

Info From the US SAILING Meeting of October 19, 1997

The Safety at Sea Committee and the Offshore Committee proposed to the Board of Directors the following Resolution:

RESOLVED, that the 1988/9 edition of *Recommendations for Offshore Sailing* shall include a US Prescription to the effect that personal flotation shall be worn when starting and finishing without exception and at all other times when on deck and the boat is racing, except when the Captain of the boat directs that flotation may be set aside.

US SAILING's Board of Directors approved the Resolution.

REMARKS

1. The publication *Recommendations for Offshore Sailing* is the document which defines what scantlings and equipment are necessary for certain Categories of offshore racing. Off Soundings bases its Minimum Equipment and Accommodations Standard on that publication's Category 4.
2. It is not clear if the US Prescription required by the Resolution will apply only to certain Categories, or will be a general requirement applying to all Categories.
3. "Personal flotation" is not limited to US Coast Guard approved devices. There are available several inflatable devices which are worn around the waist that, when inflated, provide the needed 35 lbs. of buoyancy. Some are actuated by lanyard, others by a dissolving seal.
4. The feeling was that we should enact this and stop losing our friends at sea. An analogy: some years ago, helmets were required to be worn by bicycle riders. At first, it was a macho thing not to wear one. But now, it's a routine thing that helmets are worn.
5. Off Soundings needs to ascertain how the Prescription is worded and to decide at the January meeting whether to include that requirement in its Minimum Equipment and Accommodations Standard in 1998.
6. We've had only one or two people go over the side in our races about every other year. So far, there have been no fatalities, in recent memory. The objective is to keep it that way.