



Maui Paddling Hui (MPH)

Escort Boat Selection Suggestions (Rev. October 2018)

Note; Escort boat propellers can be lethal. Paddler beware!

- Selection & hire of a safe escort boat with qualified captain & crew is solely the paddler's responsibility.
- Maui Paddling Hui (MPH) shares this information to assist, but in no way replace, paddler's own judgement in selecting and hiring an escort boat, boat captain & support crew. MPH is in no way held responsible for this selection or any injuries or damage resulting from this selection.
- Good communication between paddlers and escort boat operators is paramount before, during and at finish of race.
- Prior to hiring, it is recommended that you get references from third parties who have used the escort boat and captain you are considering hiring.

Suggestions for questions to ask when hiring an Escort Boat

- 1) HAVE YOU PROVIDED A CANOE RACE ESCORT SERVICE BEFORE?**
 - a) Relay entries may especially benefit from their captain's experience.
- 2) ARE YOUR CAPTAIN'S CERTIFICATIONS UP TO DATE?**
 - a) If no... continue looking.
- 3) DO YOU HAVE INSURANCE?**
 - a) If no... continue looking.
- 4) IS YOUR BOAT U.S. COAST GUARD CERTIFIED AND ALL EQUIPMENT UP TO DATE?**
 - a) If no... continue looking.
- 5) WHAT LENGTH BOAT DO YOU HAVE?**
 - a) Boat must be minimum 17 ft for MPH events.
 - i) Optimum length is between 20 and 30 foot.
- 6) WHAT ENGINES ARE ON YOUR BOAT?**
 - a) While single engines are perfectly acceptable, twin engines offer a higher level of reliability. If your Escort Boat breaks down, you may be required to stop racing.
 - b) Inboard and outboard engines are acceptable.
- 7) WHAT BOARDING ACCESS DOES THE BOAT HAVE?**
 - a) Know your own ability when it comes to climbing up ladders in a rough sea state.
 - b) A boat without easy boarding creates a high-risk scenario and should be avoided.
 - i) A decent ladder and/or aft swim platform is recommended.
 - ii) Many boats have fantastic side boarding options.
 - c) Boats with outboard motors offer a higher level of risk if boarding is from the aft and one needs to enquire further about this.
 - i) Sleds provided for easier boarding are wonderful.
- 8) DO YOU HAVE SHADE ON YOUR BOAT?**
 - a) While not a necessity, it sure is a plus to have sun and rain protection. Not a concern if going IRON.
- 9) DO YOU HAVE A PERMANENTLY INSTALLED VHF RADIO?**
 - a) Hand held radios have limited range and are not recommended. Having a spare hand held is of course a good thing.
- 10) DOES YOUR BOAT HAVE A CHART PLOTTER?**
 - a) While not a necessity it is a very good thing to have to be sure your course is as per planned.
 - b) Positioning and Currents are material in terms of overall speed. Knowing where you are in relation to rhumb line is super helpful.

- c) In the case of an emergency, being able to communicate exact Latitude and Longitude immediately is of huge importance to organizers and rescue personnel.

11) WILL YOU HAVE A SPOTTER JOINING YOU?

- a) A second pair of hands and eyes is always preferable and in many instances a requirement, particularly for relay activities.
- b) If you have your own spotter joining, make sure the captain is aware that you are planning on bringing a spotter/support person and be sure they communicate with the captain regarding protocols for participants entering & exiting boat.

12) WHAT ARE YOUR FEES, WHAT DO THEY INCLUDE, AND HOW AND WHEN IS PAYMENT EXPECTED?

- a) What is the refund policy should race be cancelled or should paddler need to cancel for any reason?

13) KNOW THE VHF CALL IN CAPTAINS RESPONSIBILITIES WITH RACE ORGANIZERS

(COMMUNICATION BEFORE, DURING AND AT THE FINISH IS KEY)

- a) Complete all forms and supply accurate information to race organizers. As the entrant paddler you will want to follow up on that.
- b) Know the VHF call in numbers for prior to start, during the race and at finish.
- c) Many Captains will operate off VHF Channel 16. This is an emergency channel and not dedicated to race day organization. Make sure they listen in on the designated channel which will be announced on race day.

14) ITEMS TO COVER FOR RACE DAY. (BEST DISCUSSED WELL AHEAD OF RACE)

- a) Share mobile phone numbers.
 - i) Agree on times to call before race start (not always easy for a captain to hear mobile phone when engines running and rough water).
 - ii) Weather, breakdowns and other aspects can change and therefore communication is of great importance.
- b) Exact description of Escort boat. Very helpful to provide picture to participants.
 - i) Colors of hull, deck, canvas, flags etc.
 - ii) Boat's name and brand.
 - iii) Style (catamaran, mono-hull, center console, fly bridge, etc.)
- c) Exact description of participant and their boat. Very helpful to provide picture to escort captain and update with any race day changes.
 - i) Type of boat (OC-1, SS-1, etc.)
 - ii) Color(s) of boat.
 - iii) Race sticker number.
 - iv) Colors of clothing to be worn by paddler. M2M participants all wear the same jerseys and therefore a bright cap of a known color is recommended.
- d) Rendezvous place and time
 - i) Relay Crews: If entering as relay, how and when will relay partner(s) board escort boat?
 - ii) Iron Crews: Discuss in advance how you will get your personal item on board and what support you expect of your escort during the race.
 - iii) Meet at launch site of escort boat on or before race morning if feasible for partners to board boat and to secure your extra gear.
 - iv) Swimming out to Escort Boat will likely be prohibited by Race Organizers. Paddling your gear and extra paddlers out in your escort may be an option.
 - v) Race organizers may provide limited jet ski drivers to take extra relay paddlers & gear to escort boats. To facilitate this, you must know what your escort looks like and where it is located so jet skis don't waste time needed to assist other participants.
 - vi) Make visual contact with your escort on race morning so you each have current image of what/who you are looking for on the water.

- vii) Communicate with Captain regarding which end of start line you plan to start and your expected course for first 30 - 40 minutes. Be very mindful that it is not easy to find you amongst a lot of canoes racers all wearing the same shirt. If your Captain knows to be left, right or center of course you are already 66% better off for a quick rendezvous once chase boats are released.

15) SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING SAFE CHANGES DURING A RELAY RACE. MANY ESCORT CAPTAINS ARE EXTREMELY EXPERIENCED, AND MAY HAVE DIFFERENT OR ADDITIONAL POINTS. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A PARTICIPANT TO CLARIFY PROTOCOLS AHEAD OF THE RACE START.

- a) Clear audible communication agreed to prior to starting race
 - i) Either jumping in the water or approaching the escort boat from the water should ONLY occur when the captain announces boat is in neutral. Agree in advance what that command is.
 - ii) Spotter to also relay this communication to paddlers approaching the boat from the water. DO NOT approach boat until the spotter has made audible and visual contact with you. If you cannot see the spotter or captain, they cannot see you.
- b) Changes must never occur directly in front of other canoes or escort boats.
- c) Paddlers entering water
 - i) When captain has positioned boat, at a reasonable distance directly in front of your canoe, wait for the captain's command before you jump in water. Depending on design of boat, wind direction and wave direction the captain will determine & communicate best position for entering the water.
 - ii) Once paddlers have entered the water and are clear the captain will move the escort boat out of the way but will stay in the vicinity of their paddlers so that other canoes and escort boats are aware of activity.
- d) Retrieving paddlers
 - i) Throw line needs to be prepared by spotter in advance of escort boat approaching paddlers in water. A throw line of approximately 20 ft that has a small fender/bumper attached to the end is recommended. Using floating line is an advantage and will also reduce risk of being wrapped around propellers.
 - ii) Captain will position escort boat in the direction that is best for weather and water conditions.
 - iii) Captain will instruct spotter to toss throw line to participants in the water at the appropriate time.
 - iv) Captain will issue clear audible instruction when engines are in neutral and spotter will loudly relay instruction to paddlers.
 - v) Only at that time should paddlers approach the escort boat for climbing on board.
 - vi) Only once all paddlers are on board should spotter communicate to driver to re-engage the engines.
- e) Other points for consideration
 - i) Wearing a bright cap or hat, in addition to your high visibility race jersey, will allow you to be better seen when in the water.
 - ii) Even when an engine is in neutral a propeller can still spin due to water movement or a surge in speed of drifting boat, therefore it is a good idea to stay clear of props at all times
 - iii) Do not make changes close to the finish line, this can be dangerous as canoes and chase boats are converging.
 - iv) Hydrate and eat during the race. Dehydration can create poor judgement
 - v) Remain calm at all times!

16) GET TO KNOW YOUR ESCORT CAPTAIN. THEY ARE TYPICALLY GREAT WATERMEN WITH VAST AMOUNTS OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE OCEAN, CURRENTS, AND MORE. DON'T BE SURPRISED IF THEY ARE ALSO SEASONED PADDLERS!

17) ALWAYS RESPECT THE OCEAN, THE SHORELINE, AND THE COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY YOUR RACE.

18) HAVE FUN AND BE SAFE!