



A2B Safety FAQ

I'm a sailor with a lot of miles, why do I need to conform to safety rules?

Although you may be an accomplished and experienced sailor, this is a race. Races between other boats require that there be some modicum of uniformity so that it is the skippers competing and not the boats. Similarly, these safety requirements are here to ensure that the boats conform to the same base-line safety standard. These rules are only the minimum requirement but have been debated and discussed at great length by ISAF, US Sailing, and the A2B race committee.

This is my first bluewater race, what can I expect?

A little bit of everything, but on a grander scale than what you might be used to.. Upwind, downwind, and beam reaches. Beautiful sunsets and rises. Beautiful and crappy weather. For most boats, it takes 24 hours to exit the Chesapeake Bay, and then 3 to 5 days to reach Bermuda.

How many boats in a "class"?

The Notice of Race ("NOR") defines a class as three or more of the same boats racing under the same rules.

What is PHRF, IRC, ORR and one-design?

These are types of classes. Performance Handicap Racing Formula ("PHRF"), IRC, and Offshore Racing Rule ("ORR") are rating and measurement systems designed to equalize different boat designs so that the crews can compete against one another. Taking the boat out of the equation is a lofty goal that is difficult to accomplish which is why there seem to be so many different rating rules. One-design is simply those boats of the same make (e.g. J120) that have their own class rules to achieve the same goal.

Will there be a Cruising Class?

Yes! It will be organized under the PHRF of the Chesapeake Bay rules for the Corinthian Class

Do you have to be a lawyer to understand the rules?

No. We've tried to make them as simple and easy to understand as possible, while making them as comprehensive as possible. That said, just like where you have a race when two sailboats are going in the same direction, similarly, when you have the same language that can be interpreted two different ways, you will have a lawyer.

How much is this going to cost me?

Not as much as you have probably been led to believe, if you review your needs and options carefully. Much of the equipment you buy and install for this race will serve to conform to other off-shore races. Certainly if you buy all new sails for this race, you will have those sails to use for one or two other races or for some extended cruising. Consider consulting with an A2B Mentor to get assistance and advice for your particular boat and circumstances.

I have a main with three reef points. Why do I need a storm trysail?

Just because you can reduce your mainsail to a small size does not mean you can necessarily control that sail independent of the boom. Keeping the boom out of the water in heavy seas while running is essential to controlling the boat in storm conditions. Because a trysail is attached to the mast only, it can be controlled independent of the boom.

Why do I need two manual bilge pumps? Where will I put the second one?

If you find yourself depending on your main manual pump, then a second pump will only help, especially if you find yourself at the outside range of search and rescue ("SAR") assets from the US or Bermuda. One pump located outside and one below, plumbed independently, will allow you more options for dewatering the boat in heavy weather.

Valise or Canister mount life-raft?

Valise is easier to rent. If you buy, consider a canister mount since the certification will be good for three years. Certification for a life-raft in a valise is usually good for only one year. Make sure you have considered a proper mounting solution for your boat before you buy.

What is a MOM and why should I consider it?

MOM = Man Overboard Module. It is an inflatable man-overboard kit that must be inspected periodically. A product that satisfies this requirement at a reasonable cost is the SOS Dan Buoy Man Overboard Marker.

Do I need to install AIS?

No. The A2BSERs will not require AIS. As a safety tool, however, it is recommended.

How can I secure and open my entry hatch from both inside and outside? If you have a padlock tang that projects through the top hatch board for the padlock, use a quick-connect to secure it outside and replace the tang screw with a quick-connect pin for the inside.

What are the best options for emergency steering? Many have pre-drilled holes on a plywood interior locker cover (eg. under settee) that fit u-bolts for attachment to the spinnaker pole as an emergency rudder, along with a secure mounting point on the transom. Other options include rigging drogue lines, possibly with a bucket off a corner of the transom to induce drag to port or starboard.

What is a simple way to rig backup nav lights? Most boats already have deck mounted nav lights, and a battery switch for engine and house batteries. Consider adding a LED tri-color masthead nav light (with or without anchor light), which can run by either battery to meet the redundant nav light requirements. LED's save power, and masthead nav lights are more visible to distant ships, while deck nav lights are better for close-in traffic. Never run both sets of nav lights simultaneously.