

2026.004

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Completing Event Equipment Inspection

Situation

All boats are required to be inspected at an international keelboat event prior to the first race to complete registration.

The class rules include:

The following equipment shall be carried on board:

(...)

personal buoyancy for each member of the crew.

The notice of race or the sailing instructions do not include any buoyancy requirements.

Boat A presents inflatable PFDs for each crew member at inspection. The technical committee decides that inflatable PFDs are not permitted under B7.1 of the World Sailing [Guide To Equipment Inspection 2025](#), and prevents the boat from completing registration. Boat A misses race 1 and requests redress stating that the technical committee committed an improper action by not allowing her to complete registration.

Question 1

Were the actions of the technical committee an improper action?

Answer 1

Yes.

A sailing event is governed by the rules invoked in the notice of race, including the applicable class rules, while the World Sailing Guide to Equipment Inspection is guidance only and has no rule authority unless specifically invoked. In this case, the technical committee made an improper action by relying on the guide to prevent the boat from completing registration, as the class rules required only personal buoyancy, which inflatable PFDs satisfy.

Moreover, the Racing Rules of Sailing clearly specify who can reject or cancel an entry: rule 76.1 states that only the organizing authority or the race committee may reject or cancel the entry of a boat before the first race, and only for a proper reason. A technical committee (appointed under rule 89.2(c)) is not listed there; therefore, it has no authority to prevent a boat from completing registration.

Question 2

If the answer to Question 1 is 'Yes', what would be the correct procedure for the technical committee to follow?

Answer 2

Before the first race of a series, the technical committee's primary responsibility is to ensure that all equipment complies with the rules. If noncompliance is identified, the committee should require the defect to be corrected and allow the competitor a reasonable time to do so. The technical committee's role is limited to inspection and fact-finding; it must record the facts, inform the competitor of its findings, allow the boat to complete registration, and only protest the boat under rule 60.1 if the noncompliance is not corrected.

In general, during a redress hearing, the technical committee should provide full and accurate evidence of its actions to assist the protest committee in determining redress under rule 61. If the technical committee becomes aware that it has made an improper action that may have significantly worsened a boat's score or position, it may request redress under rule 61.1(b).