

Special Regulations Interpretation

2017-2021 Special Regulations – Drinking Water

Issued 11 December 2019

1. Question:

- 1) We seek clarification from Australian Sailing on whether it is within the rules to intentionally drain/jettison water overboard (from the required allowance under SR 3.18.2) at any time after the start and consequently gain the performance advantage of a lighter yacht in comparison to the yachts that do not have a water maker and are carrying the full complement of water as prescribed by SR 3.18.2.
- 2) Additionally, given the generous water allowance under SR 3.18, should yachts using their water maker during a race have to declare the fact that they 'made water' and the reason why? (I.e. Tank failure etc.)

2. Answer:

- 1) Yes, providing the person in charge ensures that there is sufficient water to meet the needs of the crew for the duration of the race.
- 2) There are no requirements in the Special Regulations for boats to make declarations around drinking water carried on board, or the use of water makers.

3. Issue:

SR 3.18.2 requires that at least 2.5 litres of fresh water per crew member per 100 Nautical miles of the course to be sailed shall be carried at the start of the race. The SR does not address how the water is to be used once racing, and is silent on water makers.

A boat owner has asked for the interpretation assuming the water allowance under SR 3.18.2 is a safety measure as yachts are at sea for extended periods and must be self-sufficient, even in the case of mechanical failure of engines and equipment.

4. Background:

The fresh drinking water carried on board under SR 3.18.2 is a minimum requirement ensuring that a boat has sufficient water for the crew at the time the race starts.

Water makers are now readily available and are currently installed on board numerous boats racing in Category 1 and 2 races in Australia. Boats that have water makers have the ability to drain fresh drinking water carried at the start under SR 3.18.2 and then only make water in small amounts for the crew's drinking and eating requirements.

Special Regulation 1.02.1 explicitly places the responsibility of the soundness of all gear, its maintenance and stowage, and the boat's seaworthiness on the person in charge.

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The person in charge is responsible for judging what type of water maker is suitable for their crew, the length of the race and expected weather conditions.

There is still a requirement under SR 3.18.4 for emergency drinking water if there is a mechanical failure of engine and equipment.

There have been significant improvements in the integrity of a boat's engine and electric power sources resulting in more reliable water making systems. The requirements for fresh drinking water were implemented before water makers were readily available in retail outlets.

The requirements of SR 3.18 for Water Tanks and Water are under review.