



## Frequently Asked Questions Weather and Routing Information

**Q: Are there specific rules governing the use of weather forecasting and routing information and services while racing?**

A: Yes.

Racing Rules of Sailing RRS 41 c) says that a boat shall not receive outside help from any outside source, except help in the form of information freely available to all boats. [ISAF Case 120](#) defines “information freely available” as information that is available without monetary cost and that may be easily obtained by all boats in a race.

The Vic-Maui 2016 Notice of Race section 15 states that the transmission or receipt while racing of any communication for the direct or indirect benefit of an individual boat is prohibited. This includes fee-for-service weather information and all routing information or advice.

Before a boat’s preparatory signal, it is not racing and therefore can access any information.

**Q: Does Vic-Maui modify the above rules in any way?**

A: No.

Vic-Maui subscribes to a common ocean racing philosophy regarding outside assistance with weather and routing. While racing, boats are expected to use freely available information and do their own weather and routing analysis onboard the boat.

**Q: I have to pay for airtime. Does this mean any data received on the communications device is not “information freely available”?**

A: No.

The rules apply only to the type of information received, not the communications method by which it is received. Competitors are free to choose between SSB/HF radio, Satphone, Iridium Go, inTouch or other communication devices and services to receive permissible information.



**Q: Can you provide examples of information considered “freely available”?**

A: Most government published weather or routing information such as NOAA/NWS and Environment Canada weather forecasts, GRIB files, and pilot charts are freely available.

Some information providers offer basic weather information for “free”, without any required subscription or purchase.

**Q: What if my provider charges for weather information, or bundles communications services and weather information?**

A: Some information providers offer enhanced weather or routing information for a price, and/or have bundles for a price that include weather or routing information with the communication service.

If the weather or routing information is not easily available to all boats, costs money, has been tailored for a boat, or is part of a bundle that combines weather and routing information with communications services for a payment, it is not permissible.

**Q: What are my responsibilities?**

A: All sailors compete within the recognized principles of sportsmanship and fair play. When making choices about weather and routing information and services, competitors must give careful consideration to ensuring that the information they are accessing is permitted within the Vic-Maui rules, including the Racing Rules of Sailing.

**Still Have Questions?**

Review RRS 41. [Download and review ISAF Case 120.](#)

Please contact Rich Ballantyne, Vic-Maui Technical Committee Chair, at [tc-chair@vicmaui.org](mailto:tc-chair@vicmaui.org).



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