpose of the PLF is to identify incoming event participants who may need to have their participation deferred, to ensure proper case management by competent health authorities (see Table on P. 13). Provision of the *athlete individual prevention package* to all participants should be considered. Such a package could consist of:

- Personal packages of disposable tissues and plastic bags for tissue disposal;
- Small laminated prevention card with key reporting information;
- Surgical face masks to wear if they develop symptoms of possible Covid-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath);
- Personal packages of an alcohol-based hand wipes, hand sanitizer;
- Personal package of disposable plastic drinking cups;
- Thermometer (digital oral or tympanic).

Otherwise, organisers should consider providing each team with an infra-red non-contact thermometer and a recording sheet/link for daily documentation of athletes' temperatures (to be reported regularly to the Chief Medical Officer). (P.36. CVGEO).

A risk communication strategy for COVID-19 should be developed before the event. It is expected that such events will draw significant media attention, and a well-prepared risk

strategy published, distributed in good time prior to the event, will minimise inaccurate news reports and misleading social media stories (P.23. CVGEO).

After the event finishes and participants have departed to their home countries, Organisers should immediately review management of the event, including things that went particularly well, and all potentially high-risk incidents. The Organisers should decide on any follow-up actions that are necessary. (P.37.CVGEO)

3. Risk Assessment of Offshore Yacht Races

Risk assessment for each event is a key element in prioritising planning. It is a continuous process that should persist throughout the period leading up to the event and continue during the event itself ending only after all participants have departed after the finish of the event and post-event measures are implemented if needed. **Read carefully Chapter 5, P. 12. of CVGEO.**

Sailing events in dinghies are usually assessed to be in the *Very Low* and *Low* risk score category, whereas offshore yacht racing events may well be assessed to be a *Moderate*, *High* or even *Very High-risk* activity.

World Sailings advises you to conduct the event only if it falls in *Very Low* or *Low* risk category

Several specific features of dinghy sailing events that are inherent to the sport (or can be altered in some way) make sailing events safe for participants, whereas conditions in offshore yacht racing have significant potential for increasing the risk of respiratory virus transmission and thus significant risk to health of the crews.

The key elements that increase the safety of sailing in dinghies, include the natural physical distancing of single-handed sailing, or sailing in long-term two- or three-person partnerships, and other preventive measures that can be enforced in a controlled environment that encompasses a limited number of people. Unfortunately, on offshore racing yachts, the key element of COVID-19 prevention such as physical distancing is missing. Yacht crew may number more than twenty and spend a significant amount of time in close proximity, sharing a very limited working and living space. Risk escalates with increasing number of crew members, and race distance and time that boats spend offshore with limited access to medical help onshore. However, some factors that can create risk in

other *mass gatherings*, are either naturally absent, or can be easily avoided in the sport of offshore sailing:

- Low density or no-crowd policies,
- An outdoor field of play;
- Absence of direct contact with spectators and referees;
- Layout of the meeting venue;
- Access to only registered participants;
- A naturally young age spectrum of participants;
- Dispersed housing where teams are renting their own (dispersed) accommodation or teams have accommodation on their boats;
- Individual catering;
- Mode of travel (cars/vans with the trailers) or coming directly to start of the race by boats.

These factors naturally increase the safety of offshore sailing events.

Offshore races vary widely both in terms of time at sea, and distance from help. Given the variation in incubation of Covid-19 (5 – 14 days or more), for longer races, there is a distinct possibility that a new case of Covid-19 may become symptomatic offshore. For shorter races, crew may have returned home before becoming symptomatic. Thus, Race Organisers need to have policies for risk mitigation to cover these eventualities, and to also reduce the risk of crew becoming symptomatic offshore.

Therefore, these guidelines are referring to specific classes of offshore events as defined in the *World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations* governing offshore racing for monohulls (Mo) & multihulls (Mu):

Category 0 MoMu 0* - Trans-oceanic races, including races which pass through areas in which air or sea temperatures are likely to be less than 5°C (41°F) other than temporarily, where boats must be completely self-sufficient for very extended periods of time, capable of withstanding heavy storms and prepared to meet serious emergencies without the expectation of outside assistance.

- Category 1** MoMu1 - Races of long distance and well offshore, where boats must be completely self-sufficient for extended periods of time, capable of withstanding heavy storms and prepared to meet serious emergencies without the expectation of outside assistance.
- Category 2** MoMu2 - Races of extended duration along or not far removed from shorelines or in large unprotected bays or lakes, where a high degree of self-sufficiency is required of the boats.
- Category 3** MoMu3 - Races across open water, most of which is relatively protected or close to shorelines.
- Category 4** MoMu4 - Short races, close to shore in relatively warm or protected waters normally held in daylight.

**Monohull/ Multihull*

In each case, the risk should be considered in the context of the known features of COVID-19, its severity, its transmissibility and the effectiveness of measures to prevent or reduce transmission in the context of the category of the race you are organizing.

In order to conduct a risk assessment of an event, it is recommended to use the WHO risk assessment tool - *Risk Assessment and Mitigation Measures Checklist for Mass Gatherings in the context of COVID-19 (WHO)*, available at <https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php>. It includes the key risk factors for consideration in sporting events, which all need to be considered, together with the mitigation measures checklist provided. Follow the document in detail, and use *WHO COVID-19 Sports MG Risk Assessment Matrix* Excel file with decision matrix for final determination of risk available at: <https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php>

These resources and structured approach will enable a comprehensive review of the key considerations for hosting and/or modification of the event, and thus inform your risk assessment results of COVID-19 for the event with counterparts and community.

Offshore sailing events can be classified in several categories:

- *Low Risk Category* - held in a single venue – start and return in the same port and with only domestic sailors;
- *Moderate risk* - includes several international ports of call and international crews;
- *High risk category* - large number of crew who inevitably spend significant time below-deck - sleeping, resting, eating, etc.

Although sailing is a predominantly outdoor sport, long-distance offshore sailing involves significant 'indoor' time with close contact, and thus according to item No 6. in the Risk Assessment table of the *Risk matrix*, there is a *High risk* of transmission.

Some risk mitigation measures like regular cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and hand hygiene can be very difficult to perform properly in offshore sailing conditions. All these elements must be considered in the risk calculation. Similarly, as with risk mitigation measures, other aspects of control of risk are impractical offshore – for instance, ambulance and first aid services. Isolation in the case of a suspected Covid-19 case on board a racing yacht, is impossible to achieve.

The COVID-19 risk assessment for the event must be coordinated and integrated with the host country's national COVID-19 risk assessment policy and should include input from the local Public Health Authority. Consultation should take place with WHO's updated technical guidance and ensuring that there is an up-to-date evaluation of the epidemiological situation.

4. COVID-19 Contingency Medical Response Plan for Offshore Yacht Races

The COVID-19 Contingency Medical Response plan should be developed to mitigate the risks identified by the event risk assessment. Elite sport is a very controlled environment and Race Organisers should develop a COVID-19 Contingency Medical Response Plan in a comprehensive manner.

All risk mitigation requirements for participants should be clearly stated in the Notice of Race (NOR). The NOR should also spell out the procedure for excluding if, any time prior to, or after the start, a sailor experiences Covid-19 symptom. A time period prior to race start will need to be specified for a crew to be symptom-free.

Some mitigation measures will be addressed to the Public Health Authorities to deliver, some the responsibility of the event medical services and some the responsibility of the teams. COVID-19 Contingency plan should specify who is responsible for delivering specific actions, the timescale for delivery, and how and by whom delivery will be assessed and confirmed. When developing the COVID-19 Contingency Medical Response Plan, Event Organisers should also take into consideration the *World Sailing Medical Action Plan* and *World Sailing Guidance for Medical Support at Designated Regattas* (<https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php>)

When developing the COVID-19 Contingency Medical Response Plan for your offshore event you should start with the *WS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Event Organisers for the Protection of the Health of Sailing Communities (CVGEO)* available at: <https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php>.

Commence by fulfilling their requests, and then progress to the guidelines presented in this addendum for offshore racing.

The action plan should identify which mitigation measures can be put in place to manage risk and reduce either the probability or impact of an adverse event. Based on the risk evaluation, options should be determined for addressing each risk. World Sailing recommends you consider and apply if appropriate, the risk mitigation measures described in CVGEO and include them in your COVID-19 Contingency Medical Response plan for offshore yacht races.

However, due to specific conditions on board offshore yachts, the following mitigation measures should be considered:

Mitigation measures		Category of the race				
		0	1	2	3	4
A	Limited number of the crew			X*	X	X
B	Age cut off limit at 65 years			X*	X	X
C	Statement of health			X	X	X
D	Health screening	X	X	X	X	X
E	Fitness examination	X	X			
F	SARS CoV-2 testing of the crew	X	X	X**		
G	Isolation before the race	X	X			
H	Health monitoring during the race	X	X	X	X	X
I	Direct arrival to the start of the race				X	X

* if not tested

** if not tested than age cut of limit of 65 years and limited number of the crew

A. Limited number of the crew

Careful attention should be paid to reducing the number of crew to the minimum safe level for the race in question. Distribution of crew above and below decks should also be carefully considered, to maximise distance in admittedly challenging circumstances. **If boat is not of the construction that enables safe sailing with reduced number of the crew, it should not participate in the race and race Organisers should not allow it to participate.** Race Organisers also have option to

put in place another measure that can make sailing with reduce crews safer (e.g. choice of sails on board to be used in the race, autopilot, roller furling, etc).

B. Age restriction to participate in the race

Older people with underling medical conditions are more prone to COVID-19 complications than young people, therefore they should be prohibited from participating in the race in order to protect their health.

C. Statement of health

People with underling medical conditions or taking medical therapy that potentially compromises the immune system (e.g. Diabetes, immunological impairments, etc.) are more prone to COVID-19 complications, therefore they should be prohibited from participating in the race in order to protect their health. All participants **should provide statements** endorsed by their family doctor about their health status and any underlying medical conditions.

D. Health screening

Race Organisers should consider undertaking health checks during the pre-start period, for COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever, difficulty of breathing). It should be organised in the port(s) before embarkation.

E. Fitness examination

All crews embarking on offshore race in *Category 0 or 1*, should have comprehensive pre-embarkation fitness examination to exclude the risk of severe COVID-19 complications.

F. SARS CoV-2 testing of the crew.

All crew should undergo two consecutive RT-qPCR COVID-19 pharyngeal swabs over a 5-day interval. This is of importance due to the long virus incubation period which is estimated for COVID-19 to be up to five days. However, it has been noted that time from exposure to onset of infectiousness (latent period) may be shorter than the

incubation period. Therefore, it is essential to do two subsequent tests during the proposed period. The second test should be taken on the day of the race (if test results are available the same day) or the day before if results take longer to become available. It is mandatory for all test results to be available before the start of the race, and both test results must be negative.

G. Self-Isolation before the race

Crews embarking on 0 and 1 class races should be isolated for 14 days before the race. Isolation can be organized in a sailing camp or even on-board but must follow strict measures to prevent transmission of the virus to self-isolated crew (contact with outside individuals, safe distribution of supplies, food, reporting of health status to CMO, etc.). The same measures of isolation should be strictly observed in all ports-of-call after each leg of the race and crew should be re-tested with two tests over a period of 5 days.

H. Health monitoring during the race

The health of the crew should be monitored throughout the race. All teams should take crew member's temperatures each day and any temperature above normal and symptoms of respiratory illness should be reported to the Chief medical Officer (CMO) of the race.

I. Direct arrival to the start of the race

To avoid overcrowding in ports and marinas, and to avoid contact among the members of different crews, Race Organisers should limit access to marina/port for boats participating in the race, except for safety reasons (such as yachts requiring repair or evacuation). The same rule applies for all port-of-call, particularly including at the start and finish.

Race Organisers should consider whether the event could be modified in some way, such as: Number of competitors, Number of crew per yacht, Route Management of ports-of-call.

5. Surveillance and Management of COVID-19 Case on Board Yachts in Offshore Races

Race Organisers should put in place an appropriate medical support plan which follows the guidelines presented in *World Sailing Medical Action Plan (MAP)* and *World Sailing Medical Response for Event Organisers Recommendation*, available at: <https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php>. World Sailing have published three key documents (Position papers) with criteria that should be met in putting in place medical support for offshore yacht races: *Medical Kit Inventory*, *Medical Training* and *Telemedical Advice Service (TMAS)* accessible at: <https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php>.

Race Organisers should require that sufficient quantity of PPE equipment (masks, gloves) is on board each boat, considering factors such as length of race, size of yacht and number of crew.

As advised in the World Sailing guidance documents, race organisers should provide an arrangement for support from a Telemedical Advice Service (TMAS). The TMAS used by individual yachts should be coordinated with the Race Organisers, the content of the medical kit on board the yacht, the medical manual used by the crew, and the also the medical training received by the crew. The race organisers should make arrangements that any contracted TMAS provider can interact and coordinate with Rescue Coordination Centres (such as MRCCs, JRCCs, etc.) or the SOLAS regionally responsible TMAS service, and also with the local Public Health Authorities.

Surveillance on board

During the event, the aim of on-board health surveillance is to rapidly identify significant health-related incidents, communicate information to the Race Organisers and respond appropriately. Health of the crew should be monitored throughout the race. Race Organisers should ensure that their medical services, including designated medical providers on board of each boat, are able to identify and refer suspect cases of COVID-19. The

designated medical provider on board should have clear instructions on how to identify “trigger symptoms” of COVID-19 that should be reported immediately to CMO of the race. **If athletes or other participants develop fever, cough or difficulty breathing during the event, it is important to seek medical attention promptly and notice the Race Organisers and/or the CMO.** The Race Organisers will inform Local Public Health Authorities at the next port-of-call of the suspect cases.

Suspected case of COVID-19 on board

If a crew member during the event is suspected to have COVID-19, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all health assessments, monitoring and support should be used by all medical care providers/designated medical person on board (mask and gloves). Critical activities in the event of a suspected COVID-19 case must include symptom control with anti-pyretic medicines, analgesia and appropriate hydration. In the confined space of the boat, person should be in the best possible way isolated below the deck and attended only by designated persons equipped with PPE. Suspect case must wear a surgical mask. Comprehensive yacht hygiene measures should be applied. If possible, (depending on the type of the race, boat, number of crew, possibility of evacuation) other members of the crew should avoid spending time below-deck without PPE.

Evacuation

It may become necessary to evacuate a crew member with suspected COVID-19 infection. This decision must be made jointly by the Medical Officer on board the yacht, the CMO, and the Race Organisers. The route and method of evacuation depends on the severity of symptoms (and hence degree of urgency), and the location of the yacht. The MRCC covering the area where the yacht is located will guide arrangements for evacuation.

All rescue personnel boarding the yacht must wear PPE, as in line with the guidelines of their organisation.

The Race Organisers will coordinate with the Local Public Health Authority at the location to where the crew member will be evacuated.

The Race Organisers may prohibit the yacht involved in the incident from continuing the race, particularly if:

- The race route becomes more isolated, as other crew may become symptomatic and possibly require evacuation;
- Other crew members are already symptomatic, but not requiring evacuation. This gives a period of time for the yacht to self-recover to a port of safety.

The event may be continued according to the pre-defined triggers defined in COVID-19 Contingency Medical Response Plan (P. 17. CVGEO), once the Public Health Authority has determined that public health measures have been completed successfully.

The World Sailing continues to be in close communication with the World Health Organisation (WHO) COVID-19 Mass Gathering Cell and the IOC Medical and Scientific Commission Games Group public health experts in order to closely monitor the dynamic of this pandemic and advised countermeasures. Please also do not hesitate to let us know if you would like to arrange any direct discussions between event Organisers or our medical officials. We also believe it is very important to provide the latest medical advice to athletes and their teams which we have loaded onto the World Sailing website: <https://www.sailing.org/medical/index.php>