

Advocacy Working Group – Progress Report and Update for Conference

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1. Overview

The Advocacy Working Group continues to advance its remit of strengthening safety, environmental awareness, and responsible conduct within the global sailing community. Since our last update, the group has focused on three key areas of communication and policy advocacy:

1. Safety reporting and incident education
2. Technical updates to rating systems (UMS measurement for IRC and ORC)
3. Marine mammal mitigation and strike reporting

This paper summarises the status of each initiative and outlines the next steps in coordination with World Sailing and relevant stakeholders.

2. Safety Reporting and Incident Education

A major milestone has been the completion of an educational paper designed to improve awareness and understanding of why and how sailors should report incidents.

This paper, developed in alignment with World Sailing's Safety Policy and Reporting Guidelines, explains:

- The critical role of incident reporting in preventing future accidents;
- How submitted data is used confidentially to improve safety standards and training;
- The mechanisms available for reporting, including both national and World Sailing platforms;
- The benefits to sailors, teams, and organisers through shared learning and transparency.

The aim is to embed safety reporting as a cultural norm rather than a reactive process. The document is now ready for distribution through member national authorities, offshore racing organisers, and sailing media channels, pending committee approval.

3. UMS Measurement Update – IRC and ORC

In parallel, the group has produced a short **technical extract** explaining the introduction of the new **UMS (Universal Measurement System)** for IRC and ORC certificates.

This section is intended to:

- Clarify the rationale for UMS adoption and its benefits for consistency between measurement systems;
- Provide simple guidance for sailors, sailmakers, and measurers on what the change entails;
- Encourage a smoother transition by avoiding duplication of measurement processes between rating rules.

The draft can be circulated with the Oceanic and Offshore Committee for final sign-off.

4. Marine Mammal Mitigation and Strike Reporting

The group continues to work closely with World Sailing's Sustainability Department on the emerging Marine Megafauna in sailing framework.

While a draft piece on this subject has been prepared, the Working Group has agreed to wait until the larger global review being undertaken by World Sailing is complete.

The forthcoming World Sailing workstream will deliver:

- Updated Mitigation Guidelines for event organisers and offshore teams;
- A unified Strike and Near-Miss Reporting Protocol;
- Data integration with scientific and conservation bodies to improve oceanic mapping of risk zones.

Our contribution will therefore focus on alignment and amplification—ensuring that when the policy is released, the messaging to sailors is clear, practical, and consistent across all offshore classes.

5. Next Steps

The next quarter will focus on:

- Publishing the Safety Reporting Educational Paper;
- Coordinating the release of the UMS information note;
- Liaising with World Sailing on the timeline for Marine Mammal Mitigation communications;

6. Conclusion

The Advocacy Working Group is willing to make steady progress in delivering clear, evidence-based communications that enhance safety, transparency, and sustainability across the sailing community.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with World Sailing, Member National Authorities, and class associations to ensure that advocacy outputs are timely, relevant, and effective.

Submitted by:

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On behalf of the **Advocacy Working Group**

WP Lead

Why Safety Reporting is Crucial in Sailing

1. Building a Safer Sport Through Proactive Policies

World Sailing's [Safety Policy](#) outlines essential safety measures for all sanctioned events, from risk assessments and emergency procedures to mandatory equipment standards and training protocols.

A critical component is the continuous improvement cycle enabling lessons to be learned from incidents directly, that help inform and update safety policies, regulations, and best practices.

2. Structured Reporting: From Critical Events to Close Calls

World Sailing categorizes incidents to clarify reporting expectations:

- **Mandatory Reporting** (e.g. fatalities, serious injuries, loss of keel, underwater entrapment): Event organizers or national authorities must notify World Sailing within 48 hours and provide monthly updates until a full investigation is complete.
- **Recommended Reporting** (e.g. life raft deployment, medical evacuations, near-misses, serious collisions): Anyone involved is encouraged to log the incident in World Sailing's portal. Such structured reporting ensures transparency and provides actionable data for safety enhancements.

3. Learning Through Independent Incident Reviews

World Sailing issues Guidelines for Independent Incident Reviews and Reporting, enabling thorough, impartial examination of significant offshore incidents.

Key features of this process include:

- Appointing an independent working party (WP) to investigate, consisting of at least three qualified members with no conflicts of interest.
- Collecting data from multiple sources—skipper interviews, logs, radar/AIS data, and video—while maintaining confidentiality and focusing on facts over blame.
- Producing balanced, factual reports with recommendations to prevent recurrence and guide improvements to safety equipment, rules, emergency procedures, and education.

4. Culture of Accountability and Collective Learning

Safety reporting fosters a culture that embraces accountability and shared learning. Incidents are not buried or ignored—they become a basis for constructive change.

Key benefits include:

- **Strengthened Regulations:** Reports feed back into offshore standards and governance, raising safety across all sailing levels.
- **Improved Education:** Awareness materials, case studies, and training evolve informed by real events.
- **Industry-Wide Impact:** Manufacturers, event organizers, and sailors all benefit from insights that help improve equipment design, race formats, and emergency planning.

5. Promoting Sailor Safety and Resilience

Safety is not just about avoiding danger—it's about creating resilient systems that protect both sailors and the sport itself. Transparent incident reporting strengthens trust, builds confidence, and ensures that every sailor, regardless of level, races in an environment informed by past lessons and clear protocols.

In summary, safety reporting in sailing is not optional—it's essential. Through structured incident reporting and independent reviews, World Sailing helps transform challenging moments into opportunities for lasting improvement. This continuous learning loop ensures the sport evolves safely, sustainably, and responsibly, safeguarding both sailors and seaworthiness for generations to come



Universal Measurement System (UMS) Sail Certification

Introduction: The Equipment Rules of Sailing (ERS) provide a framework for the definitions and measurement parameters for most sail types used in the sport. However, in offshore sailing especially, there have been developments and innovations in sail design that do not easily fit in this framework.

The two recognized international handicap rating systems – the Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) and the International Rating Certificate (IRC) – have therefore devised approaches to the measurement of sails that are separate but have agreed to a common method to record a sail’s measurements to be shown both on the sail and uploaded to a National Authority’s database.

Procedure: WS-approved IHC sailmakers will do the following:

- Measure the sail
- Fill in the data to a UMS sticker to be placed on the sail
- Sign and date an IHC sticker to be placed next to the UMS sticker
- Take photo of both stickers in place and submit data to the relevant ORC or IRC Rating Office

An example of the guidelines for this process is shown here:

Spinnaker

IRC	ORC	DEFINITION
SLU	SLU	Spinnaker Luff Length
SLE	SLE	Spinnaker Leech Length
SHW	SHW	Spinnaker Half Width
SFL	SFL	Spinnaker Foot Length
IRC SPA		IRC Spinnaker Area
	ORC SPA	ORC Spinnaker Area

UMS		IHC Serial No:	IHC Loft:
dd / mm / yy	Signed:		
SLU			
SLE			
SHW			
SFL			
IRC SPA			
ORC SPA			

IRC	ORC	ERS	ORC Rules	IRC Rules	OSR
SLU	SLU	G.7.3		A8	
SLE	SLE	G.7.2		A8	
SHW	SHW	G.7.5 (b)		A8	
SFL	SFL	G.7.1		A8	
IRC SPA				21.6.2	
	ORC SPA		ORC 113.1 or 114.2		

This process is described in more detail at <https://www.sailing.org/inside-world-sailing/activities-services/technical-offshore/technical-services/in-house-certification> and includes measurements of Storm and Heavy weather sails described in WS Offshore Special Regulations.

Measurement guidelines: ORC has produced and published on YouTube how-to videos on sail measurement to instruct sailmakers and measurers on the correct methods for measurement of:

Mainsails - <https://youtu.be/8dH0AXlxNfU>

Headsails - https://youtu.be/A49sk_OpCoQ

Spinnakers - <https://youtu.be/Jlt5YqBuhyY>

Benefits to sailors: With the ORC videos for technical guidance and on measurement, and a new process of ensuring both uniformity and accuracy in recording and submitting the data to Rating Offices, sailors will benefit from greater speed, accuracy and efficiency in their rating authority's processing and issuing their certificates for racing.

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