

ASC safety boat sailboat towing endorsement.

Do not tow sailboats until you have received training from an ASC approved safety boat trainer who is also an active skipper in the ASC sailing program, and you have been approved by ASC to tow sailboats after demonstrating the proper technique and knowledge regarding towing sailboats.

Towing a larger and heavier boat than the safety boat, such as a sailboat which also has a much greater draft, requires extra skill and practice. To be endorsed to tow sailboats one must learn and demonstrate the following skills and knowledge.

1. Learn and memorize the "ASC sailboat towing chart". One must be able to accurately describe the path one must follow when towing sailboats with the ASC safety boat, then demonstrate following that path when operating the safety boat while calling out the path targets and alignment points to stay in the deep-water channel.
2. You should have a second person onboard the safety boat to handle the tow line and fend off the safety boat if it accidentally gets too close to a sailboat, or at the wrong angle.
3. Make certain the motor is in neutral when attaching the tow line to a sailboat.
4. Be careful not to foul the tow line around the motor or propeller.
5. Take up towline slack slowly and carefully before applying power. Observe no-wake restrictions.
6. Apply power very gradually to not damage the sailboats or the safety boat. Some of the sailboats have much greater mass/inertia than the safety boat (do not jerk boats/lines).
7. Follow the towing path as depicted on the ASC sailboat towing chart exactly. Do not cut corners.
8. Turn in arcs when towing sailboats, especially the Hobie (no sharp turns).
9. Every few seconds briefly look back to check that the sailboat is aimed directly at the towline attachment point on the safety boat for a smooth and safe tow. If the sailboat is not directly aimed at the towline attachment point, quickly determine if the sailboat skipper needs to correct their course, or if you are off course and you need to correct your course because the skipper is trying to steer the sailboat towards the proper course for a safe tow.
10. In all but light winds, the sailboat should have their sails down when towing, especially when towing back into the inlet from the river. If the sails are up, note there can be times when the wind shifts to a broad reach or run on the sailboat and the skipper/crew is not able to depower the sails enough to prevent running into the safety boat. Be aware of that and speed up carefully (no jerking of the towline) until the sailboat slows down. Have the sailboat lower their sails, or cast off the towline if the conditions persist.
11. The best procedure for terminating the tow is to slightly slow down and have the crew on the sailboat cast off the towline. Turn away from the sailboat and retrieve the towline as soon as possible. The less desirable procedure is to slow down to let the sailboat gently catch up so the second person in the safety boat detaches the towline but that runs the risk of the sailboat hitting the motor without careful coordination and maneuvering.
12. When towing a sailboat to the river, the tow needs to be stopped, and the towline detached, before encountering significant wind unless the wind is straight on in the final alignment towards the cell tower/water tank. Coordinate the termination of tow location with the skipper.
13. Learn how to, and demonstrate, bring the safety boat parallel to the sailboat at a complete stop next to the sailboat with the assistant on the safety boat abeam of the agreed upon shroud on the sailboat to allow for safe and stable transfer of people off of, or onto, a sailboat.
14. When returning to the inlet, the tow needs to be terminated, and the towline detached, well away from the beach to allow the sailboat to bring up its centerboard and rudder before reaching shallow water.