



Mid-Fleet and Cruising Membership Guidelines and Policies

Welcome Courageous Cruising and Mid-Fleet Members! Cruising offers unique opportunities for learning and exploration on the water and we are very excited to provide these to the residents of greater Boston. Our guidelines and policies are designed to ensure the safety of our boats and our sailors. Please let us know if you have any questions about them. Your signed waiver indicates that you agree to abide by all Courageous rules, guidelines and policies.

Becoming a Member

There are many ways to become a Mid-Fleet/Cruising member. Some of our members start from scratch with Courageous and work their way up from Learn to Sail courses through Bareboat cruising; others come with comparable experience or having taken courses elsewhere. In all cases we work with everyone individually to determine their skills and knowledge, and help ensure the best, safest cruising experience for them.

Check-Out Process

Cruising Members

- All Cruising members must possess the skills and knowledge to qualify as a Courageous Green Flag or Blue Flag skipper.
- All new members must pass and submit the online [Green Flag exam](#) and [Blue Flag exam](#) (covers cruising boat-specific knowledge)
- All new members must send us a sailing resume and complete a 1-2 hour orientation and maneuvering checkout with a Courageous Instructor.
- Members who have passed a cruising course with Courageous will not need to submit a resume or undergo a secondary checkout upon successful completion of that course.
- Upon successful completion of these steps, members are considered to have a **Blue Flag**, meaning they can sail to the outer harbor and in heavier conditions on boats with an in-board engine. Use of smaller vessels in green flag conditions is dependent upon successful completion of a Green Flag on-the-water checkout.

Mid-Fleet Cruising Members

- All Mid-Fleet cruising members must possess the skills and knowledge to qualify as a Courageous Yellow Flag member on Rhodes 19's before completing an additional J80 orientation/check-out sail.
- Mid-Fleet Cruising members must complete an engine and docking clinic in addition to the orientation and check-out sail on the J80.

- Members who have passed a Performance course with Courageous **are not exempt** from the required engine clinic and vessel orientation sail.
- Members looking to sail past the Airport must first pass both the written Green Flag exam and an on-the-water Green Flag checkout (typically completed on a Rhodes 19).
- Adhere to all Courageous member policies and procedures as outlined in the Member Packet.
- In accordance with the policies and procedures laid out in the waiver, no alcohol is permitted on board and no sailor shall be under the influence while aboard.

Cruiser Flag Ratings

Blue Flag vs Green Flag

The traditional flag rating system at Courageous Sailing follows a progression from Red to Yellow to Green. To better serve members of the cruising fleet, we have introduced a new Blue Flag rating, specifically tailored for cruiser vessels. This rating allows for sailors to check-out on the cruisers only (if they wish to do so). Green Flag wind speed and ratings will apply to Blue Flag sailors.

All cruising members will undergo a check-out to obtain their Blue Flag rating.

Green Flags ratings are needed if sailors would like to use our fleet of J80's and R19s to access the outer harbor.

Use of J80s & R19s is dependent upon successful completion of check-outs on those additional vessels.

Blue Flag Skills for Cruiser Members

What is a Blue Flag rating?

The Blue Flag rating is Courageous' designation for sailors who have mastered the Inner Harbor and are ready to begin venturing further into the Outer Harbor under both sail and power. Blue Flag skippers demonstrate confidence in longer-distance trip planning, sail handling in stronger wind, basic engine use, anchoring, and emergency preparedness.

How do I earn my Blue Flag rating?

To earn a Blue Flag rating, you must:

- Pass the Red and Yellow and green flag written tests
- Pass an on-the-water cruising check-out (approx. 1.5 hours) that includes sail handling, engine operation, docking under power, and anchoring
- Complete a blue flag written test (approx. 1 hour, available in digital or print format)
- Submit and review a sample float plan

Schedule through the Courageous front desk. Your practical evaluation will take place between the Inner and Outer Harbor, and includes motoring, sailing, mooring, and anchoring practice.

What can I do with a Blue Flag rating (as a Courageous member)?

- Sail a cruising vessel into Outer Boston Harbor (Spectacle, Thompson, and Governor's Islands; not beyond Long Island or shipping channel)
- Operate vessels under sail and power, including docking, mooring, and motor cruising

- Operate cruising vessels in green flag rated wind conditions
- Anchor, pick up moorings, and tow a dinghy

What restrictions are associated with the Blue Flag rating?

A Blue Flag rating is a cruising rating only. If you intend to take out the J80's or Rhodes 19s, an additional checkout on those vessels is required and a flag rating will be assigned to you.

A Blue Flag rating *does not* grant automatic access to the outer harbor in the J80 or Rhodes 19 Fleet. Outer Harbor access on the J80s and R19s can be obtained through successful completion of the on-the-water green flag check-out and written exam.

What skills and knowledge do I need to earn a Blue Flag rating?

Sailing Maneuvers

- All Yellow Flag skills with consistency in 12–16 knot winds
- Reef/unreef mainsail while underway
- Heave-to; anchor under sail
- Pick up a mooring ball under sail or power
- Execute both Figure 8 and Quick Stop COB recoveries
- Motorsail with appropriate coordination of sail and throttle
- Change headsail while underway; select headsail for wind conditions
- Use winches properly; clear a fouled winch
- Wing-on-wing sailing and sail plan adjustments for stability in gusts
- Direct crew effectively during maneuvers

Engine Operation

- Start diesel and/or outboard engines correctly; confirm raw water is exiting the engine
- Open raw water seacock before starting a diesel engine
- Recognize signs of engine overheating or failure; describe steps to take in crowded or hazardous areas
- Identify proper RPM and throttle settings; shift gears smoothly and safely
- Understand refueling procedures, safe fuel storage, and ventilation needs
- Pump out holding tank safely; understand head system
- Troubleshoot basic electrical system, battery use, bilge pumps, and safety systems

Maneuvering Under Power

- Motor in close quarters with awareness of prop walk, glide zone, and windage
- Leave and approach docks in various wind/current conditions
- Approach and land on mooring balls
- Perform a COB recovery using life sling (if present)
- Raise sail under power and transition to full sailing
- Tow a dinghy safely

Navigation & Planning

- Plot and follow a basic course in Outer Harbor
- Use charts and visual aids for basic 2-point fixes

- Submit a basic float plan (include ETA, destination, and weather considerations)
- Plan for tides and current, particularly in channel and island approaches
- Identify safe harbors and shelter zones in moderate weather

Emergency Preparedness & Safety

- Use VHF: understand Mayday, Pan-Pan, Security calls
- Identify all safety and first aid equipment on board; know location of extinguishers, bilge pumps, etc.
- Heave a line accurately
- Operate manual and electric bilge pumps
Understand how to handle: grounding, loss of steerage, fouled prop
- Use of lifelines: purpose, limitations, and best practices

Docking, Mooring & General Maneuvers

- Use dock lines, fenders, and spring lines effectively when docking
- Execute fork moor, Bahamian moor, and fore-and-aft mooring (describe and/or demonstrate)
- Adjust and locate through-hull fittings
- Operate freshwater systems, alcohol stove, and grill (if applicable)

Green Flag Ratings for mid-fleet and Cruising Members

To earn your Green Flag rating, you must:

- Sail confidently single-handed in a Rhodes 19 in 18+ knot winds
- Anchor and perform emergency maneuvers solo
- Navigate in the Outer Harbor using chart skills
- Understand COLREGS boundary, light signals, and remote hazards
- [More information can be found here](#)

A green flag rating is needed for any mid-fleet or cruising member looking to take the J80s or R19's to the outer harbor.

Spinnaker use for Mid-Fleet

- Members interested in flying the spinnaker should attend a spinnaker clinic, Performance 2, and Spinnaker Practice
- Spinnaker access is limited to clinics, races, and programs lead by the Courageous team.

While we understand that many members are interested in free access to the Spinnakers, we are still working on a check-out process that would demonstrate both skipper and crew competency. Please check back with our team for updates.

Guidelines and Policies

Reservations

- Members should make reservations for a vessel through the Courageous Member Portal at least 24 hours in advance.
- To ensure equal and fair availability of vessels for all members, Cruising and Mid-Fleet Cruising members may not hold more than **two** reservations at a time.

Float Plans

Members must [submit a float plan](#) before sailing if they will be going past the Airport.

- Float plans must indicate if a vessel will be docked at any time while away from Courageous.
 - Docks can damage our boats. Any planned docking must be approved by Courageous staff ahead of time.
- Anchoring is only permitted in marked anchorages.
 - Vessels may **not** be left unattended while at anchor. At least one person must stay on the vessel at all times.
 - Vessels may not anchor at Lovells or Brewsters
 - Vessels must use moorings within a mooring field and may not anchor within a mooring field.
- Any changes to a float plan made while on the water must be communicated to Front Desk via phone or radio

Before Departing

Cruising Members

Our cruising fleet will be docked at Pier 4 for the 2025 season. There will be staff on Pier 4 who will supervise and facilitate operations for the cruising fleet, ensuring members and guests are prepared for their sail and assist them in departure and docking.

When Cruising members arrive at Pier 4 they should:

- Check in at the Front Desk (or Welcome Wagon during Youth Program hours)
- Retrieve life jackets for all crew
- Retrieve Yellow binder from the frontdesk
- Review their float plan with the front desk staff for final approval or adjustment
- Members are responsible for completing the [pre-sail](#) and [post-sail](#) checklists

Mid-Fleet Cruising Members

- When members arrive for their sail, they should check in at the Front Desk

Returning Your Vessel

- Members must check in with the Front Desk after they return, inspect the boat, and report any issues.
- Any damage to the vessel or equipment must be documented in the damage log immediately.
- Cruising Members are responsible for completing the [post-sail checklist](#) after returning to the dock and *before leaving Courageous*.

Standard Equipment for Boats

Members are responsible for checking their boats for necessary equipment before leaving for their sail.

Cruising Members

Each Cruising boat comes equipped with the following items in order to be USCG compliant and prepared for cruising in Boston Harbor. Please check for them before leaving the dock:

- Throwable Type IV PFD
- Fire Extinguisher x2
- Anchor & Rode
- Signal Horn
- Bucket
- Sealed Orange Safety Box containing:
 - Flares or electronic strobe & distress flag
 - Whistle
 - Cruiser Repair Kit
 - Spare engine parts
 - First Aid Kit
 - Emergency running lights
 - Wood plugs

Courageous can provide, given advance notice:

- Limited set of cutlery, pots, pans, and dishes
- Cleaning supplies
- A dinghy (details below)

Bring your own:

- Potable water
- Navigational tools

Mid-Fleet Members

Each Mid-Fleet Cruising boat comes equipped with the following items in order to be USCG compliant and prepared for cruising in Boston Harbor. Please check for them before leaving the dock:

- Pump
- Paddle
- Throwable Type 4
- Whistle
- Anchor
- A 1 gallon gas can- please retrieve this from the gas locker before departing

Dinghy Reservations

Courageous owns three dinghies that are available for cruisers to bring on sails.

- Overnight cruisers have priority for dinghy use - if, for example, a member takes a cruising boat out for a day sail, they may not bring a dinghy if another member is starting an overnight trip and has not explicitly turned down the use of a dinghy.

- Dinghies will not be automatically included in overnight reservations - members should additionally reserve them on the website to indicate the length of time they are needed.
- Dinghies may be reserved on planyo.
- Dinghies must be placed back on the dock after use.
- Dinghies will have a set of oars, a pump, and tow line - it is the responsibility of members to return all equipment.

Overnight Cruises

For "Full Cruising Membership" only

Overnight cruises are considered to be 2 days and one night aboard the vessel. Members looking to book an overnight cruise must first have completed a Bareboat course, Night-Sailing course, ASA equivalent, or provide a resume for review of prior cruising experience. Having an overnight reserved on the schedule accounts for BOTH allotted reservations for each member. No additional reservations may be held if an overnight cruise has been reserved.

Guidelines for overnight bookings

- Members looking to book an overnight may have no other reservations on the books. The 2 days of reservations that make up the overnight will constitute the full allocation of "2" per member.
- Courageous reserves the right to cancel overnights in the event of poor weather conditions in the forecast.
- In the event of an emergency, members are responsible for contacting Courageous directly and may be asked to contact sea-tow for assistance. This will be at the members expense.
- Each season, all cruising members that intend to do an overnight will email Leo (leo@courageoussailing.org) a sailing resume that outlines prior overnight experience and courses taken for us to have on file.

Steps for booking an overnight

1. The member will reserve their desired vessel for two consecutive days through the reservation system.
2. Members must email Leo (leo@courageoussailing.org) **2 weeks prior to the overnight** with the intended float plan.
3. Following review, Leo and/or the Courageous team may make recommendations about the cruise based upon forecast weather conditions.
 - a. All recommendations and/or changes must be heeded by the members.
 - b. An edited or finalized float plan is submitted to the Frontdesk
4. The cruising team will approve the overnight/deny request and email the Adult Program Director, member, and Front Desk when the reservation for an overnight has been approved.

Following an overnight members are asked to:

- Pump out and Fuel up the vessels. We have an account with Mystic Marine fuel dock located just north of the Spalding Rehab building on the west side of the harbor up near the Tobin bridge.
 - Failure to pump out, fuel, or clean, will result in a \$150 fee
- Members are required to clean the interior of the boats after their use. Leave the boat tidy
- Clean all dishes and return them to the "boat bin"

- Leave no personal items or food aboard the vessel

Booking an Extended overnight

Extended overnight cruises are considered to be no more than 3 days, 2 nights. Each qualified cruising member is allotted one extended cruise per season. Cruising members who wish to reserve a vessel for a cruise longer than one night or outside Boston Harbor must meet the following qualifications:

- Bareboat Cruising certification or equivalent experience
- Coastal Passage Making certification or equivalent experience

Members must additionally provide:

- **2 weeks notice of their trip**
- A float plan reviewed and approved by APD and Cruising Coordinator

On an extended cruise, members may sail no farther north than Gloucester and no farther south than Scituate. Courageous reserves the right to cancel any extended overnight reservations if the weather is deemed too risky.

All procedures for an extended overnights (booking, returning, etc) will follow the guidelines outlined above for a standard overnight cruise.

Operating Hours

Cruising Members

- Our Seasonal operation hours for Cruising members are as follows:
 - Monday - Friday: 12:00 pm - 30 minutes before Sunset*
 - Saturday - Sunday: 10:00 am - 30 minutes before Sunset*
- *Closing time is subject to change

Mid-Fleet Cruising Members

- Our seasonal operating hours for Mid-Fleet Cruising members are as follows
 - May 1st - June 30th and August 19th - October 31st
 - *Monday - Friday*: 12:00 pm - 30 minutes before Sunset*
 - *Saturday - Sunday*: 10:00 am - 30 minutes before Sunset*
 - July 1st - August 18th
 - *Monday - Friday*: 4:00 pm - 30 minutes before Sunset*
 - *Saturday - Sunday*: 10:00 am - 30 minutes before Sunset*

*Closing time is subject to change

Thank you for taking the time to read through our cruising member guidelines and policies. We know that as cruising members you are ready to pursue new horizons and new challenges. Our policies are meant to help you as sailors realize your goals by preserving our fleet and ensuring it is a resource for everyone.

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