



Offshore Yacht Racing Association

OYRA SEARCH AND RESCUE

It is imperative that you inform the Race Committee as soon as you retire from a race! The preferred way is to use your VHF Radio on the designated channel of the day. You can ask another boat to relay the message if you are out of range. Failing that, you must call the YRA answering service (415) 771-9500 and leave a message. Today most of us can call from the boat. If you can't call from the boat, use a land line as soon as you are ashore. This does not mean when you get home or before you sit down to watch TV! If you retired from the race due to equipment failure or injury, inform the USCG immediately and set up a radio check in schedule. Ask the USCG to inform the Race Committee so that we do not to report you as over-due.

Here is the scenario if you fail to report you have retired from a race. The RC will note your absence. They will then call the YRA answering service to confirm you have not yet reported your Did Not Finish (DNF). If you have not reported to the answering service, the PRO must then make the decision - give you more time or take the next step. The next step is to contact the YRA. Hopefully, the YRA will be able to provide additional emergency information related to your boat. (Your home phone number, the number of your Marina, the YC you belong to, etc.) A call is placed to the Harbormaster, your YC and your home. Someone will be asked go to your berth to see if the boat is there. Best case, yes the boat is there, congratulations, you have just received a DNE. No protest hearing necessary. Worst case, the boat is not there. At the same time, we are trying to locate you or someone who knows where you are. We call your YC and your home. If you are not at either place, a call is made to the USCG.

The first questions they ask is: "How many people are on board? Does everyone have a life vest? What is the experience level of the skipper and the crew? What color is the boat deck? What color is the hull? Where were they last seen? Where is the boat berthed? What is the license plate number of the skipper(s) vehicle?" We have answers to some, but not all of these questions from your PHRF certificate.

At this point, the USCG starts a Search and Rescue mission. They will first double check the marina, then, they try to contact you by VHF Radio. The USCG can reach us anywhere we race by VHF Radio. If they could not, EPIRB's would be required equipment. If they cannot contact you by radio, a boat will be launched. The search is usually started from your last known position. Other resources will be added to the S&R mission as required and available.

Below is some idea of what Search & Rescue costs the USCG:

Small boat \$ 5,000.00 per hour
 72 FT boat \$ 5,500.00 per hour
 Helicopter \$ 6,000.00 per hour

A typical search will last three hours using both a helicopter and boat. Here is an approximate, but conservative cost:

Administration	Lump Sum	=	\$ 1,500.00
Small boat	3 hours @ \$ 5,000.00	=	\$ 15,000.00
Helicopter	3 hours @ \$ 6,500.00	=	\$ 19,500.00
TOTAL COST			\$ 36,000.00

As you can see, we do NOT want to bother the Coast Guard unless it is a real emergency. Failure to communicate with the RC is not just an emergency. It is stupid and reckless! *It might also get you a bill from the Coast Guard.* YES, THEY CAN DO THAT.

Included in the Race Package is a Crew Sign-In Sheet. We encourage you to fill it out, in duplicate, for every race. Put one copy in a plastic folder and leave it at the dock. Take the other one with you. Remove the dock copy as soon as you return. If needed, the form will let us know we have a problem and allow us to act more rapidly.