

Daysail Leader Checklist: Clear Communication Summary



This guide outlines the critical steps for planning, executing, and closing a safe and successful daysail.

Preparation: The Week Before

Action	Details
Notice & Communication	Send out the initial " calling notice " with an initial plan. Maintain contact with all participants throughout the week. Understand which boats will be attending to allow those bringing boats time to prepare and to report any issues for example, if they are no longer able to tow a boat.
Conditions Check	Study the day-by-day weather forecasts (assessing confidence), tides , and the impact of large ship movements or other fleets (e.g., races).
Route & Safety	Plan the route in detail, including rendezvous points and refuge locations. Send the plan to experienced daysail leaders for validation.
Permissions	Identify and contact all necessary authorities for information or permission.

Final Confirmation & Cancellation

Action	Timeline	Details
Cancellation Check	Two days before	Re-check the weather. Cancel as early as possible if conditions are unsuitable.
Final Plan	The night before	Confirm the plan, boats, crews and cancellation criteria with all participants.
Go/No-Go	6:00 am on the day	Perform the final check against cancellation criteria. Send "go" or "cancel" notice.

Pre-Sail Assessment: Boats & Crew

The leader must assess the fleet's readiness, competence, and suitability for the expected conditions.

- **Boat Assignments:** Know who is sailing with whom and in which boats.
- **Reefing Ability:** Confirm which boats are rigged for **reefing afloat** and the **skipper/crew competency** to execute it.
- **Experience & Suitability:** Assess if the crew has **sufficient sailing experience** for the planned sail.
- **Outboard Buddying:** Identify which boats have outboards and competent operators. **Pair boats without an outboard** with one that does.
- **Health & Contacts:** Collect **confidential health information** from skippers and ensure you have **emergency contact details** for every participant.
- **Final Review: Reassess** the suitability of all boats, crews, and the anticipated conditions.

Go/No-Go Questions - Before the briefing, a final, critical self-check:

<input type="checkbox"/> Should this sail still go ahead?	<input type="checkbox"/> Should the crewing arrangement change to ensure safety and viability?
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the planned duration and destination appropriate, or should a closer objective be selected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Should all boats participate? Which boats to leave behind?

Briefing & On-Water Management

The Briefing

1. **Location:** Find a spot where everyone can **see the chart and hear you clearly**.
2. **Materials:** Have the **tide table, chart of the sail**, and the **plan** visible.
3. **Delivery:**
 - Show the **start, destination, rendezvous points, refuge locations, and expected hazards**.
 - Confirm skippers **understand the plan**.
4. **Fleet Best Practice:**
 - **Sail as a fleet.** Maintain discipline; it is **not a race**. Turn back if you get ahead.
 - If a boat is in distress, **sail to them** if safe, and **stand by** to assist.
 - If you intend to **leave the fleet**, you **must inform the daysail leader**.
5. **Personal Gear:** Remind everyone about **water, food, suncream, and appropriate clothing**.
6. **VHF Protocol (If Applicable):** Agree on **call signs** and the **monitoring channel** (VTS/Harbour Control). Use **Channel 16** to *initiate* emergency communication.

On the Water

- **First Rendezvous:** Perform an **internal VHF radio check** on a working channel, or hail National Coastwatch on Channel 67. Assess **weather conditions** against the forecast and note any implications.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

This is a continuous process throughout the sail:

- **Situational Awareness (External):** Monitor **weather, tides, large vessels, and other boat movements**.
- **Situational Awareness (Internal):** **Count the boats regularly**. Check if boats are sailing well, if they are overpowered, and if crews are happy.
- **Check-In:** **Communicate with each boat** to understand their status.
- **Adaptation:** Consider if the **plan needs to change**. Share any changes with the other sailors immediately.

Incident Management

- **Internal Incident:** If manageable by the fleet, **manage the situation** to ensure ongoing safety.
- **External Assistance:** If outside help is required, **call the Coastguard** via **VHF Radio** or **999** (mobile phone).

After the Sail: Debrief & Reporting

1. **Reflection:** Create a space for a **debrief** (what was difficult, what went well, what could be done differently next time).
2. **Reporting:** Agree on who will write the **Newsletter report**.
3. **Club Boats:** Remind users to report all club boat usage and any breakages using the **online forms**.
4. **Major Incidents:** **Manage the necessary implications** of any significant incident.