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INTRODUCTION

The transition from bay sailing to coastal and offshore passages brings with it the need for an increased degree of self sufficiency including managing medical emergencies at sea. Transoceanic voyages to other nations adds a further degree of complexity with the need to consider personal fitness, pre-existing medical conditions, limited access to outside medical assistance and preparation for exposure to a range of environmental elements as well as endemic diseases within the areas to be visited.

The ‘Special Regulations’ section of the Yachting Australia ‘Racing Rules of Sailing 2013-16’ (commonly referred to as the ‘Blue Book’) provides an excellent guide to determine your needs for self sufficiency depending on the area in which you intend to voyage based on a system of Categories for Events. Cat 1-4 requirements describe offshore sailing activities which differ from the Cat 5-6 events sailed inshore. The prescriptions for each of the categories will guide you re training requirements, Medical Kit contents and storage. The following table summarises the category descriptions and gives examples of races conducted by the Ocean Racing Club of Victoria (ORCV) to various destinations to assist you with determining your needs.

YA 2.01		Distance	Waters	Day/night	Rescue	ORCV Races
Cat 1	Offshore	Long distance	Well offshore	Yes	Self sufficiency	Melb to Osaka (1+)* Melb to Vanuatu
Cat 2	Offshore	Extended	Not far offshore	Yes	Self sufficiency	Melb to Hobart Melb to King Island Melb to Launceston Melb to Portland Melb to Port Fairy Melb to Stanley
Cat 3	Offshore		Protected	Yes	Limited	Latitude Series (3+) * Melb to Apollo Bay
Cat 4	Offshore	Short	Close to shore	Generally daylight	Limited	Latitude Pursuit (BYS to SYC) Boxing Day Dash ORCV Double-handed Bay race
Cat 5	Inshore		Protected Sheltered	Day Night (5N)	Limited	Melb to Geelong Geelong to Melb
Cat 6	Inshore	Short	Protected	Daylight only	Available	Winter Series

* Additional requirements over and above YA requirements for these events as per NOR



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In the state of Victoria, there are also **additional legislative requirements** to be met with regards to access, storage, administration and disposal of drugs for the Medical Kit. The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 (the Act) and the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2006 (the Regulations) require secure storage of both -

- Schedule 8 (Drugs of dependence) including morphine, pethidine, proladone,
- Schedule 4 drugs (labelled Prescription Only Medicine) which includes all other drugs for which prescriptions are generally required, e.g. antibiotics, Panadeine Forte, Tramadol, Stemetil, etc

Hence there is a 'Protocol for Lawful Supply of Schedule 4 & Schedule 8 Poisons to Racing Yachts in Victoria' which requires accessing of these listed drugs directly from a registered pharmacist - not the internet!. It is also illegal to request your local medical practitioner to write a prescription for drugs for the purpose of the boat Medical Kit. A medical practitioner can only write a prescription for drugs after having made a medical diagnosis with regards to the patient presenting to them and scripts can only be written in that patient's name and administered to the identified patient according to the written instructions. Further information is provided under **Medical Kit**.

PREPARATION

Planning and training are critical for a successful voyage and both can never be commenced too early.

CREW

Fitness to undertake the planned voyage

Offshore sailing is not a short sprint but an endurance event which requires you to manage your sleep, nutrition, hydration, physical and mental activity under a whole range of weather and environmental conditions. Regular watches which roll over like clockwork can rapidly become prolonged periods of exposure to the elements, sleep and food deprivation, dealing with sea sickness or injury in either yourself or other crew members, with a limited capacity for respite, so starting fit, fresh and informed is crucial.

1. GP check up

Visit your GP at least 6 weeks prior to any major race for a general check up and access adequate supplies of personal regular medications to cover you for the duration of your trip. Regular personal medication is best managed with a weekly set up, either in a dosette box or sheets of medication stored in a sealable plastic box. To ensure you do not lose all your



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medication supplies, it is wise to pack each week's requirements separately into cryovacced bags and open as needed. Whilst you are having your liferaft serviced or are organising hire, it is worthwhile considering the need to pack a pair of magnifying glasses and a spare pack of emergency medication in case of emergency.

If you have any chronic medical conditions (heart disease, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, etc), ensure you have adequate amounts of emergency medications and a written **Action Plan** for managing any events, as other crew will need to be aware of the problem or needed to assist with managing the issue.

A check for skin cancer is also advised to identify any potential lesions which should be attended to prior to your departure.

2. Travel Consult

For the longer distance transoceanic passages, a travel consult is essential to discuss immunisations, prophylaxis for mosquito borne diseases including Malaria, Rabies risk and the management of Traveller's diarrhoea. Some immunisations require several doses of vaccine given at monthly intervals for protection, so consult your GP or travel clinic at least 6 weeks prior to your departure.

3. Dental check

Dental pain is significant and often requires potent analgesics to minimise pain. There is also significant risk of spread of infection to other parts of the body which could potentially cause life threatening illness in susceptible people, so minimise the risk by having a thorough dental check well prior to departure.

4. Personal seasickness remedies

Take your own personal supplies. Do not rely on what may be in the boat Medical Kit or medication you have not previously tested for yourself. Test out what works for you well before your departure to ensure you do not have any side effects from medications which could impair your ability to function on the boat. Be aware that patches containing Scopolamine and some oral medications containing related substances can cause blurring of vision in some people, making it impossible to read charts or instruments or judge distances when working on deck. Drowsiness can also be a problem with some medications derived from antihistamines.

If you are prone to seasickness, start taking your medication **before** you get on the boat and take regularly for the first 48hrs until you are settled in. For long passages, with impending bad weather, start medication before the storm arrives so that you will not be hampered by seasickness when you are most needed. You can safely assume that if you vomit within 20 minutes of taking oral medication, that it has not been absorbed and administration should be repeated. Zofran (generic name – Ondansetron) wafers are an excellent option in these circumstances as they are held in the mouth and are rapidly absorbed from here bypassing



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the stomach.

Rehydration is essential to stop the vomiting / dehydration cycle. Even if you continue to vomit, keep sipping on electrolyte replacement drinks (Gastrolyte, Hydralyte) or sports drinks (Gatorade, Powerade, etc) as these increase the absorption of fluid from the gut.

5. Sunscreen

Take your own supply and apply a minimum of 20 mins prior to sun exposure to allow binding to the skin. In hot weather reapply every 2 hours. If you are in a tropical area where mosquito borne diseases are a problem, apply sunscreen first and then mosquito repellent later. A sunscreen chapstick is also very useful for yachties who are constantly looking up to trim sails and your lower face is not protected by your hat or cap.

6. Water

Carry your own water bottle to reduce the risk of spread of infectious diseases, particularly gastroenteritis, hepatitis, etc. In hot weather, increase your fluid intake accordingly.

Crew Confidential Medical Questionnaire

For Cat 1,2&3 events where yachts are required to be self sufficient for purposes of rescue, it is recommended that each crew member completes a Crew Confidential Medical Questionnaire and for those with chronic medical conditions, to attach a copy of their emergency Action Plan.

It is also strongly recommended that the Crew Confidential Medical Questionnaire be held by the boat Skipper /owner and First Aid Officer to be aware of medical issues and location of personal emergency medication and Action plan for administration.

For incidents where medical evacuation or specialist access is required, personal medical information may also need to be shared with other medical specialists, hospitals, police or other SAR authorities.

BOAT EQUIPMENT

Medical Manuals

For Cats 2-6 events, the standard First Aid Manuals are sufficient, but for Cat 1 a more detailed Medical Guide is required, either the Ship's Captain Medical Guide or WHO International Medical Guide for Ships or equivalent.

Medical Kit

Depending on your passage plan and number of crew, Medical Kit contents need to reflect the areas being sailed through, the number of crew onboard and access to external resources in the event of an emergency at sea. The YA Blue Book Section 4.07 gives the prescribed list of contents but in the event where there are crew members who have documented significant allergies to some listed medications, speak with your GP about an appropriate alternative, to



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minimise the risk of administration of an inappropriate medication to the susceptible crew member.

Simplified “Day” Medical Kit

As the contents of the mandated Medical kit are often expensive and dressings and drugs can be damaged by exposure to moisture, it is a good idea to set up a small simple ‘day’ kit, readily accessible for managing minor injuries, pain, seasickness, etc, which keeps your main Medical Kit intact until needed for more complex issues.

Dental Kits

Dental kits with an accompanying guide for use can be obtained by contacting the ORCV office.

Practical training in the use of the contents of these kits is provided from time to time at the educational training lectures provided prior to ORCV Cat 1 races.

Suturing Kits, Instruments & general medical supplies

Contact the ORCV office for advice on accessing these items.

Accessing Drug Supplies for Yachts in Victoria

1. Find a registered Pharmacist

The ORCV website lists appropriately qualified pharmacists who are familiar with the legal requirements for dispensing prescription drugs for Medical Kits for Racing Yachts.

If you have another pharmacist who is happy to provide the listed drugs, it would be advisable to include a copy of the “Protocol for Lawful Supply of Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 Poisons to Yachts in Victoria” with the other documentation listed below, as not all are familiar with the details of the requirements.

2. Documentation Required to be sighted by Pharmacist -

- YA Blue Book 2013-2016
- Copy of Notice of Race indicating race category and any changes to the Medical Kit requirements compared to those stated in the YA Blue Book
- Proof of entry of the yacht into the Race
- Personal identification of boat representative, to provide proof of boat ownership or crew membership of the yacht entered in the race

3. Storage of Drugs

All medications must be stored in a locked container securely attached to a fixed internal structure of the yacht. The keys to this container must be kept by the appointed First Aid officer and another crew member. Therapeutic storage of medications is usually below 25°C.

4. Record of Drugs

The yacht owner or crew member must keep a record of the purchase, administration



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and disposal of any Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 drugs. Proformas for these records can be downloaded from the ORCV website.

In the event of any drugs reaching their expiry date or having been exposed to prolonged high temperatures, they should be returned to the pharmacist for appropriate disposal and this action be recorded in the Yacht's Drug Register.

Maritime Requirements for carrying Medical Supplies on Yachts

The Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection also has regulations relating to the possession of drugs on yachts departing from and arriving in Australia. Keeping appropriate records of drug supplies and administration will reduce the risk of being detained for further investigation. Further information is available at <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Ente/Avia/Maritime/Requirements-for-yachts-and-pleasure-craft>

MEDICAL INCIDENTS AT SEA

In the event that you require access to medical advice whilst making passage, as an Australian citizen, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority should be your first call. Any subsequent medical evacuation arranged by them will be at no cost. Travel insurance often does not cover crew on board recreational yachts and contacting a local authority directly may incur a hefty fee.

Medical Incident Form

The ORCV Incident Management Team have developed their own Medical Incident Form for recording details of any significant illness or injury whilst at sea to provide ongoing documentation of observations and treatment given, particularly for the longer Cat 1&2 passages.

In the event of a significant medical incident occurring the following protocol should generally be followed by the attendant First Aid Officer -

- (1) Assess and stabilise the casualty
- (2) Complete the Medical Incident Form as accurately as possible
- (3) Call for help.

Depending on where you are, this may be a mobile phone call to the patient's GP or if further offshore, to AMSA via HF radio or preferably satphone to protect the patient's privacy.

- (4) First Aid Officer to relay observations made on the patient and request advice.
- (5) First Aid Officer to record medical advice given on Medical Incident form and administer treatment and /or medication to the patient and continue to record observations as instructed.



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The form also requests your current position and current reliable methods of communication. The ORCV experience with satphones in the 2013 Melbourne to Osaka race highlighted difficulties with access to satellite time and problems with signal drop out, so in an emergency, it is essential that alternative avenues of contact such as a current HF frequency or VHF relay station is recorded when initial contact is made.

Consideration should also be given as to notification of the patient's nominated next-of-kin under these circumstances. Depending on the nature of the incident, there may be a more appropriate person to be contacted to pass the message on to the nominated next-of-kin at the time of the incident, so it is important to record the contact details and relationship to the patient on the Medical Incident Form. If the patient requires medical evacuation, the authorities involved will require a handover of information.

A copy of the ORCV Medical Incident Form is illustrated below and copies can be download from the ORCV website.

Medical Conditions and Drug Administration requiring Medical Advice

Please note that the YA Blue Book clause 4.07.09 under 'Warning' mandates seeking advice in an emergency under certain listed circumstances as inappropriate initial management can worsen the outcome for the patient. These conditions are summarised in the table at the end of this document.

Further Information

For further information about training sessions, go to the ORCV website www.orcv.org.au

If you have any queries about Medical Kits or other medical issues, please contact –

Dr Rosie Colahan - davros@bigpond.net.au or mobile 0409 865 283.