



2026

RACE TO ALASKA RACE PACKET

REQUIREMENTS THE APPLICATION PROCESS THE RULES THE LACK OF RULES YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED THE GLORY HOW TO NOT DIE DATES TIMES PLACES BEING VETTED BEING DENIED DEADLINES THE WAYPOINTS DISQUALIFICATION THE PRIZES AVOIDING BEARS WINNERS LOSERS RACE INSTRUCTIONS FAQ'S WHAT IS SUPPORT WHAT NO MOTORS MEANS THE PARTIES THE SHAME THE SECRETS SOME LIES THE START LINE THE FINISH LINE THE QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD NEVER ASK THE RULES AGAIN JUST IN CASE YOU MISSED THEM EVERYTHING WE'VE LEARNED FROM TEN YEARS OF CARNAGE AND EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO SHUT UP AND GO.

Race to Alaska takes place on lands and waters that are loved, cared for, and reverently stewarded by the Indigenous people of the Salish Sea and have been since time immemorial.

Today, Indigenous people are our neighbors, colleagues, and partners in a shared love and respect for the sea and its teachings.

We are grateful to respectfully live and work in this place. This acknowledgment is one act in the ongoing process of working to deepen our relationship with the people of these lands and waters.

Bienvenidos al Paquete de la Carrera

If you intend on racing, it'll be assumed that you have read this, read it again, printed it out, covered it in notes, brought it to your kid's dance recital and read it while ignoring your kid, then hosted a local trivia night with questions all taken from these pages.

What we're saying is read the whole thing. Because when you ask us questions that were already answered here, we're going to punish you by adding your address to random email lists.

THAT SAID, beyond the jokes lies the truth: the water is cold, the seas get big, and the only thing between you and disaster is what you know, what you prepared, and what you decided when it mattered.

Participate at Your Own Risk

Competitors in this event are participating entirely at their own risk. A team's decision to participate in the race, or to continue racing once they've begun, is theirs alone. By participating in this event, each competitor releases the race organizers and officials from any and all liability associated with such competitor's participation in this event to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Short version: This is dangerous. All of us at R2AK High Command advise that if you're not damned sure you've got all your ducks in a row, and all of them float, you shouldn't do this.

Calendar

All times Pacific Standard and subject to change due to: weather, whimsy, bad omens.

Paperwork		
November 15		Application Period Opens
April 15		Applications Closed
April 30		Registration Deadline
Port Townsend Events		
June 12	1 PM	R2AK Moorage Open
June 12	TBA	Racer Only Lamb Roast
June 13	10 AM-2 PM	Registration
June 13	2:15 PM	Skipper's Meeting
June 13	3 PM - ?	R2AK Ruckus!
June 14	5 AM	Proving Ground Start
Victoria and Beyond		
June 15	5 PM	Proving Ground End
June 15	6 PM	Meeting and Party
June 16	3-6 PM	Victoria Open Docks
June 16	6 PM	Victoria Party/Meeting
June 17	High Noon	Le Mans Start
June 29	High Noon	Grim Sweeper Departs
July 9	High Noon	Race End
September 11	6 PM	R2AK Blazer Party

Note: Victoria Party has been changed from June 15-16. (Change on May 21)

Get In The Race

Application & Getting Vetted

Because yes, we do say no.

A solid application is your first step into the 2026 race. We'll collect basics - names, crew size, vessel details - but the real heart of the application process are the Adventure Resumes that you provide us. You need one for each team member, preferably cut-and-pasted into a single document.

Your Adventure Resume is the main thing we use to decide if you and your floating contraption belong in the Race to Alaska. This is where you convince us, with cold facts, that you can survive the race - and ideally, not become a Coast Guard training exercise.

What We Want

- ✓ Your real-world experience on the water *and off*. We certainly need to be confident about your water skills, but other adventure types are appropriate to include if they demonstrate your resilience and skill in the face of adversity.
- ✓ The worst conditions you've faced - and how you *actually* handled them.
- ✓ What kinds of boats you've operated, where, in what capacity, and how often.
- ✓ Stories of close calls, bad weather, gear failure, or sketchy traffic - and how you kept it together.
- ✓ Times you used good judgment and backed off when it was smart to do so.
- ✗ Self-assessments like "ready," "determined," or "badass." Let your history speak for itself.
- ✗ Long narratives that we have to wade through to find facts.

Think logbook, not memoir.

Format

- ½ - 1 page max (per human on your team).

- Bullet points are your friend. Use them.
- PDF format before uploading, please.
Keep it short, factual, and readable. No one's getting in on vibes alone.

Don't write anything like this:

"My grandfather introduced me to sailing, and I fell in love with the freedom of the water. I've always dreamed of the sea, and it's where I feel most alive."

If you get in, we might talk about that stuff on our second date.

After you submit

The Vetting Team reviews your resumes and your boat, then makes the yes/no call. If we can't tell whether you belong out there, the Race Boss will reach out and ask for more information. But let's get this right the first time.

Registration

Because application and registration are different words

If your team is accepted to race, the Team Captain will receive an acceptance email from The Registrar, which includes a link to Register. Note: *regardless of how you structure your team, the person listed as Team Captain in the registration will be the only person that we ever email directly.*

The registration form is a bit of a beast. Breathe in, breathe out, and accept it. Depending on your team size, this thing takes time. And the system we use doesn't allow for saving your progress. It's all one go.

The Team Captain will be filling out the information for EVERYONE on the team, and they'll need to collect that information before starting registration. The registrar will provide you with all of the information fields you will need before you begin.

Once you've submitted your registration, you'll receive a copy of it. This is the proof that the typo was your fault, not ours.

Look, we get it: things change - boats break, legs break, bank accounts break, team members get mad at each other and become embattled in boat ownership legal disputes before ever getting to the start line. And so some of you will be wanting to change team details. There's a certain level of this that we will let slide, but just know that it's more complicated than you

think it should be. We will be shutting down the opportunity to make any last changes earlier than you'd like, and we will let you know when that's gonna happen.

Once you're accepted, you have until MAY 1 2026 to register. Please do it waaaay before that.

Race Rules

Ugh, we don't like them either.

Don't Break the Law

This race complies and adheres to COLREGS and USCG Navigation Rules and Regulations; we do not employ special racing rules. The Rules of the Road exist to keep you and everyone else on the water safe, and both Canadian and U.S. authorities expect them to be followed. Up-to-date rules (for both countries) can be found [here](#).

Don't Have a Motor

No motors onboard, at all, even if they're disabled, not hooked up, filled with cottage cheese, etc. This includes motors and engines of any fuel type, and that includes fossil-fuel-powered generators to keep the lights on. Human and wind power only for propulsion. Solar, wind, and human power are okay for charging things - and no, not for charging a battery that powers propulsion of any kind. Bilge pumps are okay, unless it's really big and pointed aft (see Rule 8).

NEW IN 2026: We're finally relenting to the whiners, and fuel cell generators like EFOYs - which have been allowed in the past for moving ballast around, are no longer allowed. Because boo.

Don't Be Supported

You cannot pre-arrange any kind of support during the race - no weather routers back home feeding you scoops, no one booking hotels for you (though you're welcome to do that yourself), no pre-stashed food drops.

Resources found along the way - stores, tools, gear, a hotel with vacancy - those are fair game, as long as they're equally available to anyone.

And then there's the human wildcard. If someone hears through the grapevine that a crew stole your winch handle and shows up with a replacement, or brings you pizza on a whim, that's not a resource—it's just someone being excellent. Call it generosity, call it trail magic, just don't call it in advance.

The standard is simple: if the help you're getting isn't available to anyone else in the race, it probably crosses the line. Every situation is different, and Race Command will assess things case by case. If it feels like you're breaking the rule, you probably are.

Don't Switch or Add Crew

There's no adding crew along the way. If for any reason you want or need to remove a crew member your team will be re-vetted in real time. Going from three people to two is a major change, going from 9 to 8 is less so. If the person leaving changes the team to the point where we would have said no in the first place... that'll be a DQ. Contact the Race Boss immediately to start the process.

Don't Skip The Waypoints

Teams must go through Seymour Narrows and Bella Bella, BC. Why? Who knows.

Don't Turn Off Your Tracker

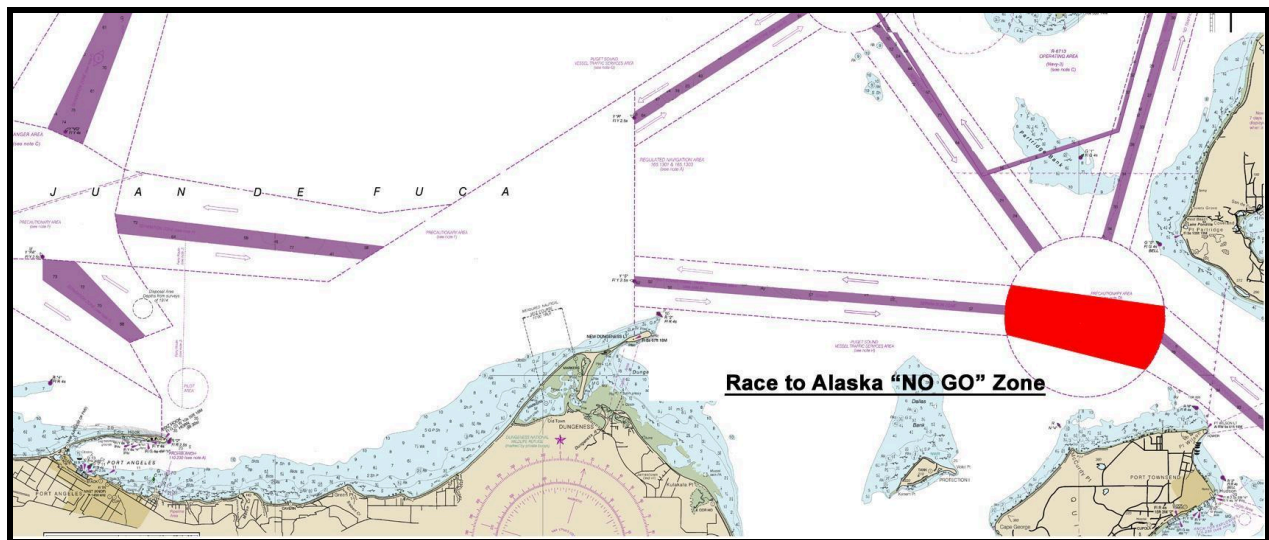
We will issue you a GPS tracker. Don't turn it off, don't lose it.

Finish in Time, Don't Get Caught

You're out of the race if you get passed by the Grim Sweeper, our sweep boat. It departs Port Townsend as soon as the first racer crosses the finish line or at High Noon on June 29—whichever happens LAST and will log about 75 miles a day until it reaches Ketchikan. If they catch up to you, you'll be tapped out and will be officially out of the race.

Don't Enter the VTS No Go Zone Near Port Townsend

The honchos of Seattle Traffic Services have deemed that getting yourself inside the TSS around the "SA" buoy north of Port Townsend is a bad idea, and as such have made it illegal for you to do so in our event permits. And so check out the map below, and don't go where it's RED. (We know, that's precisely where you want to go. But since nobody can do it, you're not missing out.)



RULE 8

If we decide it's necessary to consult a lawyer to figure out if you are disqualified or not, you are automatically disqualified.

(the remainder of this page is intentionally blank for dramatic effect.)

FAQs About The Rules

These often come to us in the form of complaining.

Can I portage my boat?

As long as you don't break any other rules doing it - be our guest. You just can't involve any other vehicle, or stash something with wheels in the bushes beforehand.

Do I really have to remove my engine? Can't I just disable it?

Great Odin's Raven, we get this question a lot, and we don't know how to be clearer. ABSOLUTELY NO ENGINES, ever, forever, period, the end. Take it out.

What is the law regarding "_____ "?

We use the same Google you do.

What does it mean to go "through" Bella Bella?

Oof. We really thought y'all could figure this one out on your own. But as evidenced by online forum threads on certain unnamed politically-unaffiliated sailing websites, you can't. Draw a line between the dock in Bella Bella and the dock in Old Bella Bella. Make your boat go over that line. We couldn't care less which direction you go.

What do I do if I decide to quit mid-race?

Hmm.. I guess that's up to you. But first thing - as long as you've gotten yourself into a reasonably safe situation after going through whatever caused you to drop out - please get a hold of the Race Boss, so we know just what the heck is happening.

What if the tracker doesn't work? My family will get worried.

We do what we can to make sure the tracker system is top-notch. But satellite maintenance is above our paygrade, and we make no guarantee that this system will always be accurate, and your family should NOT rely on it for their ability to sleep at night. Get them to trust your skills, experience, and planning instead. And you can always set up redundant systems to contact them.

The Winners And Prizes

1st Place

\$10,000 cash. Nailed to wood. Bring a crowbar.

2nd Place

A Set of Steak Knives. 8 knives, to be exact.

Any Team That Arrives in Ketchikan

Pride. And not like the kind in the Bible that turns you bad.

Required Equipment

What The Law Says to Have

Race to Alaska requires you to follow all Safety Equipment carriage laws, and we are going to inspect your boat to make sure you have it all. What laws? All the laws - International, US and Canadian. The laws are generally written such that your required equipment is dictated by the governing body holding jurisdiction over your vessel's home port.

Study up and know the laws. Depending on your boat type you may be required to carry additional items such as: radar reflector, fire extinguisher, boarding ladder, anchor and rode, bailer/bilge pump or compass. (Really. Some nincompoop made a compass optional on some boats.)

GPS Tracker

We will issue you a GPS tracker, and you've got to use it. Never turn it off from the moment it touches your hand.

This year, for the first time, we are not going to take the \$200 deposit on the tracker. We're going to go a little more stick than carrot - if you do not return the tracker, we will charge you the full cost of the device, which is about \$450. And if it winds up at the bottom of the ocean (with or without your boat), we will be very sorry for you and your boat, and then we will still charge you.

PLB or EPIRB

Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) are the primary tool that Coast Guards worldwide want you to carry. And we require each team to carry at least one EPIRB OR PLB aboard. Best practice is one PLB per crew member.

Let's be clear: Garmin InReaches or similar devices ARE NOT EPIRBs OR PLBs. They are fundamentally different, and so while it's awesome that you have one, you'll still need to pick up the real thing. Once you register for the race, you'll be supplied with a (hefty) discount from our sponsor Fisheries Supply and that's where we suggest you pick one of these puppies up.

These devices are useless unless you register them, which you can do [here](#).

MAY 8 EDIT:

It turns out that the marketing companies have started calling anything that beeps a "PLB".

To pass muster for R2AK, you need a 406 MHz SARSAT/COSPAS PLB or EPIRB. The real deal. The "summon-help-from-orbit" kind of device. If it relies on AIS or DSC alone - even if the packaging whispers sweet nothings like *Personal Locator Beacon* - that's not the butter we spread around here.

And if you're buying one purely because the rules say so, that's a useful warning flare in itself. The requirement is not paperwork. It's an invitation to spend some quality time imagining what "remote," "cold," and "catastrophic" actually mean in this race. Then choose the tools you'd want when the ocean stops being whimsical and starts conducting exit interviews.

VHF Radio

Another thing that the law tends to leave out. But yeah, you need one. Heck, bring three - they're awesome. They tell the weather, let you talk to Norwegian ship captains, and sometimes even have a flashlight. We recommend getting one with DSC, and to get an MMSI number for it. What is an MMSI number? [Check this out](#).

Proving Ground Instructions

The R2t's a qualifiAK Proving Ground is not a race. ler, and if you want to continue to Stage Two, you need to complete this leg within 36 hours and without getting rescued. What you are "proving" is that what you wrote in your application is true.

Start

The official start will be 5 AM on June 14, and teams have 30 minutes to cross the start line to be entered into the race. The starting line extends from the end of the Northwest Maritime Center dock to a committee boat. There will be a starting sequence. Maybe it will have flags and stuff. We'll tell you at the Skipper's Meeting.

Route

Port Townsend to Victoria without entering the VTS No-Go Zone. (See Rules above.)

Time Limit

36 hours. That's 5 PM on June 15.

Finish

Finishing means you have passed the Ogden Point Breakwater. Racers finishing within the time limit without getting rescued are eligible to continue in Stage Two. Yes, in this year's race. We're not going to let you finish this year's Stage One and race in the next one *carte blanche*.

Entering Canada

All racers must make entry to Canada at the Raymur Point Customs Dock located just west of Laurel Point before proceeding to the Causeway Docks. There is a single telephone on the customs dock that will connect you to a customs agent. This process can be LONG, and there isn't a toilet on that dock so... plan ahead.

You can also call that phone number directly as you enter the harbor, but you must stop at the customs dock until you have the go ahead. The phone number is: 1-888-226-7277

Tying Up in Victoria

A vessel's ceremonial finish is declared when one of the crew members rings the bell located at the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority Causeway Docks, right in front of the Empress Hotel. Where exactly will the bell be? You'll figure it out.

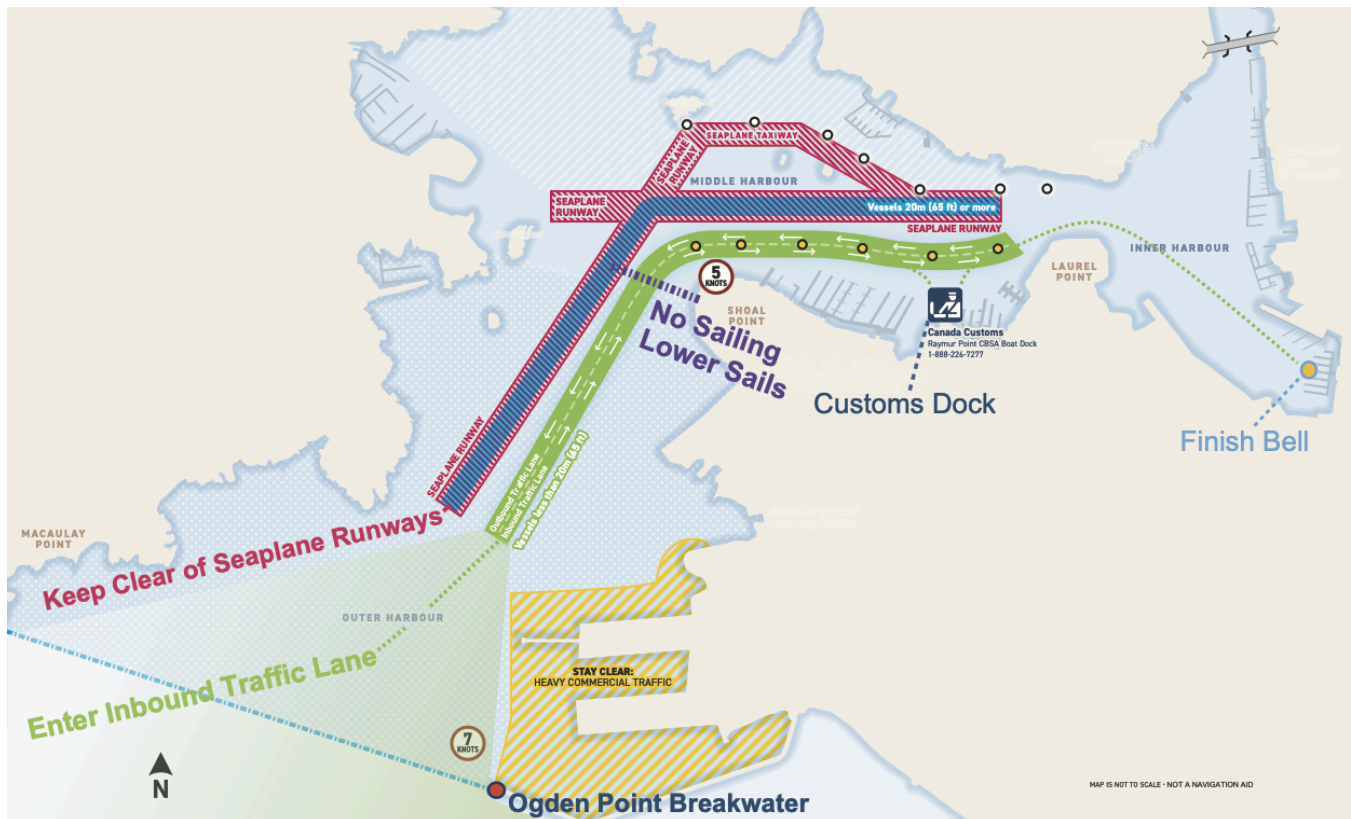
Important Things About the Port of Victoria

The Port of Victoria is home to a certified water airport and receives hundreds of aircraft arrivals and departures every day. There are designated runways in the center channel of the Outer Harbour and the Middle Harbour. Avoid entering the harbour on these runways—if you do, Royal Canadian Mounted Police will stop you, shout at you, cause you to be passed by everyone else—and all this while mounted...on a harbor porpoise or something. Oh, also you might get hit by a freaking airplane. So use the traffic lanes marked on the charts, and keep yellow buoys to port at all times.

All ships maneuvering in waters of the Port of Victoria shall proceed at a safe speed at all times and shall not exceed 7 knots. All ships maneuvering in waters east of Shoal Point shall proceed at a safe speed at all times and shall not exceed 5 knots. (And if you are worried about the speed limit...hats off to you.)

No blackwater discharge or anchoring in Victoria. Just say no.

Sails shall not be used in the MIDDLE, INNER and UPPER HARBOUR and all sails shall be lowered even when under power. Just check out the map below.



Leg Two (Full Race) Instructions

This is the main event, folks.

Start

Stage Two begins with a Le Mans start from street level above the Causeway Docks in Victoria. At High Noon on June 17, you will be dashing to your boat to get that 2-minute edge on this 700-mile leg of the race. Giddyup.

Route

Victoria to Ketchikan, passing through Seymour Narrows and Bella Bella.

Time Limit

Official race end is at High Noon on July 9, as a blanket of fog heralds the Grim Sweeper's entrance into Ketchikan.

Finish

A team's finish is declared when they pass the breakwater of Thomas Basin in Ketchikan, and a horn is sounded, or an amount of excited shouting is heard from the Baranof Fishing Excursions dock. Proceed to said dock where you will be greeted by adoring fans and a frosty beverage. Ring the bell! Depending on the time of day and activity level of the dock, we may need to help you move to another space quickly. Or not. We'll let you know.

Entering the USA

Download the [ROAM App](#) on your phone. As you approach Ketchikan, use it to make legal entry into the country, and you won't have to tangle with Border Agents once you land. If you want to do it the "traditional" way, you can call them once you land at (907) 225-2254. We highly recommend the app.

Grievances

Grievances for perceived race infractions can be made directly to the Race Boss. Any decision made by the Race Boss is final.

As stipulated in Rule 8, if we have to consult a lawyer about your grievance (or anything else during the race) you are automatically disqualified. Don't try to win by pushing the rules; you're better than that.

Parties and Logistics

Racers Only Lamb Roast - 12 June (Friday)

This is when we make the traditional sacrifice to the powers that be...in the form of lamb and whatever else you bring. More info on that will come at a later date in a Racer email.

Port Townsend Official Team Check-in - 13 June from 1000 - 1400

This is old-school registration, IRL.

When you show up to meet Verity the registrar, with or without your whole team, she and her team will confirm your onboard phone numbers, give you some fancy racer t-shirts, and issue you your GPS tracker. This whole bit happens upstairs in the yellow building at The Northwest Maritime Center, 431 Water Street.

*Note: If you want to get one of the famous free R2AK tattoos at The R2AK Ruckus, get to registration early, as there will be a signup there.

Skipper's Meeting - 13 June at 1415

The Skipper's Meeting is open to all racers, not just you skippers. In fact, everyone racing really should attend, as we will be going over some important stuff, and maybe some of your crew pay better attention than you do.

This is also upstairs in the big yellow building at the Northwest Maritime Center.

R2AK Ruckus - 13 June

The Ruckus is a time-honored tradition. It's the place for you to rub shoulders with your competition, your fans, the townsfolk, and likely a few gawkers considering their own R2AK aspirations.

This shindy takes place on the Northwest Maritime Center campus and there will be MUSIC! There will be FOOD! There will be DRINKS!

And as a centerpiece to it all: your fine vessels. If your vessel can be displayed on land, we encourage you to let Race High Command know if you'd like to show it off. Otherwise, you will likely be moored in Point Hudson Marina (information on this to follow in emails to teams)—and you'll be swarmed by your loving fans. Be warned.

As always, if you want to get the R2AK logo tattooed permanently somewhere on your body, we will have a tattoo artist on hand, and we will pay for the first 15 folks to do it. (*There will be a racer signup at registration earlier that day - get there early if you really want that ink.*)

Victoria Skipper's Meeting and Racer Party - 15 June, 1800

Race to Alaska has two skipper's meetings. This one is a little kinder and a little more casually apologetic, as it is the Canadian one. But it's just as important as the American version, so if you're a racer, make sure you're there.

This meeting is paired with a party - with a smattering of pub foods. For a drink ticket and access to the grub, you can grab some cheap tickets during online registration. Anyone looking for a higher BAC% or a fuller stomach can seek out the menu. Friends and family are welcome, but the food is for racers, so hands off! This all takes place at Swan's Pub at 1601 Store St.

Victoria Open Docks - 16 June

We invite all of your adoring fans (and the general public) to come down to the docks and meet you and your boats. This is a goodwill activity well received by Victoria. It'll be from 1200-1800. You are asked to have all or some of your crew on the docks to represent. You'll probably be fixing your pedal drive there on the docks anyway.

Moorage in Port Townsend, Victoria, Ketchikan

Port Townsend

The Northwest Maritime campus in Port Townsend, Washington, is the hub of R2AK activity. (You did know that R2AK is a project of [Northwest Maritime](#), right?) You'll need to get yourself and your boat here. If you need to park a trailer for a few weeks during the race, we've got access to about 10 trailer parking spots in town - we will get specific in a Racer Email when the race gets close. If you need moorage for your boat, we reserve a block of slips at the Point Hudson Marina starting Friday the 12th at 1pm. In the registration form you will have an opportunity to chip in for a piece of dock there. You can also moor your boat at Port Townsend's Boat Haven Marina. It's first come first served. You can also anchor out. There is a boat launch ramp just next to our campus, and also you're welcome to hand launch kayaks and the like on our beach.

Victoria

All the action in Vic happens at the Victoria Causeway Marina. During racer registration you'll sign up for moorage there!

Ketchikan

You made it! Now hopefully you aren't one of those teams that didn't think ahead about what you're going to do with your boat.

The Ketchikan Harbormaster *usually* gives a great deal to racers—2 free nights of moorage. This will require you to register with the Harbormaster before the race—the Race Boss will remind registered racers about this at some point.

Crossing Borders and Personal Responsibility

Entering Canadian and U.S. Waters

It is illegal to land on foreign soil or anchor in foreign waters before clearing customs. Do this, and you will likely have the experience of being held at gunpoint. Yes, this has happened to racers.

Being Admitted into Canada and the U.S.

Just because you show up in a foreign country doesn't mean they have to let you in. Some offenses do prohibit individuals from entering Canada. These can include certain driving offenses and other crimes. Entering this race does not guarantee you will get into Canada.

If you want to bring an animal across the border.

Just don't do it. It can be a hassle.

No weapons

No guns, automatic knives, crossbows, tasers, blowguns, spiked wristbands, kusari, brass knuckles, nunchaku sticks, etc. Just, no weapons. The second amendment stops at the border. We hear that bear spray/mace/pepper spray/etc. are also illegal.

No weed

It may be legal in both Washington State and Canada, but you would be quite foolish to think they're going to let you haul some across the border. No weed.

No apples or avocados

There are a lot of weird rules about food crossing the border. Canadians have a zero-tolerance policy for foreign apples and avocados, and a "more tolerance" policy about cheese and beef jerky: you can bring 44 pounds of each...either? We're not certain on the finer points, but cheese is freaking spendy in Canada. Canadian rules are [here](#).

Nothing made out of cat fur & no Haitian animal hide drums

Not sure why this was ever a problem, but it is a U.S. law.

A full list of what is prohibited to bring into the U.S. is listed and updated [here](#).

Unless you are lured in by the illicit cat fur markets of coastal British Columbia, generally speaking, you ought to make it back into the U.S. if you made it into Canada.

Documents for Entering Canada and the U.S.

If you are a U.S. citizen, ensure you carry proof of citizenship such as a passport, birth certificate, a certificate of citizenship or naturalization, a U.S. Permanent Resident Card, or a

Certificate of Indian Status, along with photo identification. If you are a U.S. permanent resident, ensure you carry proof of your status such as a U.S. Permanent Resident Card.

For other international travelers, you must present a valid passport because it is the only reliable and universally-accepted travel and identification document for the purpose of international travel.

If any of your crew are minors

We recommend that parents who share custody of their children carry copies of their legal custody documents, such as custody rights.

If you share custody and the other parent is not traveling with you, or if you are traveling with minors for whom you are not the parent or legal guardian, you need to carry a consent letter to provide authorization for you to take them on a trip and enter Canada or to re-enter into the U.S. Start looking into it now, this is real.

Emergencies, Emergency Assistance, Fine Print Stuff

If you break down and/or need emergency assistance, you can get towed somewhere to fix your problem, but to continue the race you must begin where you left off under your own steam (by steam we mean your now-broken pedal drive or whatever). This will be easy to see on the tracker interface, so don't try no tricks.

If you're quitting, you can do whatever you like...after you contact us, please.

Like we said, assistance in an emergency is understandable, and you may restart the race after the emergency is ameliorated. Things like being dismasted on a lee shore in a gale, capsizing, hull delamination, medical issues, or running aground all could be considered emergencies, or not. You know best what you, your team, and your vessel are capable of handling. This race is about being bold, not foolhardy. You're in an unsupported race, but not alone, don't forget. Running out of food or water is not an emergency; it's poor planning.

In the event of an emergency, the following is what the Coast Guard will ask you before anything else. You should just print this and laminate it somewhere by your VHF.

- Name of persons onboard, physical description and clothing, age, health info (underlying medical conditions)?
- Are you wearing PFD's?

- Vessel description including color, length, registration numbers, etc.?
- Next of kin/emergency contact name/number/relationship?
- Safety equipment carried on board?

Helping Others

Remember, this is only a race. If you find yourself considering what to do if you see a vessel in distress...let us take a page from the Canadian Shipping Act of 2001:

"Every qualified person who is the master of a vessel in any waters, on receiving a signal from any source that a person, a vessel or an aircraft is in distress, shall proceed with all speed to render assistance and shall, if possible, inform the persons in distress or the sender of the signal.... The master of a vessel in Canadian waters and every qualified person who is the master of a vessel in any waters shall render assistance to every person who is found at sea and in danger of being lost."

This is International Law. If you do not properly respond to a distress call when able, you can be fined and even imprisoned. And it goes against the hallowed code of the sea...

A Note of the Use and Awesomeness of Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and Marine Communications and Traffic Service (MCTS):

Vessel Traffic Services exists in both Washington and Canadian waters. They monitor and manage all commercial traffic along the race route—think of them as air traffic control for the sea. They also will be of you, and you can monitor their radio channels for information on approaching ships, tugs, and other commercial traffic. (See below). We'll be talking about VTS during the skipper's meeting.

Your VHF radio:

Did you know VHF radios don't work if they aren't on, the volume is too low, or it's stashed somewhere you can't hear it? Use it. Create a battery plan and keep it on.

For the race you will always use your team name for all VHF communication with race officials and search and rescue organizations.

Getting Your Boat Home

From Victoria

Well, it's up to you. We recommend enjoying the splendors and sin dens of Victoria for a while and maybe stopping off on some perfect beach on your way home for a barbeque.

From Ketchikan

Other than doing the return trip or selling the boat in Alaska, there are several options for shipping your boat home. The following companies operate terminals in Ketchikan:

Alaska Marine Lines (AML): These folks operate a container barge service with a couple sailings a week to Seattle. As long as your boat fits within the size guidelines, you can ship it home. The boat will need to either sit flat okay or have a trailer/cradle for it. If you have a trailer/cradle you can put it on a barge headed north and have it meet you in Ketchikan.

Samson Barge Lines: Basically the same deal as AML.

Alaska Marine Highway System: The state ferry system is a good option for people traveling with small hand-carry boats and/or also want a ride home. Any boat needing a trailer can travel without an accompanying car as long as there is a car on each end to drop off and pick up. The trip from Ketchikan to Bellingham takes about 36 hours, and you can either camp on deck or reserve a cabin.

Prince Rupert: You can reach this town by car in Canada (hint, hint)...So you could leave a trailer in Prince Rupert and just sail down there.

Ten years of this ridiculous, impossible, glorious thing and the lore is thick with broken boats, stubborn hearts, and the kind of suffering that makes stories worth telling. It's about standing on the edge of something big, taking a breath, and pushing forward. The legends of the last decade earned their place by being bold enough to show up, resourceful enough to adapt, and stubborn enough to keep moving when everything was sore. Now it's your turn. Whatever happens—whether you end up victorious in Ketchikan or broken on a beach along the way—you're part of the story.

