

Boat Access Policies & Procedures

Updated January 2025

Welcome to the St. Thomas Sailing Center (STSC) Boat Access program at the St. Thomas Yacht Club (STYC). This document will provide you with information on how Boat Access works as well as some guidelines for the use of our fleet. If you have any questions about your Boat Access privileges or these policies, please call, email, or stop by the office. We want to help you make the most of your time sailing with us!

St. Thomas Sailing Center

- Mobile: 340-690-3681
- Email: info@stthomassailingcenter.com
- Website: stthomassailingcenter.com

St. Thomas Yacht Club

- Landline: 340-775-6320
- Email: manager@stthomasyachtclub.org
- Website: stthomasyachtclub.org

Please note that these Policies and Procedures are updated from time to time. To ensure you have the latest document, see our website: <https://stthomassailingcenter.com/boat-access> or request a copy from the office.

Sailing Hours and Availability of Boats

Sailing hours begin at 9am. IC-24s must return to the mooring thirty minutes prior to the end Launch hours. Hobie Waves and Sunfish must return to the beach thirty minutes before the sun sets. Launch hours end at 6pm in the winter and 7pm in the summer (if in doubt, check with a staff member!). **If you find that you will be unable to return on time, please call the office immediately.** Cruising Boats may be used 24/7 (but if you want an evening launch ride in, you must be back in time). **Boat Access may be limited due to weather, during club racing and sailing events, and during maintenance/hurricane season (August through November).**

Office Hours

The STSC office is open 9am-5pm seven days a week, early December through mid-July. From mid-July through November, office hours may be reduced.

Boat Access Requirements and Fees

Boat Access requires current membership in the St. Thomas Yacht Club, payment of the boat access fee, a checkout (or successful completion of the appropriate course) for each class of boat to be used, signed agreement to these Policies and Procedures, a signed waiver, and damage deposit (if applicable). The Member with Boat Access must be onboard whenever the boat is in use and is responsible for the condition and operation of the boat and the safety and actions of crew and guests, as well as knowing and complying with USVI laws and regulations, including maritime laws.

The Cruising Boat Access fee includes IC-24 and Hobie Wave Access. The IC-24 Boat Access fee, both Level I and II, includes Hobie Wave Access.

The annual Boat Access year is January 1st – December 31st. See our [website](#) or call the office for current Boat Access fees. For members adding or upgrading Boat Access after March 31st, fees for IC-24 and Hobie access are discounted according to a quarterly schedule. For members upgrading from Blue Water to Annual Boat Access, the Blue Water Boat Access fee may be credited when a Blue Water membership is contiguous with an Annual STYC membership.

Additional Fees

Additional fees will be charged when boats or equipment are left dirty, damaged, or lost or if we have to tow you for you to get back in time.

For **Cruising Access**, there are specific additional fees:

- \$200 if the boat is returned and the head holding tank has not been emptied
- \$100 if the dinghy is not put away properly (see Operator's Manual for instructions)

Boat Access for a Couple/Family Membership

Additional persons on an STYC Membership may be added to Boat Access, and additional fees may be required as described below.

For **Sunfish Access**, one Boat Access fee covers one family member. Each additional family member who wants Boat Access pays an additional 50% of the Boat Access fee and fulfills the above Boat Access Requirements to use a Sunfish. *Only two boats may be used by the family at a time.*

For **Hobie Access**, one Boat Access fee covers all members of the family, any family member who has fulfilled the above Boat Access Requirements may use a Hobie Wave. *Only one boat at a time may be used by the family;* to use more than one boat at a time you must pay an additional boat access fee.

For **IC-24 Boat Access**, one Boat Access fee covers one family member. Each additional family member who wants Boat Access pays an additional 50% of the Boat Access fee and fulfills the above Boat Access Requirements to use an IC-24. *Only one boat may be used by the family members at a time.* To use more than one boat at a time, an additional full boat access fee must be paid.

For **Cruising Boat Access** is by individual only, the individual with Boat Access must be on board.

Qualifications and Checkouts

All new and upgrading Members with Boat Access are required to take an on-the-water checkout with an STSC instructor unless the prerequisite courses have been successfully completed. Allow a half-hour for a Hobie checkout, a half-hour for Sunfish, two hours for an IC-24 checkout and four hours for a Cruising Boat checkout. Checkouts are complimentary once you have purchased Boat Access and are scheduled by appointment. The purpose of the checkout is twofold:

1. To help you become familiar with the rigging and handling of our boats under the guidance of an instructor, as well as with procedures for taking them out and guidance for local navigation and conditions
2. To help us determine if you need further instruction before skippering our boats

Following the checkout, if the instructor determines that further instruction is necessary, private lessons are available or you may be required to take an Introduction to Hobie Wave Sailing for Hobie Access, a lesson for the Sunfish, Learn to Sail Course for IC-24 Access, or a Cruising course or Bareboat Certification Program for Cruising Boat Access.

Crew and Guests

Sailing is fun solo, and even more fun with friends! Hobie Waves may be sailed single handed or with a maximum of 4 people/650lbs. IC-24s are best sailed with a crew and a maximum capacity of 6. Single handed sailing on the IC-24s is weather dependent, requires instructor approval and checking in with the office. Cruising boats must be sailed with at least one crew. You may sail with your guests at any time.

Boat Reservations and Cancellations

Boat use is by reservation. Blue Water Members must reserve boats by contacting the office and receiving a confirmation. Annual Members may use our online calendar to make reservations. As an Annual Member, once you have completed the Boat Access sign up process, we will send you a link to the reservation calendar. *Please note that reservations for which name, boat access status, and reservation policy compliance cannot be verified may be deleted by the office.* Except for Hobies and Sunfish, you must use the boat you have reserved. For the IC-24s, if there is a problem and you need to change boats, please contact the office first.

Please confirm that your reservation is on the calendar before sailing. And please be sure to cancel reservations as soon as you can so we can open up the boat for other members to use. To cancel or change a reservation, contact the office. For any special requests such as a shade canopy or radio, please let us know!

Reservation Policies by Level of Boat Access

Please ensure that your reservations comply with our reservation policies for your type of Boat Access. You may search the calendar using your name to see all your reservations. Should you have reservations exceeding the policy, a reservation may be deleted. If you are at your reservation limit, you must return the boat before making another reservation.

Blue Water Sunfish, Hobie Wave, and IC-24 Boat Access: An STYC Annual or Blue Water Member with Blue Water Boat Access may have one reservation on the books at a time. In addition, last minute reservations may be made after 9am the day prior for the next day. Please indicate last minute reservations as such on the calendar.

Annual Sunfish, Hobie Wave, and IC-24 Boat Access: up to two weekdays and one weekend day reservation on the books at a time. In addition, last minute reservations may be made after 9am the day prior for the next day. Please indicate last minute reservations as such on the calendar.

Annual Cruising Boat Access:

- **One 7-day Cruise:** This can be booked as far in advance as you want. You may break your 7-day reservation into 2 reservations – however, only 2 weekend days total are allowed. Please note your 7-day reservation as such on the calendar.
- **Rolling Reservations:** In addition to your 7-day cruise, you may have up to 3 days reserved at a time (3 rolling days), of which only one can be a weekend day. After weekend sail, you cannot add a new rolling reservation for the following weekend (i.e., you must skip a weekend). Additional rolling reservations can be made only after the boat returns to its mooring.
- **Last Minute Reservations:** In addition to the above reservation restrictions, last minute reservations *may be made after 9am no more than two days prior to the day you wish to have a last-minute reservation.* Only one last minute reservation may be made in a 7-day period. Please indicate last minute reservations as such on the calendar.
- A reserved day is a 24-hour period from **9am until 9am the next morning**. However, if you are only using the boat for part of the day, we appreciate it if you specify a start and return time. This improves boat availability for both sailing and maintenance.
- Cruising Boats will be hauled for maintenance/hurricane season from late July through November.
- Cruising Boat Access Members are encouraged to introduce yourselves to each other and coordinate boat turnovers, dock use, etc.
- Cruising Boat Access Members who have taken loving care of the cruising boats will have priority to renew Cruising Boat Access for the following year.

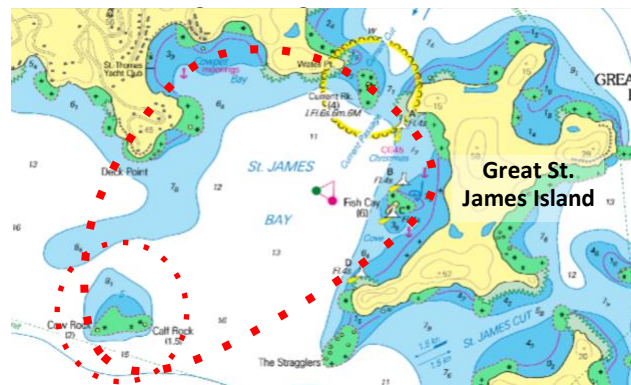
Navigation, Sailing Area Boundaries and Destinations

The key to trouble free sailing is continuous navigation. Keep your chart out and refer to it constantly while sailing. Areas to pay particular attention to are: shoal and rocks off Deck Point, Calf and Cow Rocks, Current Rock and nearby shoals, rocks off Cabrita Point, shoal & rocks off Fish Cay in Christmas Cove, and Stragglers rocks. Know the location of these and many other hazardous areas in advance and avoid them.

Note: there is no anchoring in the waters of the [Virgin Islands National Park](#) and the [Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument](#). Please respect National Park & National Monument regulations; the most detailed boating information is found here: [Superintendent's Compendium](#)

Sunfish and Hobie Wave Boat Access: Sunfish and Hobies must stay in the water between STYC and Christmas Cove. Do not pass-through Current Cut nor sail past Deck Point or the Stragglers. Be aware of the frequent ferry and motorboat traffic in Cowpet Bay. You may beach Sunfish and Hobies on sandy spots in Christmas Cove - avoid rocks and lift the boat when pulling it ashore. You can also tie up to a mooring in Christmas Cove, order pizza from Pizza Pi VI, and snorkel while they cook it. Swim over to Pizza Pi will sometimes deliver in their pizza delivery dinghy! Generally, Hobies and Sunfish should stay within sight of STYC.

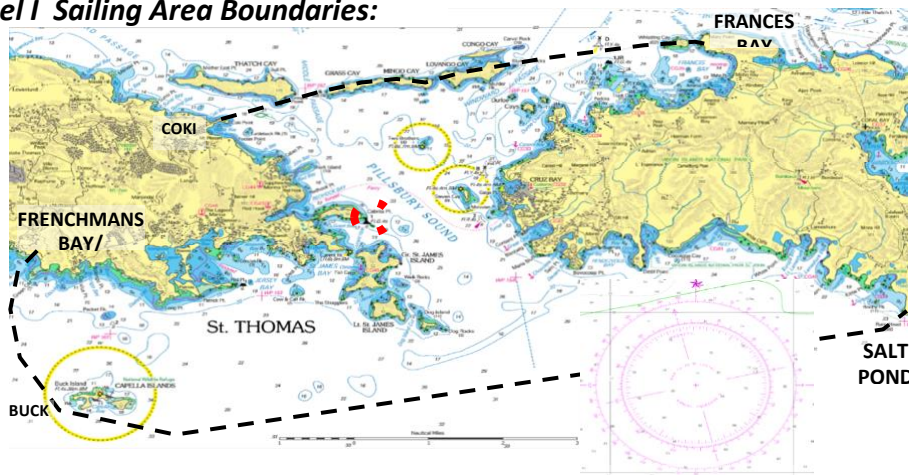
Diagram – Sunfish and Hobie Wave Sailing Area boundaries:



Sunfish and Hobie Wave Sailing Area

IC-24 Boat Access Level I: the IC-24 sailing area is bounded by Abi Beach in Frenchman Bay on the south side of St. Thomas, Buck Island to the south, Coki Point on the north side of St. Thomas, Francis Bay on the north side of St. John, and Salt Pond Bay on the south side of St. John. See diagram below. There are many wonderful bays and coves where you can moor or anchor (no anchoring in National Park waters), swim, snorkel, and picnic – all within a two-hour sail of STYC. Indeed, this is one of the incredible benefits of sailing here! See the [Cruising Guide on our website](#) for possibilities.

Diagram - IC-24 Level I Sailing Area Boundaries:

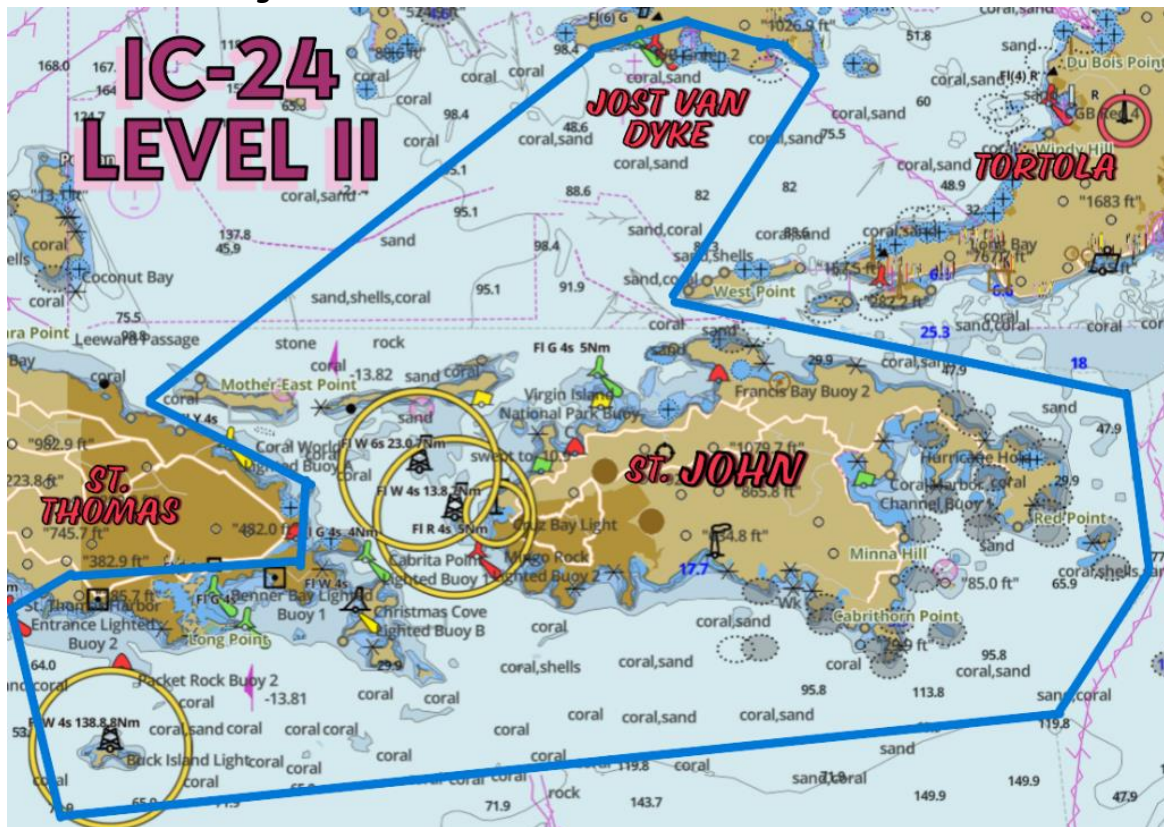


IC-24 Sailing Area

IC-24 Level II Access:

Level II will be approved on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Sailing Center if you are interested in this Access Program for the detailed Level II Policies and Procedures.

Diagram - IC-24 Level II Sailing Area Boundaries:



Cruising Boat Access: cruising limits are the US, British and Spanish Virgin Islands – an area bounded by Anegada, St. Croix, and Vieques. These waters are some of the best cruising grounds in the world. Copies of the Yachtsman's Guide to the Virgin Islands and Guide to the Spanish Virgin Islands are on board each vessel. Please stay current on entry regulations for such international travel.

Safety and Etiquette

Communication on the Water

We recommend you bring a cell phone while sailing to contact us in case you need assistance. Make sure you have STSC and STYC numbers in your phone. You may check out a hand-held VHF from the office which will allow you to radio other boats or marinas in sight.

Collisions

Please remember the safety of yourself and your crew is a priority. Use fenders, not body parts, to protect boats from impact. Should you collide with another boat, please note the name and type of the other vessel, and report the incident to the Sailing Center Office or the STYC Manager.

Groundings

If you do run aground and can't get off immediately, drop your sails and call the Sailing Center. We will send a power boat out to help you. Grounding a keel can cause dangerous structural damage. Whether you can get the boat off the ground or not, **for the safety of those using the boat after you, report all groundings to the STSC office immediately** so we can inspect the boat and repair as necessary.

Weather Conditions and Squalls

On days when we determine that high winds or other weather conditions might make it unsafe for you to sail, we may require that you reschedule your sail for another day. In such cases we will attempt to call you in advance of your scheduled arrival. If the weather looks severe, you may want to call us prior to leaving home. In marginal weather conditions we may ask you to limit your navigational range.

Squalls are not uncommon in the Caribbean. They rarely last more than 10-15 minutes but they can produce winds in excess of 30 knots. You can often see them coming—you will see dense, dark clouds to the east with heavy rainfall just before the strong winds arrive. These are the actions you should take when sailing a small boat and a squall is imminent:

- **Sunfish and Hobie Waves:** return to the club (the wind will take you there) or take shelter on a beach or a mooring in the lee of Great St. James or Water Point and drop your sail.
- **IC-24s:** before the squall hits, reef or take your mainsail down, roll and lash it to the boom. You will be able to sail comfortably on a broad reach with the jib only, but you must have room to leeward to do so. A squall can reduce visibility to near zero for its duration, so plan ahead and estimate a safe compass course to sail. If it's too windy for the jib, or you need to slow down more, you can drop and lash the jib. You will be able to sail up to a beam reach with no sails up. If you do not have room to leeward then after you get your sails down and lashed, you should anchor and wait it out. If you need help, contact the Sailing Center and we will send someone out to help you. Once the squall passes you can put your sails back up and continue sailing!
- **Cruising Boats:** Drop or reef your main. If necessary, head downwind, furl your jib and motor until the squall passes.

Before Sailing

- Review the weather forecast and revise your sailing plans if needed. You are responsible for sailing within your ability. Please call or stop by the office if you have questions or would like some guidance on whether to sail, setting up your boat, choosing sails, or where to sail.
- Check the calendar and confirm your boat assignment.
- For your safety, you may want to let us know your destination. Either add this info to your reservation or stop by the office.
- Note the condition of the boat and check equipment inventory. Let the office know if there are any problems or if you need to change boats.
- Sunfish and Hobie Waves – be sure to take a PFD for everyone on board. There are PFDs available at the yacht club.

After Sailing

- **Sunfish:** Leave on dolly, drain plugs out. Take sails and masts down and store in the sail room. Keep the mainsheet, blocks, and gear out of the sand.
- **Hobie Waves:** wrap halyards or leave very loose so they do not slap against the mast. Keep the mainsheet block out of the sand.
- **IC-24s:** use the bucket to give the decks & cockpit and deck a saltwater rinse if needed. Take trash off the boat. Pass the halyards around a spreader to prevent them from slapping against the mast. Wrap the pick-up buoy around the bow cleat several times to keep it on deck. All sail covers and tiller covers on.
- **Cruising Boats:** please leave the cruising boat clean (inside and outside), with at least a half full fuel and water tanks and an empty holding tank – ready for the next member to sail by 9am. See Operators' Manual for each boat for more details.

Damages and Liability

Members with Boat Access are responsible for any and all damage and injury, including to third parties, resulting from operator error as determined by STYC.

A Member's responsibility for damage per incident shall be limited to \$750 for Sunfish and Hobie Waves, \$2500 for IC-24s, and \$5000 for Cruising boats - except when racing or in cases of gross negligence. When racing or in cases of gross negligence, a Boat Access Member who is found to be at fault is responsible for the full cost of boat damages without limitation. Examples of gross negligence include sailing outside of defined sailing areas or hours (unless participating in a sanctioned STYC event taking place outside of the defined sailing area and/or hours), operating the vessel under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or not having sufficient crew to safely operate the vessel. Cruising Boats shall not be raced.

STYC carries hull and liability insurance that extends specific coverage to program boats, liability losses and claims brought against STYC subject to deductible amounts, exclusions, and terms and conditions. Members are encouraged to review their own insurance policies which may provide their own personal coverage.

Care of the Fleet

We ask that Boat Access Members treat every boat with the same love and respect as if it were their own. Please report any equipment or maintenance needs to the office by email, text or in person. IC-24, Sunfish, or Hobie sails in need of repair should be brought to the office. Thank you for helping to keep our boats safe and ready to sail for all members!

Our staff are here to help and answer any questions you may have. Please stop by the office or reach out to us if we can assist in any way. It is important to us that you enjoy your Boat Access and sailing experience!