

Sail to the Conditions

I was driving on State Highway 1 the other day when my eye fell on a road sign that said *Drive to the Conditions*. I guess it means that when driving along, one takes into account the weather conditions, amount of traffic, time of the day/night and anything else that might otherwise distract you from driving safely. Perhaps you slow down a bit, keep a longer than normal distance from the car in front of you or not overtaking that tree truck ahead of you. In other words, you are taking extra care to make sure that you get to your destination safe and well, even if it means you are getting there a little later than you had hoped.

Isn't that the same when we sail our boats, regardless whether we are crossing Cook Strait or engage in a race on Wellington Harbour? *Sail to the Conditions*, safety first. When I was much younger I was a bit of a daredevil, taking sometimes unnecessary and dangerous risks. I have become wiser since and I drive and sail *to the conditions*.

Driving and sailing to the conditions puts the onus on you and me, it appeals directly to our sense of responsibility. It means that we must do everything reasonably and practicably possible to not bringing ourselves and others in danger. Driving our cars or sailing our boats *to the Conditions*, makes us good drivers, good skippers.

I hear some of you say, why not legislate for that? We do! There is the Road Code and there are the YNZ Safety Regulations. The difference between these two pieces of legislation is that in order to get your driver's licence, you get tested for your knowledge of the Road Code and your ability to safely drive a car. Fail those tests and you won't get your licence. That's not the case in yachting or pleasure boating in general. There are no tests, no licences, so the onus is squarely on us as yachtsmen and women to not only be familiar with and understand the Safety Regulations, but also that we learn to *Sail to the Conditions*. Otherwise put, don't do anything stupid. Think and become the best sailor you can. It is impossible to legislate for every potential occurrence of potential danger; with every rule we create, we also create a loophole or at least time in the protest room. We don't want that.

The Notice of Race and the Sailing Instructions in any yacht race set out the general rules and behaviour when racing our boats. These documents have never been intended to be an exhaustive list of rules, do's and don'ts in yacht racing. Having said that, it is expected that responsible yachtsmen and women abide by the Safety Rules set out by Yachting New Zealand. That is why all our races, including the 24-Hour Endurance Yacht Race are governed by these rules. Allow me to once again refer to the source of this document: <https://www.yachtingnz.org.nz/shop/ynz-safety-regulations-of-sailing-2017-2020> Get familiar with it, buy a hard copy to keep on your boat. We are not going to be tempted trying to cover any potential occurrence of danger by another rule in the NoR or SI. Having said that, we have made it compulsory for skippers in the 24-Hour Endurance Yacht Race to attend the skippers' briefings on Thursday the 7th of March and Saturday the 16th of March. The Race Officer will take you through the Sailing Instructions and point out matters that require your attention, so you can *Sail to the Conditions*. As mentioned elsewhere, the 24-Hour Endurance Yacht Race will challenge you as a skipper and crew. Accept that challenge with all the responsibility that goes with it. Enjoy.

Theo Muller

Race Director 24-Hour Endurance Yacht Race

