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I. INTRODUCTION
This Sailing Operations Manual provides CRAB volunteer Skippers, Crew, and Support Staff with the necessary information to perform your jobs well for our guests with disabilities and children from at-risk communities. It is not intended to replace the necessary and proper actions in the event of an emergency that requires life-saving actions.

This Operations Manual is written to inform and enhance your ability to provide safe and courteous service to our guests. Note: Please refer to all CRAB participants as guests. In this respect, we are seeking to treat our guests as we would want to be treated if we were a guest at someone’s home. At CRAB, we want to treat our guests as special guests.

Sailing is a new activity for many of our guests and some of them may feel uncomfortable on the water or in a new situation. Many of CRAB’s guests do not know how to swim or have not been on a sailboat. Because of this, it is vital to make sure they understand what will happen before you proceed down the dock, board the boat, or start sailing. This includes: walking or rolling down the center of the dock, getting on/off of the boat with support and one-hand for the boat, how their wheelchair or other important items will be stored and secured while sailing, the safety and stability of our boats, the fact that our boats typically heel and pitch while sailing, the reality that they may get a little wet, the need to be aware of the boom, etc. Discussing what to expect can ease many of the concerns they may have about sailing.

This guide consists of the following sections:

II. General Sailing Operations
III. Interacting with Our Guests – Disability Etiquette
IV. Training CRAB Volunteers
V. Instructional Techniques
VI. Transferring/Lifting

Skipper Check/Sailing List
Volunteer Sign-off form

II. GENERAL SAILING OPERATIONS

Sailboat Fleet
CRAB’s fleet of six Beneteau First 22A sailboats have been specially modified to take persons with disabilities sailing with safety and comfort. All sheets are led to the cockpit and they should be checked for any damage or problems before the guests’ arrival. Be sure the boat is clean, if not please clean and hose off if necessary before guests arrive. Make sure the cockpit is clear of any extraneous items that may be a tripping hazard, i.e. foam foot-blocks, water bottles, radio, etc. Sometimes the bilge needs to be pumped out.
if there has been rain. Please complete the attached Skipper Checklist Pre-Departure section before leaving the dock.

**First 22A’s**

These boats have a 5’11” swing keel that is adjusted using a winch handle (righty - raise; lefty – lower) to a retracted depth of 2’4”. The keels are set at 4’ 6” for sailing through the channel at SPSP. *Do not adjust the keel when sailing at SPSP.* If you run aground, the keel will kick-up. Pictograms on the keel trunk indicate when the keel is at 4.5 feet. You may lower the keel to its full depth of 5’11” when sailing to or from Annapolis. These boats also have twin adjustable rudders. *Do not adjust the rudders.* The twin rudders make this boat have a larger turning radius at slow speeds, so exercise caution when docking; give yourself plenty of room or plan to do a three-point turn.

When docking at SPSP we request that Skippers proceed to the dock in reverse as control of the boat is greatly enhanced in this direction. The jib is roller furled and the main is protected in a sailstack on the boom. Simply unzip the sail cover and leave in place while sailing. The main has two reef-points and prior to sailing the Skipper and Fleet Director will determine what amount of sail should be used for the given wind and weather conditions prior to leaving the dock. CRAB does not want to have Skippers reefing the main while sailing with guests if possible, which is why the sails are set at the dock prior to sailing. This may include not unfurling the jib or only partially unfurling the jib.

When raising the mainsail it is necessary to have the boat pointed directly into the wind. Any deviation will cause the fully battened mainsail to get caught in the lazy jack lines. If this happens, you will need to lower the sail, point the boat directly into the wind, and hoist the sail. **DO NOT** try to man-handle the hoisting of the sails. The mainsail is stuck on something if they are difficult to raise. The sail is easy to raise or lower if held directly into the wind. For this reason it is **not recommended** to hoist the mainsail at the dock.

The boat has a roller furling jib and the jib furling line is a grey line on the starboard side of the boat. It should be used to initiate unfurling of the jib and to furl the jib. Please make sure the halyard line is tailed into the furling drum so it does not snag.

The reef lines on the mainsail are green for the first reef and red for the second reef. The halyard on the main must be loosened to lower the main and set a reef. The gooseneck of the boom has a J-hook to set the reef in the new clew. The reef line is pulled and the jam block on the foredeck will secure the line. Re-hoist the mainsail. For additional instruction, please ask for the Fleet Director for assistance.

Please make sure all reefs are shaken out of the main after docking.

**Lehr Motors**

These motors are fueled with liquid propane. Fuel level can be checked by visually inspecting the fuel gauge or the translucent portion of the tank. To start the motor turn the throttle back and forth a couple of times. Place the transmission handle on the left of the engine in neutral, set the throttle handle in between idle and full-throttle, gently
take up the slack in the pull-cord (**do not pull without taking slack out of the cord**) and pull the pull-cord. It takes two or three pulls for the motor to prime itself and start. It is important to use upper body torque when pulling the starting cord. Once the motor starts, return the throttle control to its original position. Please operate the Lehr motors at half-throttle for better fuel efficiency. **Do not operate the engine in reverse at more than half speed; this can damage the engine.**

If the main tank is empty, attach a spare canister (the boat should always have 2 spare canisters on board). Remove the large, black, cylindrical plug, extend out the hose, and attach to the canister. Disconnect the hose from the main tank (**never operate with both a spare canister and main tank attached**). You may need to pull the pull cord several times to purge air from the line before it starts.

The LEHR motors can have the air in the line bled by sticking a paper clip into the middle of the aluminum square piece on the aft right side of the motor (facing aft). To reach this area the top cover of the motor needs to be removed. When the paper clip is inserted into the hole you will hear a hissing noise. That is the air escaping the line. When you smell propane, you can stop bleeding the line and the motor is ready to start after replacing the engine cover.

**Torqueedo Motors**

CRAB has one Torqueedo motor that is not generally used for fleet sailing. However, we provide this information and instruction if a Skipper is on a boat with an electric motor. When installing the battery and throttle control, follow the instructions on the throttle control: attach the main cord first and the thinner cord second. When disconnecting, disconnect them in reverse order. Remaining battery life is indicated on the control panel of the throttle control. There is no transmission. To run in reverse, turn the throttle in a counter-clockwise direction. There is a **two-second delay** from the time you turn the throttle from the neutral (center) position and when the prop starts to turn; **plan for this!** Battery life is consumed at an exponential rate when increasing speed, so be judicious! It is best to cruise at 400 watts, the bottom number on the throttle controller (if it is installed)

**Weather**

Sailing operations should be conducted with the highest level of safety and guest comfort in mind. It is important to be very aware of the weather and wind conditions prior to departing the dock, while sailing, and returning to the dock. Under no circumstances should a skipper depart the dock if they have any question about the weather. The Executive Director or Fleet Director shall have sole responsibility for determining the suitability of sailing after properly reviewing the weather radar, forecasted wind conditions, etc. This shall include: a go or no-go decision, any trimming of sails that should be performed before leaving the dock, where to sail (i.e. in the pond or immediate area), and, how long to sail with guests.
It is the skipper’s primary responsibility to be aware of their guest’s physical state and if they are comfortable, cold, hot, wet, seasick, or in need of water to ensure a pleasant sail. If the guest(s) are not comfortable, the skipper shall return to the dock as expeditiously as possible. In addition, the skipper shall notify the Fleet Director by radio that they are returning to the dock and the reason in case any guests are in need of immediate assistance.

While sailing, if the wind or weather conditions should change, the skipper should report the new weather conditions to the Fleet Director and ask for guidance. It is not difficult to furl the jib on the boats, but with guests, it is more challenging to reef the main. For this reason, CRAB’s policy is to reef the main at the dock prior to departure if the wind is likely to cause the boat to heel excessively.

Basic weather guidelines for CRAB’s Fleet of First 22A’s sail well with full sail in winds less than 12 knots (does not apply to Martin 16). Above 12 knots, the mainsail may be reefed. At 15 knots the mainsail must be reefed. Also, above 15 knots the boats will be restricted to sailing in the pond because of the wave action in the Bay off of Sandy Point State Park and guest comfort. The jib also may be furled if there are gusts above 15 knots that cause the boat to come about. In higher winds, the main sail shall be double-reefed and the jib furled if necessary to keep the First 22A in a comfortable sailing position. Skippers must be aware of their own comfort level in various sailing conditions. Do not push your comfort level. Please let the Fleet Director know before leaving the dock if you are not comfortable with conditions be it due to wind, cold, or heat.

In addition, avoid sailing out into the ship channel on the Bay. If the wind dies or the tide is working against the boat, it can be a scary situation to have a large container ship approach you at 15 knots with no room to maneuver to avoid your boat. So, be aware and observant of the weather, tide, and ship traffic when sailing on the Bay.

Equipment

CRAB sailboats are provided with one or two oars, extra propane fuel canisters, a throw cushion, a manual bilge pump, an anchor, and additional lines or straps. In addition, each boat will carry a VHF radio that must be kept on and tuned to the designated channel (usually Channel 78) monitored by CRAB Staff and Fleet Director on shore and the water. Skippers are responsible for hearing the radio and responding to the Fleet Director when called. The VHF radio should be turned on and the volume all the way up and in hearing distance of the Skipper at all times. Please complete the attached Skipper Checklist Pre-Departure section before leaving the dock.
Skipper

CRAB volunteers serving as Skippers are responsible for the safety and pleasure of the guests. At all times, they are to be focused on any issues that may create a safety issue or hazard for anyone on the dock or on board, including guests and other volunteers. Reporting any safety issues of concern to CRAB Staff takes priority over any sailing services. If necessary, all operations must come to a stop if the safety concern is of a serious nature and a risk to our guests and volunteers.

Before any volunteer is allowed to be a CRAB Skipper, they must have sufficient sailing experience to merit becoming a Skipper, and be checked-out in a multi-step process. The review and determination of sufficient sailing experience will be made by CRAB’s Executive Director. Upon acceptance into the CRAB Skipper training program, the Fleet Director will be responsible for having the new volunteer Skipper serve as Crew on two sailing trips of at least an hour in length for each with one of CRAB’s Fleet Directors or an experienced Skipper designated by the Fleet Director.

After two successful trips as a Crew member, the prospective Skipper must conduct two sails as Skipper under observation with one of the Fleet Directors or a Skipper designated by the Fleet Director. Following successful completion of the two sails as a Skipper under observation, the Fleet Director may provide his/her approval of the Skipper for future sails with guests without supervision. The Executive Director/Operations Manager will be notified by the approving Fleet Director when a new Skipper has successfully passed this training and is capable of being a CRAB Skipper in the future.

Boarding Boats & Safety Briefing

Assistance in boarding should be offered to all guests regardless of their ability or disability. Ensuring that everyone is safely in the boat and secure in their seats is the responsibility of the Skipper with the assistance of Crew. The First 22A’s have a higher freeboard than the former Freedom 20’s in the fleet. When boarding guests, the stern of the First 22A must be secured tightly to the dock with no gap in between the boat stern and the dock. This will require loosening the bow line in order to snug-up the stern. After the stern is secured, the bowline may be secured. Do not board the First 22A without securing the stern as stated above or the boat will heel a foot or more when stepping aboard. NOTE: This instruction for securing the boat also applies when disembarking. However, once everyone is off of the boat, the lines can be loosened to allow the boat to float freely one-foot off of the dock.

When using the transfer box to board a guest, the Skipper and a Crew member must stand on the rail adjacent to the dock to lower the height of the cockpit combing. Place a cockpit cushion on the seat, underneath the transfer box slide to protect the fiberglass. With the weight on the rail, the slide should have a downward angle into the cockpit. A Crew member or caregiver can slide the guest down the transfer box slide into the boat. At this point the guest can be transitioned to the seat in the cockpit. The slide can be raised and the transfer box repositioned away from the edge of the dock. The four-point seatbelts should be snugly fitted to the guest so they do not slide out of the seat and they feel – Safety first!
comfortable. Foam blocks are available in each boat to rest the guest’s feet that may not reach the cockpit sole. The foot rests should be offered to all guests in the special seating.

Once everyone is settled, introductions can be made and an explanation of what will happen after casting off, sailing out of the pond, and on Chesapeake Bay is most appropriate. Making the sailing interesting and enjoyable for everyone on board is the Skipper’s responsibility. Getting guests involved in the actual sailing of the boat is one of the highlights for most guests. Skippers/Crew should ask if the guest is interested in sailing or working the sails and explain how they should go about doing either activity well before they are expected to do it.

Prior to casting off, the Skipper shall conduct a safety briefing that covers:

1. Passengers remain seated during docking, both departure and arrival.
2. Location of Type 4 throw able (seat cushion), life ring, life line, and fire extinguisher.
3. Warning about the boom (head below boom, especially when tacking).
4. In case of MOB, throw Type 4 (seat cushion) to person in water; keep eyes on MOB.

Crew

CRAB volunteers serving as Crew must be responsive to the Skipper and guests. Crew are vital in providing assistance to guests walking or rolling down the dock to the boats (in the center of the dock), assistance with getting guests from wheelchairs onto the transfer box or Hoyer lift, and securing guests in their seats or ensuring they are comfortable in the boat and their PFDs are secure. Crew will be responsible for tossing dock lines to other crew or staff on the docks when docking. Be sure to stay clear of guests when tossing lines to the dock. Throw the lines well past the person intending to catch the dock line. Crew also may be required to fend the boat off of the dock on departure or arrival. Being prepared and having a good understanding with the Skipper is important when docking.

Support Staff

CRAB Support Staff working on land will be responsible for registering guests and making sure the liability waivers are signed before guests are allowed to put on a PFD. Assistance with the guest’s PFDs, getting water, or showing them where the bathroom facilities are will be common services.

Safety

Make sure all guests stay in the cockpit and do not lean out of the boat. It is extremely difficult and often dangerous for a person to go overboard, particularly persons with disabilities. Throwing the flotation cushion to the person in the water should be the first order of business when close enough for them to reach it. Any overboard situation demands that the Skipper notify CRAB Staff or Fleet Director immediately by VHF radio of the situation and to stand by. Drop sails and stay with the person, preferably with them
holding onto a line or sheet to stay with the boat. CRAB Staff or Fleet Director will bring a boat to the scene to assist with boarding the guest in the water. If necessary, DNR or USCG will be notified to assist with the guest in the water or to take for further medical attention.

Likewise, when docking, do not allow any guest to get in a situation that takes them out of the cockpit. Throwing a line to the dock can easily be performed from the center of the cockpit when the boat is close to the dock. The Crew will be responsible for securing the sailboat to the dock and not until the boat is secure should anyone leave their seat. The stern quarter must be immediately adjacent and secured to the dock. Please make this known and assign any roles for guests before arriving at the dock.

If you have any questions about the information in this guide or when you are working a sailing event, please feel free to ask a CRAB Staff member. We are available to assist you in performing your important job to the best of your ability for our special guests. Our first and most important rule at CRAB is: Safety First! Rule number two is: Have fun!

III. TRAINING CRAB VOLUNTEERS

The key to successful training is clear communication. Tasks should be explicitly stated by the Fleet Director so that Skippers, Crew and Support Staff understand what is expected of them. This applies to any communication between CRAB Skippers, Crew and Support Staff as everyone needs assistance at times. The training should include disability awareness and very clear definition of the tasks to be done. Also important is commitment from the Skippers, Crew and Support Staff for which they are being depended upon to do what they say they will do. Communication works both ways. Skippers, Crew and Support Staff need to be made to feel free to make known their own limitations and expectations to the CRAB Staff or Fleet Director.

Sailing is supposed to be fun, but it won’t be for someone with a bad back who attempts to lift a sailor into a boat. There will be others who can provide the necessary physical strength. Skippers, Crew and Support Staff should report any issues they have with CRAB Staff and/or Fleet Director as soon as possible. Please make a point of introducing yourself to CRAB Staff and the Fleet Director.

If a Skipper is having difficulty sailing or docking their boat, do not yell at them with your corrective action recommendation. It is up to the Fleet Director or Executive Director to provide the necessary instructions depending upon the circumstances. This also will serve to keep confusion and noise to a minimum with guests present.

The overall focus of training is centered on the needs of the guests being served and meeting those needs to the satisfaction of all involved. CRAB Skippers, Crew and Support Staff need to have with them sunscreen, proper clothing for the weather, and refreshments or food as necessary. Water is provided for all events, but if you feel you need a beverage other than water (non-alcoholic) then please bring it with you. Skippers, Crew and Support Staff are expected to work for the time of the sailing event. If unable
to make that commitment, you should inform CRAB Staff of the time you are able to commit to the event prior to the event.

CRAB Skippers, Crew and Support Staff should dress appropriately for a professional look around guests. Shirts must have sleeves and preferably collars. No tee-shirts with any offensive logos or words will be permitted. Clothing must be clean and presentable at all times. Wearing the appropriate clothing for the weather conditions is not only smart, it is critical when Skippers, Crew and Support Staff must be comfortable in order to provide our guests with an enjoyable experience.

Last, but not least...

No one is allowed on the dock or near a boat without wearing a life jacket or personal floatation device (PFD). Anyone on the dock without a PFD shall be asked to leave immediately and not return until they are wearing a PFD. All Skippers, Crew and Support Staff have the responsibility to abide by this rule. They also must request that the person not wearing a PFD leave the dock, and to report anyone not wearing a PFD to CRAB Staff.

Remember: Safety First and Have Fun!

IV. INTERACTING WITH GUESTS: DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

CRAB Skippers, Crew, and Support Staff should understand the following:

- Attitude
- Disability awareness
- Viewpoint
- Communication
- Personal space
- Wheelchair information
- Prosthetic devices

**Attitude**

A person with a disability is just that — A person with a disability. People with disabilities have special needs and may need extra assistance, or be unable to do some tasks. The majority of people with disabilities are capable of performing some, if not most activities necessary to sail the boat. As a Skipper or Crew do your best to find what a guest’s abilities are so the guest may feel engaged and involved in the sailing of the boat.

Some volunteers may be uneasy when meeting a person with a disability for the first time. You should treat a person with a disability just the same as he/she would treat any other person. If there is a feeling that a person may require assistance, he/she should be asked if they would like help before touching or assisting them. If they ask for assistance, inquire how best to help. CRAB strives to provide volunteers with achievable tasks and they are encouraged to progress at whatever rate you are comfortable. If you have any questions or need assistance, please ask a CRAB Staff person who will be very happy to answer your question or be of assistance.

CRAB does not want Skippers, Crew, or Support Staff struggling with a task that is beyond their capabilities for physical or mental reasons. CRAB encourages everyone to take an active and supportive role in the operation of the program. Skippers, Crew, and Support Staff are provided training and support to acquire new skills for the safety and operation of the sailing program. Remember that our guests with disabilities often don’t see themselves as disabled and prefer to be treated just like everyone else and should be. It is best to always refer to the...

**ABILITY** rather than **DISABILITY**. One’s disability is not focused upon; one’s ability is acknowledged and nurtured.

**Disability Awareness**

There are a wide range of disabilities, and even the same type of disability will affect people differently. Some categories of disabilities and some challenges they may present include:
1) **Disabilities that may limit physical mobility:** spinal cord injury (SCI), cerebral palsy (CP), paralysis (paraplegia or quadriplegia), muscular dystrophy (MD), fibromyalgia, cystic fibrosis, amputations, multiple sclerosis (MS), arthritis, and spina bifida.

**Possible Challenges for Sailing:**
- Equipment may need to be adapted to suit the person’s needs.
- The Skipper/Crew may need to assist or be assisted with boarding of a guest on and off the boat.
- The guest may fatigue easily due to muscle weakness and spasticity.
- Mobility issues may increase susceptibility to hypothermia in cooler conditions and hyperthermia in hot, humid conditions.
- There may be some difficulty with balance on and off the boat due to coordination issues, level of spinal cord injury/paralysis, and sensory loss.
- Reduced sensation or paralysis in the limbs could lead to injuries of the feet and legs. CRAB sailboats have foam blocks to provide elevation of guest legs when requested. In addition, sail ties can be used to secure guest legs if they so desire. A cockpit throw cushion or padding under the buttocks of those with spinal cord injuries also can be a source of comfort.
- Loss of bladder or bowel control. Use a water bottle to clean the area. Bring the sailboat back to the dock as quickly as possible for the guests comfort.

2) **Developmental disabilities:** Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury (TBI), cerebral palsy, autistic spectrum disorders, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, epilepsy, and diabetes

**Possible Challenges for Sailing:**
- Balance may be a problem on and off the boat.
- Guests may fatigue easily.
- Depending on the disability, it may be necessary to modify some of the sailing equipment.
- The Skipper/Crew may need to assist with helping the sailor on and off the boat.
- Sensory impairments may reduce the ability to feel pain, and an injury may go unnoticed.
- Diabetics need to monitor their blood sugar levels. Ask the guest what his/her needs are and ask the caregiver or family member to inform you of any developments while sailing that require returning to the dock. The guest might need to keep their insulin nearby in a cool dry place as well as a snack should they have an insulin reaction (low blood sugar).

3) **Visual impairments:** Anything that causes a guest to have difficulty seeing such as: congenital blindness, amblyopia, strabismus, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and macular degeneration.
Possible Challenges for Sailing:

- Guests may have difficulty becoming oriented within the facility. This can include the direction of the water and docks, location of boats and equipment.
- Difficulty understanding the direction and distance to the buoys and other boats on the water. Audible aids and cues can help the sailor.
- Difficulty understanding the direction that the wind is coming from, and the velocity of it. Sensory cues will help the sailor. Additionally, giving consistent and frequent communication and feedback while out on the water will be helpful and useful to the visually impaired sailor.
- Not understanding where everything is positioned within the boat. Using tactile cues and different size lines, as well as an orientation, will help familiarize them with the boat.

4) Hearing impairments: Anything that affects a guest’s hearing such as conductive hearing loss such as sensor neural hearing loss, auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder, mixed hearing loss, and central hearing loss.

Possible Challenges for Sailing:

- Difficulty identifying specific control lines, sheets and fittings. Labels on equipment and visual cues, such as marks on particular lines or fittings, will be beneficial to the sailor.
- Unfamiliarity with the facility or sailing area. Using maps and charts provides a great resource for acclimation.
- Miscommunication on when to perform actions such as moving the tiller or trim a sail. Creating well-defined (and agree on) clear visual signals with the hearing impaired sailor will solve this problem. For example, thumbs up means sail is at a good trim, thumbs down means sail needs adjusting. Waving your hand side to side means let sail out tapping your knee means trim sail in.

5) Cognitive disabilities: Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Dementia, Attention Deficit disorder (ADD), dyslexia, dyscalculia, Aphasia, learning disabilities or some kind of difficulty with cognitive calculation or processing.

Possible Challenges for Sailing:

- Proficiency of the guest’s water safety skills.
- The movement of the boat under sailing or an abrupt change in motion (like heeling over in a gust of wind) may cause him or her to become fearful or erratic.
- Misunderstanding of expectations and directions. Be concise and deliberate when communicating.
- Problem-solving for the guest may be difficult in a challenging situation.
Positive reinforcement, encouragement, and consistency should help the guest process and remember the sailing experience and training. Keep in mind that people living with the disabilities mentioned above may use a mobility, visual, or hearing aid such as a wheelchair, walker, or cane. CRAB guests are generally accompanied by a family member or personal care attendant (PCA).

Certain medications can affect a guest’s endurance, stamina, and focus. It is important that you ask guests or PCA’s what if any concerns and needs there may be, be sensitive to those needs, and monitor the activities they are participating in to make sure that they are comfortable and enjoying their sailing experience.

**View Point**

Having a disability doesn’t automatically qualify as needing assistance. First and foremost, if you think someone may require assistance, ask if they would like help! If they accept, ask them how best to help and listen carefully to what they tell you. NEVER assume that you know best how to help a specific individual. If they do not know how to facilitate some aspect of an activity, you might suggest possible solutions.

CRAB guests with disabilities should be encouraged to take an active, supportive role in the sailing of the boat and do as much as possible on their own, IF THEY WANT TO. This enhances their independence and gives them an opportunity to be an active and important part of the sailing event.

Training and support to acquire new skills should be offered to CRAB guests. It is important for CRAB guests to be given achievable tasks and encouraged to progress at whatever rate they are comfortable.

TIP: It is best to always refer to the ABILITY rather than DISABILITY.

**The focus should be on achievement, acknowledging and nurturing the ability.**

**Communication**

Skipper and Crew communication with our guests is vitally important for safety and comfort. Please establish proper communication and understanding before departing the dock. Some guests with disabilities may have difficulty with communication. It is important to establish how a non-verbal person communicates YES and NO. Ask them to show “yes” and then “no”.

Communication might become easier when you phrase questions requiring a YES or NO answer. If the person is not able to even give you a “Yes or No” response, ask the person who brought the guest how much the guest understands and what the best way to communicate with that him/her.

The PCA (Personal Care Attendant), caregiver, family member or friend should be able to show you significant signs or communicative mannerisms that are identifiable and helpful. You need to be patient when a guest has difficulty with verbal communication. If you can’t work out what the guest is trying to tell you, ask them to slowly repeat what they’ve said. Don’t be embarrassed to say that you can’t understand. If you have a
question, just ask. Speak to them in a clear and concise tone, keeping your sentences short and simple. Give them time to answer and never cut them off by finishing their sentences.

When speaking with a guest in a wheelchair, talk directly to them. Do not talk around or over them to the PCA or companion. Try getting down to eye level and make sure they can hear you. When interacting with a guest with a hearing impairment, it is important to keep in mind that some of these individuals may have partial hearing loss and can communicate fairly well. Other hearing impaired individuals might read lips or use sign language.

Be mindful of how they prefer to communicate. If they communicate through sign language see if the guest has a sign language interpreter with them.

When communicating with a guest with a visual impairment, always make sure you introduce yourself and let them know you’re there. It is equally helpful to let them know if you are leaving an area. They may request your assistance but never assume that it is needed. The guest may have a guide dog. Always check with the individual on how to interact with the guide dog. Remember, that this is a service animal. CRAB Support Staff on shore should ask if the guest wants to have their service dog join them on the boat. If so, which in many cases they do, please allot the necessary space in the boat for the service animal and inform the Skipper and Crew to ensure proper loading of the boat.

Communication is a two-way process. Relaying a message through speech or a communication aid is ineffective without a careful listener. When a guest is communicating with you, focus on them and listen to what they are saying. You may want to repeat back the message you think they sending to you to confirm it.

After you have given instruction to the guest, it may be helpful to have the guest repeat back what you are communicating to ensure understanding.

Most importantly, Skippers, Crew and Support Staff should always be observant, respectful, and pleasant to anyone coming to sail as a guest at CRAB. If a guest behavior becomes an issue or problem, CRAB Staff should be notified immediately.

Personal space
The use of personal space and physical interaction can be a type of non-verbal communication. Personal space requirements vary from person to person. Unwanted intrusions into personal space might lead to a guest withdrawing or having an outburst, depending if he/she has a behavioral disorder. A physical interaction is one of the most important non-verbal signals. Touching can be perceived as a very positive thing, but it can also be perceived as a negative.

On the positive side, touching is one-way people demonstrate protection, support, and caring. In its negative context, touching may signal superiority and dominance. A guest with a disability may not necessarily want to be touched or assisted but is unable to communicate that. Skippers, Crew and Support Staff need to be aware and sensitive to this issue. Be cognizant of the reaction you receive.
If you attempt to assist someone stepping on the dock ramp or boat and reach out to hold their arm, they might not be able to speak up to tell you “no”. Pay attention to their facial expressions or body language. Are they looking angry or worried? Are they trying to pull away? Be aware of how your physical interaction is making that person feel. Better yet, ask the guest before they attempt something you think may require your assistance. Safety First!

Wheelchair information
Do not assume that a guest in a wheelchair wants to be pushed. ALWAYS ask first. A guest’s wheelchair is part of their personal space. It’s almost an extension of them and should be treated with respect. You should never lean on or hold the wheelchair unless you are assisting. Never leave the chair unattended without first putting on the brakes. After the guest transfers into the boat, make sure their wheelchair is moved well away from the edge of the dock or water. Try not to leave the wheelchair in the center of the dock while unoccupied. If there is no shelter or cover for the chair, consider turning the cushion upside down or flip the chair over to protect the seated area from the sun or weather.

There are many different models and styles of wheelchairs. People with upper body strength will generally use a manual wheelchair. Manual wheelchairs need to be pushed or self-propelled. Manual wheelchairs come in a wide variety of sizes, colors and performance levels.

Some issues to be aware of with a manual wheelchair: If the chair is difficult to push, the tires may be flat or low on air. Uneven ground, sand, and large stones should be avoided because it is very difficult to push a wheelchair over those surfaces. While on the dock it might be a good idea to keep the brakes on to help keep the chair from rolling. Some manual wheelchairs do not have brakes and if left empty and unattended should be flipped over to keep from rolling. Try not to let the cushion lay on the ground. Some guests may want to use their wheelchair seat in the boat. Remember, the guest will need to sit on that cushion when they return from sailing.

Power wheelchairs are a bit more complicated. They too vary in size and shape. To move a power wheelchair manually, there is a small wheel/knob/lever inside the back wheels, which can be unlocked. Note that these chairs are very heavy when unlocked into manual mode, some exceeding several hundred pounds. Power wheelchairs need to be turned off when stationary to keep the battery from dying and to prevent any accidental, unanticipated movement. If a powered wheelchair needs to be moved, ask the owner of the chair or his/her care-giver to move the chair. The electronic controls are extremely sensitive to touch. CRAB prefers for a care-giver or family member to move electronic chairs on the dock due to the sensitivity of some controls. Great care must be taken when attempting to operate/move one, especially when on the dock.

Prosthetic devices
A prosthetic device or prosthesis basically refers to the replacement of a body part, for example an arm or leg. Some people are born without body part(s) and some people have

TIP: When going down a steep incline, it may be easier and safer to back down the ramp with the guest and wheelchair above you.
to have body part(s) amputated due to an injury or illness. Sometimes sailors leave their prosthetic arms and legs on the dock when they head out on the water. Make sure that the prostheses are safely secured or stored, perhaps in the boat cabin. It might be a good idea to designate a space so that prostheses stays dry and that you and the guest always know where they have been put for safe keeping.

V. INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

When teaching sailing to persons with a disability, you may need to modify some teaching and instruction methods and techniques. If you have any doubts or questions, please ask a CRAB Staff Member or Fleet Director for assistance, advice or counsel. It is better to have this knowledge and understanding before leaving the dock. If you are on the water, contact CRAB Staff or Fleet Director by VHF radio and get assistance.

It is the CRAB Skipper’s responsibility for the safety of everyone on the boat. The caregiver or family member on board is responsible for letting the Skipper know if there is any situation that is a concern for a guest. It is important to establish this protocol with the caregiver/family member prior to leaving the dock. If they inform the Skipper that a guest is having an issue that demands immediate attention, please do not hesitate to notify CRAB Staff or the Fleet Director by VHF radio and immediately return to the dock.

Overall, as stated throughout this guide each guest, Skipper, Crew and Support Staff has unique and different learning abilities and styles. Please be sensitive to these differences.

Although it is difficult to make generalizations regarding a specific disability, below is an attempt at offering some suggestions/guidelines in approaching the more common issues within a disability group.

Paraplegics & Quadriplegics

Most people with paraplegia and quadriplegia will be able to speak and communicate his/her needs and participate in developing creative adaptations that will make the sailing experience easier and safe. Once the challenge of adapting the boat is complete (secure, supportive appropriate seating; necessary straps for hands/feet; limb protection from hard surfaces, etc.), sailing instruction should be the same as any other sailor.

Brain Injuries

When instructing an individual with a brain injury, take into consideration that processing and memory may be difficult, so it is important to talk slowly, clearly and to provide small amounts of information at one time. Break the task down into components. You may find that you need to repeat procedures a number of times before they stick. Visual aids in the classroom and on the boat may be helpful, i.e. using flashcards to show the different parts of the boat.

Each Skipper, Crew and Support Staff must determine the amount of information that can be processed by a guest, including the capacity of short and long term memory, and adjust accordingly.
This may all seem overwhelming, but if you can remember that you have a guest who is most interested in sailing, and who is thinking and living beyond what others expect of them, everyone benefits from sharing in the experience of assisting these guests to learn and enjoy the sport of sailing.

**Visual Impairments**
When in the presence of a guest with a visual impairment, it is best to speak directly to them, using their name, which lets them know you are speaking to them. Talk clearly, but not louder than normal. It is always helpful to announce your presence, introduce yourself and let them know you are leaving when you do, so they are not left talking to someone who is no longer present. Be specific with directions, i.e. direct him/her to the left from his/her position instead of saying, “over there.”

If/when you are walking with a guest with a visual impairment, talk to the individual while guiding them and give them directions to avoid difficulties, i.e. tell them there is a ramp, a step/object in front of them, slow down until they feel it with their cane or foot and then proceed forward. When guiding, allow the guest with a visual impairment to hold on to your arm at your side or place a hand on your shoulder. This will allow him/her to walk a step behind you and have an idea what is coming in front of them by the way you move.

Basically, being with a guest who has a visual impairment should heighten your awareness of your surroundings and in turn, assist them with avoiding any possible hazards.

When instructing a guest with a visual impairment, speaking clearly and giving the fullest explanation of technique will be extremely helpful. Remember that they visualize in their mind so your description will be very important. Avoid use of “visual cues” with those who are completely blind.

Sometimes it may be helpful if the guest can feel the Skipper actually performing a particular movement or the Skipper moves the person through the movement. And offering verbal feedback on the progress of an activity that may naturally be observed by guests with vision can be very helpful and encouraging.

**Hearing Impairments**
Guests with hearing impairments may use hearing aids, lip reading, sign language, or written notes to enhance their communication with others.

**Hearing aids**
Hearing Aids only amplify sounds; they do not clarify them much. Background sounds also get amplified and this makes it difficult for the person to isolate sounds. So, if possible, background noises should be kept to a minimum. Also, remember that when sailing, the wind may affect the ability to hear in general, and therefore can be more challenging for a guest who is hearing impaired, so alternative communication may need to be established, i.e. hand signals.

When a guest with a hearing impairment is lip reading, it is best to be at the same height level as the guest you are speaking with to make it easier for them to read your lips. Conversations should be kept simple and to a minimum in order to avoid confusion. It is
also good to remember that talking quickly, moving a lot, or smiling while speaking make lip reading difficult. Additionally, beards and mustaches make lip reading very difficult if not impossible.

When giving instructions in the presence of a guest with hearing impairment, be sure you have the guest’s attention so they can ascertain the whole message. Hand gestures and facial expressions can be very helpful in making the meaning clear. Use standard movements/body language that people with hearing impairments can understand. Make sure you keep your hands away from the face, so the guest can read your lips and expression. Check that you have been understood. This can be done with a simple “okay” sign with a hand. During the activity, signs such as the wave of a flag, flick of lights, or tap on the shoulder may be required if the guest is unable to hear a whistle.

Written Notes
Written notes can be used any time necessary or appropriate, but it is best not to rely on them unless absolutely necessary. It is better to communicate via methods described above. With patience and practice, you will find what works best for you and the hearing impaired individual.

Special Note: There is a risk of social isolation for those with a hearing or a visual impairment because of difficulty in participating in conversations, so efforts should be made to include and encourage those individuals in conversation.

Intellectual Disabilities
An intellectual disability is life-long disability that affects the cognitive processing ability of an individual, such as Down syndrome.

Skippers, Crew, and Support Staff need to be aware of some common denominators among the population of people with intellectual disabilities. Any one guest may not display all of the following characteristics, but rather some of them, and to varying degrees: inability to think in abstract terms; lack of decision making ability; poor short term memory; learning difficulties and generally a few literacy/innumeracy skill; poor co-ordination and mobility skills, often due to lack of appropriate opportunity, or inconsistent concentration spans.

Skippers instructing guests with an intellectual disability should acknowledge that the level of expectation is crucial. Keep verbal instructions basic and brief. Be clear, precise, deliberate, sequential, and then reinforce your message.

When instructing guests with intellectual disabilities, demonstrating the activity and allowing the guest to participate in the demonstration gives the guest a standard with which to model his/her performance.

Guests with an intellectual disability tend to learn more by doing than looking and listening. When teaching new skills, be sure to move the guests through the desired motions. Praise and encouragement are very important.

Break down skills into small teaching components, ensuring each part is learned fully before progressing.
Review and repeat skills, and drill in many different ways and situations. Then reinforce. Remember also that reinforcement should be spontaneous and immediate. Teach basic skills. Keep practice time on specific activities short to avoid loss of concentration and boredom. Be sure to vary your activities and drills.

While sailing, a guest with an intellectual disability may become fearful and react in an unexpected manner. These guests should be monitored closely until their level of confidence is ascertained. On the other hand, a guest with an intellectual disability may show no concern for his/her own personal safety or the safety of others.

Again, initial close monitoring is necessary.

Consistency in Skipper, Crew and Support Staff behavior and basic instruction is both important and helpful for guests with an intellectual disability.

Always check with caregivers/family members and guests themselves as to how they are feeling when they arrive, and if there is anything specific that needs to be monitored that day. This is most important for those guests who may be more dependent and be less able to advocate for themselves.

Most importantly, enjoy the experience of sharing and learning with CRAB’s guests. CRAB Skippers, Crew and Support Staff derive as much out of the experience as does the guest with the disability.
VI. TRANSFERRING/LIFTING

Guests with physical disabilities may or may not need assistance in transferring from their wheelchairs, walkers, or crutches to the boat from the dock. Transfers can be done in a variety of ways. In every instance, the boat must be secure to the dock. The stern quarter must be tied immediately adjacent to the dock with no space.

Positioning

In most cases a boat will naturally drift away from the dock, especially when bumpers are being used. In order to properly prepare the boat for a transfer, remove the bumpers and bring the boat alongside the dock. Ensure as much contact as possible between the dock and the stern of the boat. Make sure everything is clear for the transition from the dock to the cockpit prior to starting the process. Checking the area twice is good practice by both the Skipper and Crew.

Place the transfer box in a location where there is enough space to deploy the slide into the cockpit. Ideally the base of the slide will be positioned so that the end rests two to three inches from the edge of the cockpit seat, immediately adjacent to the seat the guest will be sitting in. The First 22A will need to have weight placed on its dockside rail in order for the transfer box slide to be on a downward slope to the cockpit seat. This may take two people to lower the height of the freeboard. If necessary, enlist a third person to be in the cockpit to gently guide the guest’s legs and feet into the cockpit for this process. Once the guest’s feet are firmly placed on the cockpit sole the process of lifting the guest and turning their backside to the seat can be initiated. Gently guide the guest to the seat with the goal of firmly placing their backside in the back of the seat so as not to miss it. The guest’s feet and legs can be adjusted to a comfortable position once in the seat. The seat belt goes over the guest’s shoulders and clicks in a 4-point buckle at the waist. Please ensure that the guest or caretaker sees how to unfasten the seat belt in case of an emergency.

3-Stage Independent Transfer Box

This is for guests who use a wheelchair, have difficulty standing or may have a visual impairment who do not need much assistance except to hold a wheelchair steady, or act as a guard/support. Please read the instructions on Boarding Boats on page 6 for additional information regarding the First 22A.

- Move from the chair or standing position to a sitting position on the transfer box. Ask the guest how they would prefer for their legs to be moved to the transfer box. Position the transfer box so that the slide is immediately adjacent to the seat the guest will be sitting. Make sure the slide angles downward onto the cockpit seat (next to the seat the guest will be sitting in). If there is not a downward angle, the Skipper, Crew or Support Staff must stand on the rail to lower the freeboard for the slide to be at a downward angle. This is important in order for the guest’s weight to transfer down the slide to the boat and also to protect the fiberglass on top of the cockpit seat.

- Slide the guest down the transfer box ramp to the preferred seat. Then transfer the guest’s legs to the box. Most guests with upper body strength prefer to make this transfer...
themselves. All guests should be asked in advance how they want to move to the transfer box and what assistance they may want to have. Regardless, make sure the transfer box is positioned as close as possible to the chair. Move the bar on the transfer box to the opposite side the guest will be boarding. Make sure the chair is locked and will not roll while the guest is transferring to the box. Some guests may prefer to transfer legs then buttocks.

- Have someone positioned in the boat in front of the slide to guide the guest down the slide. Having a person in back on the dock doing the same thing is helpful and provides better support for the guest’s back. When the guest’s feet reach the cockpit sole the guest can inform you how they want to be lifted or transported from the slide to the seat. 

Watch out for the boom, or have it secured outboard.

- Once in the seat be sure to secure the 4-point seat belt around the guest. Ask the guest if they would like to have a foot rest (stored in the boat cabin). It is a block of foam that slides under their feet. If the guest requests a sail-tie to secure their legs in place, use a simple slip knot (such as a bow) that can be easily untied in an emergency.

1-4 Person Full Body Lift*

A body lift from a wheelchair to the boat can be done with the assistance of 2-4 people to lift (lifters), but is most commonly done by two lifters. The proper ways to do this should be demonstrated by someone who has been trained in order to maintain safety for both the lifter and participant. It is most important to LISTEN to the person you are transferring, or to their companion/caregiver if they cannot communicate. They will direct the lifters as to the best way to assist in the transfer. Make sure that the guest’s back is well supported by someone who can handle the weight, the knees of the guest must be supported, and feet kept free from catching on anything during the transfer. *This is not a preferred method of transfer by CRAB and should not be performed unless approved by a CRAB Staff Member or the Fleet Director.

1-Person Full Body Lift*

It is important to have a second or third person stabilize the boat at all times during the transfer.

* Note: Anyone who is lifting a guest in and out of a chair, or in and out of a boat, should remember to lift from the knees when they stand up and not use their back to facilitate the lift. This will help prevent unnecessary back injuries! This is not a preferred method of transfer by CRAB. Generally, this type of transfer is performed by a guest’s caregiver or a family member.

2-Person Extremity Lift (not best for guests with shoulder injuries)

The guest crosses his/her arms across the chest and grips own wrists. One lifter stands behind the guest and reaches under guest’s armpits at the shoulders and reached around to grasp the guest’s forearms. The second lifter reaches under the knees of the guest. Both lift simultaneously to move the guest from chair to dock or boat using proper lifting techniques (lifting through the knees not the back).
Hoyer Lift Transfer

The CRAB floating dock has two base mounts for the Hoyer hydraulic lift on the right and left side of the dock, depending upon which boat a guest will be boarding or a preferred seat position. Place the Hoyer Lift securely in the base mount and lower the lift by releasing the pressure from the hydraulic pump.

Prior to placing a guest in the Hoyer Lift, position the boat so that the seat the guest will be placed is immediately below the hangar attached to the end of the arm on the lift. Make sure the boat is securely tied in this position. If necessary, have a Crew member maintain the boat’s position. Next, swing the arm back over the dock to a position the guest’s wheelchair can be reached by the hangar. Make sure the arm is not swung back over the dock at a height that may strike the guest’s body. The arm will likely be positioned close to the guest’s face, so be particularly careful when positioning the arm with the hangar.

The guest will need to have a proper lifting cloth or sling with attachments for connecting to the hangar on the lift arm. Generally, guests arrive with their own lifting cloth and possibly sitting on it in their chair. If not, CRAB has a sling stored in the trailer at SPSP. The sling has four loops on the corners that are to be connected to the metal hangar. The two, back loops are connected straight over the guest’s back to the hangar. The two, leg loops are crossed on the hangar to secure the legs in position. A CRAB Staff Member or Fleet Director must be present for the use of the Hoyer Lift with a guest.

Once the guest’s sling is secure, the hydraulic pump can be pumped to raise the guest from their wheelchair. After lifting the guest from their chair have the chair removed from under the guest. Raise the guest to a height that is sufficient to swing the guest over the deck of the boat to the boat seat.

Lower and position the guest with the assistance of a Crew member in the boat guiding the guest’s body in the sling to position the guest in the middle of the seat. Lower the arm to unhook the sling loops from the hangar. Be careful to keep the arm away from the guest’s face. The sling can remain underneath the guest while sailing and the seat belt can be easily attached over the guest sitting on the sling. Raise the arm and swing it away from the cockpit and back over the dock.

To lift a guest from the boat using the Hoyer Lift this process is repeated. The positioning of the boat so the lift will reach the guest is important and a Crew can hold the boat in position. It is not as critical to have the chair placed exactly where it needs to be on the dock as it can be moved into position by the caregiver while the guest is attached to the Hoyer Lift. Gently let the air out of the hydraulic lift and position the guest back into their wheelchair. Have the caregiver assist with the removal of the sling underneath of the guest. Return the sling to the CRAB registration table or the trailer. Do not leave it on the dock or in the boat.

SKIPPER CHECK/SAILING LIST

BOAT #: Please circle to correspond with boat:  1  2  3  4  5  6

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECK:

SEAT MOUNTS/STRAPS – CRACKS/WEAR
SAFETY BRIEFING – HEAD, HANDS, FEET
ALL GUESTS WEARING PROPERLY SIZED PFDs
GUESTS STRAPPED IN/BACK or SEAT CUSHIONS
if necessary
GEAR IN CABIN PROPERLY SECURED:

__ Life Ring __ Life line __ Anchor and Rode
__ First Aid kit __ Boat hook __ Docking lines (at least 2)
__ Fire extinguisher (charged) __ Oar __ Type IV throw cushion
__ 2 Fuel Canisters __ Bilge pump handle __ Fenders (2)
__ Electric distress flare (operable) __ Chart of local area __ Winch handle
__ Foam block footrest __ Bucket and sponge with 6-feet of line attached
__ Two-way marine radio (operable and on Channel 78 or designated channel)

ENGINE (if installed) CHECKED/CLAMPED
PROPANE FUEL LEVEL SATISFACTORY
SAILS/LINES CHECKED FOR WEAR

POST-SAILING CHECK:

ALL PERSONAL GEAR OFF BOAT
ENGINE RAISED/ TILTED
BOAT LINES CLEATED PROPERLY
BOAT FENDERED PROPERLY
TURN OFF RADIO & RETURN
SAILING LIST:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

COMMENTS/REPAIRS (use back if necessary)

Skipper __________________ Signature __________________

DATE: ___________________
Volunteer Sign-Off Form

Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating, Inc.
Volunteer Operations Protocols & Guide
Adopted April 2, 2018

Name: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

Email: ________________________________

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have read and understand the information contained in the CRAB Fleet/Guest Operations Manual. I agree to follow at all times the protocols and guide instructions in the performance of my duties and responsibilities as a CRAB volunteer. I understand that safety is the number one priority of CRAB operations and as a volunteer providing sailing services to CRAB guests, it is my responsibility to follow the safety protocols and to report immediately to a CRAB Staff Member or Fleet Director any instance of a variance from the safety protocols by anyone (including self) at any time.

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________