

The Early Worry Items

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OK, you've made the decision to sign on to the fun adventure of a sailing race to Hawaii – now when is the start? But you are now just at the start of getting ready, not at the pin end of the line. After the inevitable “holy crap, what have I done?” moment passes, owners and their teams need to make a list of the things that need to be in place so they are ready to go when the starting horn sounds.



While many decisions can (and sometimes should) be postponed until later in the process, there are a few important items that can require significant lead time and which should be dealt with, or at least planned for, well in advance.

Shockingly to some owners, obtaining the right insurance for an ocean voyage is not as simple as calling your broker (or going on-line) and ordering more insurance. Most yacht insurance policies have restrictions on operating areas and/or participating in racing. Obtaining insurance for going into an offshore race can take a significant effort, including the possibility of having to change carriers, with complications such as requiring a survey. And adding coverage for rig, sails or other items can add further complication. It pays to check with your current carrier very early in the process.

Another item that can befuddle preparation efforts is the required liferaft. [The Offshore Special Regulations](#) make quite clear that the old Swiftsure days of simply borrowing an old raft from a friend and stuffing it in the quarter-berth are long gone. The liferaft has to be fit for ocean going service, approved to the right standard, be big enough for all of the crew, and serviced by an approved facility. A decision on whether to buy a liferaft, rent one, or borrow a suitable one should be made early. And as important, a decision on where to store it has to be made. You don't want it ripped off if you capsize, be able to actually launch it while the boat is sinking, and work when it is supposed to. Plan accordingly!

“Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink” was a problem for the Ancient Mariner. And it is a problem that skippers need to sort out early. Carrying enough water is a solution, but boats will need to find space (and deal with the weight) of 3L per person per day. If the budget allows, the other solution is a water-maker. But its location, connections and maintenance need to be thought through well in advance.

It seems obvious that a boat that wants to get to Maui must have the mast stay up, and the rudder and keel stay on. So you might want to check that. While the new [Offshore Special Regulations](#) specifically require a structural inspection, it has always been good seamanship to do so. Qualified boatyards, shipwrights and riggers are always busy, so getting to this work early will pay off and prevent you from being stuck in the boatyard when you should be starting.

And last item on this early worry list is getting your crew together. Finding adventurous, experienced people who won't want to cut each other up for fish bait after 2 weeks at sea together is not as easy as it sounds. Finding the right

navigator and watch captains is critical, but having the right crew to ensure not only your sailing success, but share in the myriad of preparation tasks will make the adventure fun for everyone. You need to also remember that getting the necessary training, especially during these covid times, will take planning (more on this to follow). And your crew has to have the documents to enter Canada and the United States – before the start!

This might all sound a little daunting, but Vic-Maui wants your adventure to be a success. Your mentor is an excellent resource to help you think through the decisions. And the Technical Committee is always ready to answer questions and will feed preparation information throughout the process. Just remember, everything gets easier if you start early.