

Rules Specialist Group 2021-2024 Racing Rules of Sailing

Communication available, Off the Beach Boats

Issued 30 November 2021

[Background](#)

An NoR contained the following clause (extract from Appendix K)

- 3 COMMUNICATION**
- 3.4** [DP] [While racing][From the first warning signal until the end of the last race of the day], except in an emergency, a boat shall not make voice or data transmissions and shall not receive voice or data communication that is not available to all boats.

[Question](#)

What does the underlined text mean in relation to off the beach classes? One or more competitors carried VHF radios and tuned to the race frequency.

Communications between race officials were used for example to determine if the competitor were OCS and could then return.

They argued that everyone could carry a radio and therefore the communication was available to all boats.

[Answer](#)

If class rules or other rules do not preclude the carrying of VHF radios, then VHF radios may be carried. Communication between race committee vessels on an open VHF channel is available to all boats as all boats had the opportunity to carry a VHF radio.

Rule 41 also contains limits regarding outside help. In this example, the race committee communication received is from a disinterested source.

However, it should be noted that many class rules, especially for dinghies, make it illegal for boats to carry radios and other electronic equipment.

While the statement that 'everyone could carry a radio' is technically correct it would mean that boats could be in breach of their class rules.

Any change to class rules must comply with rule 87 which only allows a change to class rules if the class rules themselves allow changes or if the class association gives written permission.

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Should class rules not allow carrying of radios and there is no valid change to the class rules in the NoR then any transmissions should not be considered as 'available to all'.

John Standley

Chair

On behalf of Australian Sailing Rules Specialist Group

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