

RYA Competent Crew Practical Course (Sail)

Course Outline

This RYA Competent Crew practical sailing course teaches you the basics of sailing and all the skills you need to be an effective member of a yacht crew. It is a complete basic sailing course suitable for beginners or those with some sailing experience (perhaps in dinghies) who want to ensure a good foundation before the next level. You will learn how to steer the boat on a compass heading and 'on the wind', how to set and trim sails, operate winches, how to prepare a boat to enter and leave harbour, how to pick up moorings and anchor, and of course all the rope work and knots. You will live aboard the boat with the instructor and 3 or 4 other students/crew.

Each day will involve a mixture of short passages from port to port and intensive exercises. We will be in harbour or anchorage every night but on one evening you will get a few hours experience of night sailing. The courses are always great fun. All meals are provided aboard but there will be opportunities to go ashore during some evenings.

Competent Crew Format Options

- 5 Day Course (0900 Monday to 1600 Friday or 0900 Wednesday to 1600 Sunday).
- 3 X 2-day weekends (0900 Saturday to 1600 Sunday).
- 1 X 2-day weekend and 1 X 3 day weekend (0900 Saturday to 1600 Sunday or Monday).
- or you can take the Competent Crew course as part of our 7-day [Adventure Sailing Holiday Cruises](#)

Note that from 1 January 2022 weekend course joining time will be 2000 on the preceding Friday so you will stay aboard for two nights. An evening meal is not included for the Friday night.

5 day courses allow you to complete the course in one cruise so you get the benefit of continuity and the chance to visit the widest range of harbours and anchorages. They are also cheaper so most cost effective.

Weekend courses involve shorter distances from the homeport but they are very effective, great fun and highly popular. You can book just one weekend at a time or in a package. The weekends don't have to be consecutive.

The Adventure Sailing Holiday Cruises are a superb way to learn, get rich experience and combine your training with an amazing holiday. [Check out the possibilities.](#)

Competent Crew Course Locations

5 day and weekend courses run from Chatham, Kent – less than 1 hour from central London. Sailing areas are the River Medway and the Thames Estuary. 5 Day courses take you as far as the Essex and Suffolk coasts or the North Kent coast. Weekend courses run in the Rivers Medway and Swale and the near Thames Estuary within a range of about 30 Miles of Chatham. Adventure trips offer the choice of sailing anywhere around the UK and near continent.

Required Previous Experience or Knowledge

The Competent Crew course requires no prior experience or knowledge.

Age

The minimum recommended age limit is 12 yrs

Achievement

RYA Competent Crew Course Certificate. You will be welcome as crew aboard any yacht. Many owners and skippers are looking for crew and this certificate could be your passport to lots more sailing.

What's Included

For residential courses the price includes a berth on the yacht (this may be in a shared cabin or a single berth in the saloon), all meals aboard from lunch on the first full day to lunch on the last day, tea, coffee etc and all operating expenses including berthing and fuel. (When comparing prices with other schools you may find that some meals are either not included or taken ashore at your expense and berthing costs may be charged to students). Water from the boat's tanks is drinkable. Alcoholic drinks, bottled water or other soft drinks are not included but you are welcome to bring your own. Often people contribute to a 'kitty' to buy some wine with dinner. Wet weather clothing hire (jackets and trousers) is available at £7 per day but capped at £25 for a single course or event. There are no other essential extras but you may want to buy one or two books (see below) and bring a little pocket money for use if you go ashore.

Facilities Aboard

The training yachts are all designed and certificated for 8 persons but we operate RYA courses with a maximum of 5 students to one instructor. Each yacht has 3 double cabins (2 aft and one forward), a saloon that seats up to 8 and converts to provide 2 single berths (on port and starboard sides), a galley with twin sinks, a twin burner gas stove and a refrigerator, and a single toilet/shower compartment. Berth allocations are made by the instructor when you join. Two of the crew may be asked to share a cabin.

The yachts all have 12 volt dc electrical systems including a limited capacity to charge mobile devices via a 12 volt USB socket. 230 volt ac power is available only when the yacht is alongside in a marina and connected to shore power.

What will I need to bring?

The only specialist requirement is a sleeping bag and some suitable footwear – deck shoes (trainers will do) and in case of rain we recommend sea boots. We provide pillows but ask that you bring your own pillow slip. Further information is provided in the suggested packing list – see below under Downloads.

If you want to charge a mobile device you should bring a 12 volt car charger plug (the kind that fits in a cigar lighter socket).

Books

There is no essential pre-course reading before this practical course. However, if you would like to learn some basics beforehand we recommend that you buy the RYA Competent Crew booklet. This is an excellent introduction and helps with the sailing vocabulary. You might also want to buy your own copy of the RYA Sail Cruising Log Book (£5.50) so you can keep a record of your sailing trips and check your progress against the whole of the syllabus at all levels. Both books are available to buy on-line from the RYA website or from our reception when you come to Chatham.

And After my Competent Crew Course?

Get more sailing. Consider joining one of our [Adventure Sailing](#) Holidays which offer superb experience and training in varied locations and conditions. Do the [RYA Day Skipper Theory Shorebased Course](#). And if its your aim to go on to complete day skipper or beyond, why not look at a complete package from beginner to Day Skipper. There are big savings to be made in booking a package – and if you need to keep flexibility you can even leave some elements open dated. See [Special Packages](#) for details.

How to Book

Check out dates, prices and availability on the course calendar near the top right of the page. Click on any dates of interest and they will appear in the email form below. Then add your request – either just for confirmation of availability or to make the reservation. Then press SEND. For weekends, only the individual prices are shown. If you want to book a package tell us in the email what you want and include any dates you would like to include. We will then work out the package price and make the reservation.

Downloads

- [Recommended Packing List](#)
- [Directions to Elite Sailing at Chatham Marina](#)

Customer comments

"Fantastic. Has enthused me. I do not have the words. Thank you!"

Robert Way

"Loved every minute of the course. Looking forward to the next time."

Jane Hampton

"Fantastic week. Excellent food and instruction. Easy to get along with fellow crew members. Felt everyone was given lots of opportunity to try anything that came up or suggest something they wanted to try. All in all very, very good and would love to do it again"

Abigail Pile

"Very enjoyable. The competent crew course was exactly what I needed and covered everything and more re my expectations"

Brian Floodgate

