# Preparing Your Boat For Going Offshore

# Start Now

- Completely empty and strip your boat
- Take everything apart, clean, lube and put it back together
- Just put back what you absolutely need for the race.
- Send life raft and MOMs in for inspection and certification
- Haul your boat, pull your rig and rudder
- Paint your bottom

# Hull, Rudder and Prop

- Haul your boat
- Check for keel damage
- Check the hull for cracks, blisters and delamination
- Tighten the keel bolts (have the boatyard do this)
- Check rudder for looseness, cracks and delamination
- Drop your rudder, check rudder post for cracks and bearings for wear and fit
- Check your propeller and thrust bearing or sail drive
- Check and clean all thru-hulls
- Clean and paint the bottom

# Boom

- Remove any lines in the boom
- Take off the boom
- Take off the boom vang
- Check the gooseneck and any stoppers
- Check the vang connections
- Replace reef lines (extra long, so you can cut away chafed ends occasionally)

# Running Rigging

- Pull all halyards and topping lift, check for wear, replace as needed
- Check all sheets and guys for wear, replace as needed
- Check and lube spinnaker pole or bowsprit and lines
- Make up spare halyards, sheets, guys, changing sheets, etc.

# Sails

- Send any sails that need repair to the sailmaker
- Check all battens and batten cars
- Put aboard a spare batten that can be cut to length
- Check your storm sails; storm jib and trysail (and maybe storm staysail).
- Order a storm jib and trysail if you don't have one.

# Fire Hose Test

- Close all hatches and seal up the boat
- Have someone heavily hose down the deck
- Walk around below with a flashlight looking for leaks
- Then seal up the leaking areas

# Check steering wheel or tiller and tighten steering cables (order spares)

# On Deck

- Check pulpits and stanchions
- Check and tighten lifelines
- Take apart winches and lube
- Lube winch handles
- Lube all turning blocks and snatch blocks
- Do a “fire hose check” on the whole deck, hatches and companionway hatch.
- Seal any leaks

# Engine and Fuel

- Service Engine, change all fluids
- Check the engine mounts
- Check engine bilge for oil, water and coolant
- Clean engine strainer
- Check hoses, hose clamps and sea cocks
- Check the exhaust system for leaks
- Check the fuel tank mounts and look for leaks
- Check transmission or saildrive oil

# Below Deck

- Check all bilge pumps, handles and lanyards
- Screw down cabin sole
- Check and secure stove and propane system
- Service fire extinguishers
- Rebuild toilet and check hoses and clamps
- Check bunks, leeboards and pipe berth tackle
- Secure anchors and ground tackle

# Electrical and Electronics

- Check batteries, top off fluids or order new ones
- Secure batteries
- Check alternator and charging system
- Check all electronics below deck and on deck
- Calibrate instruments
- Calibrate compasses
- Put new bulbs in running lights and all other lights on board
- Make up a spare running light system

# Plumbing, Water and Fridge

- Service refrigeration system
- Service water maker
- Check water tanks, sinks, pumps, hoses, clamps and sea cocks.
- Double clamp all hose clamps below waterline
- Rebuild toilet, check hoses, clamps and sea cocks.

# Communication

- Check out VHF radio and antenna
- Check out handheld VHF
- Check our SSB radio and antenna
- Do radio checks on all 3 above
- Make up emergency VHF and SSB antennas
- Check out sat com, sat phone or sail mail modem
- Check out laptop, inverter charging and electronic interfaces

# Safety

- ISAF Offshore Safety Regs is your bible
- Secure life rafts on deck
- Register 406 EPIRB and check batteries
- Renew all expired flares
- Install jack lines on deck
- Make sure all crew have PFDs and harnesses or inflatable harnesses and they will wear them
- Have enough tools and spares to fix almost anything on the boat at sea

# Things Will Break

- If you go to sea, things will break
- You can do a lot now to make sure what breaks is minor, not major
- There is no West Marine between L.A. and Honolulu
- There is no Vessel Assist after Catalina Island
- After a couple days, there is no Coast Guard help
- You have to be prepared to fix what breaks
- You must have the tools and materials on board to fix anything that breaks