**Spirit of South Carolina FAQ**

Sailing aboard a tall ship is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and one that has the ability to be life-changing. While aboard your son or daughter will be completely immersed in all operations of a traditional sailing vessel, while exploring the Gulf of Maine and Coastal New England. They will participate in all aspects of the ship’s needs including maneuvering the vessel, navigating, cleaning, cooking, predicting the weather, and much more. Life at sea is fast paced and continues on a 24 hour basis throughout the duration of the program. There is always something to do and learn.

With this FAQ sheet we have attempted to answer some of the questions you might have about the program. If you have any additional questions please contact Matt McDonnell or Sarah Piwinski at 843.722.1030 x 19 or 11.

1. **What kind of medical personnel can sign the medical form?**
   Any licensed medical personnel, such as a physician, pediatrician, or physician’s assistant. If your child has had a physical in the past 6 months, it would satisfy the physician portion of the medical form. However, you must still complete the participant portion of the medical form and attach a copy of the completed physical form.

2. **Where will the ship be docked?**
   The Spirit will be docked in the Boston Harbor, MA. The most likely dock will be Fan Pier, but all docks are easily accessible by public transportation. Exact location of the ship will be offered once confirmed.

3. **What about transportation to and from the vessel?**
   Students are required to provide their own transportation to and from the vessel.

4. **What is the student to staff ratio?**
   There will be nine professional crew members aboard during the program. This includes the Captain, Head Educator, Cook, 3 Mates, and 3 Deckhand/Educators. There will also be 2 faculty/staff from Colgate University as well as 2-3 Wilderness Adventure leaders. The student crew will be divided into three groups called watches (A watch, B watch, and C watch). Each watch will consist of approximately 6 student crew members, and 2 professional crew members. The professional crew on each watch will work side by side with the students.

5. **What are the requirements of the professional crew?**
   All crew members aboard the Spirit of South Carolina are professional mariners and experienced educators. Prior to working onboard they must undergo a comprehensive background check, National Sex Offender Registry search, and a pre-employment drug test. Also, because the Spirit of SC is a Coast Guard Certified vessel all of our crew members participate in a random drug testing program.

6. **How is the Spirit of South Carolina Certified?**
   The Spirit of South Carolina is certified under the US Code of Federal Regulations as a Sailing School Vessel. These regulations translate into a rigorous set of safety, training and construction standards. This process is overseen and enforced by the United States Coast Guard.

7. **Who are the ship’s leadership personnel for the program?**
   Captain Tony Arrow has been sailing professionally since the mid 80’s. He maintains a license that allows him to be Master of a vessel up to 1600 Gross Tons. As the Spirit of South Carolina is under 100 Gross Tons, the vessel is well within the scope of his credentials. In addition Captain Arrow has received extensive training in navigation, marine engineering, shipboard fire fighting, managing and leading personnel, and has the medical certification of Wilderness First Responder.
Chief Mate Emily Harwood is a Colgate University Alum and maintains a 200-ton USCG License. Emily has extensive experience aboard many sailing vessels, and is a long-time South Carolina Maritime Foundation employee. In addition to her sailing credentials Emily also has the medical certification of Wilderness First Responder.

Matt McDonnell, the Foundation’s Program Manager, will be serving as the ships head educator and medical officer during this voyage. He has been involved in outdoor experiential education for many years in addition to formerly working as a middle school teacher. He began sailing as an instructor for the Outward Bound Sea Program in 2004 and has also led several Wilderness Adventures during his time as a Colgate University student. Matt also maintains a 100 ton Master license as well as Wilderness First Responder.

8. **What type of safety training does the ship’s crew receive?**
   All of the crew has received professional training in all types of shipboard emergencies. Additionally, we drill and inspect our gear every week. Safety is our first priority and factors into all decision making.

9. **What does the ship do in bad weather?**
   While at sea the weather is monitored constantly, both onboard and through our shore side support staff. Decisions for the ship’s track are based on the current and predicted weather conditions. While at sea the ship maintains communication with the office at least twice a day and its position can be monitored on the SCMF website [www.scmaritime.org](http://www.scmaritime.org) under the ‘iboat tracker’ link.

10. **What happens if there is a medical emergency onboard?**
    We have an extensive offshore medical kit aboard, and our shipboard personnel are trained to deal with medical emergencies. Through our satellite communications, we also have access to a doctor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

11. **What should my child pack?**
    See attached packing list for detailed inventory of what to pack.

12. **What is not allowed?**
    The following items are prohibited:
    Additional Food, Fishing Gear, Scuba Gear, Tobacco, Illegal Drugs, Alcohol and Electronic Equipment such as: Electronic Games, MP3 Players, I-Pods, Cell Phones, CD or DVD Players, Computers, Radios, etc.
    Participants may bring their cell phone for travel purposes, but they must be turned in upon arrival to the ship. They will remain locked in the ship’s safe for the duration of the voyage.

13. **Why can’t my son or daughter bring electronic equipment on the voyage?**
    The use of electronic equipment during a program encourages participants to be solitary and sedentary, which does not correspond with the objectives of the program. These items also pose a safety hazard. Emergencies onboard are made known to the ships company by sounding a verbal alarm. If a participant has headphones on they may not be able to hear her shipmates sounding the alarm.

14. **What is the food like?**
    The food onboard is always great and there is plenty of it. We eat very well at sea thanks to the ship’s cook. There are three meals and at least two snacks a day. All meals are well balanced and nutritious.

15. **What if my child has a food allergy or is a vegetarian?**
    Special food needs are usually not a problem as long as we know about it in advance. Please be sure to note any allergies or preferences on the medical form. This is a really important piece of information for us to have. If the ship’s cook knows about your food preference before shopping for the two week trip, they will be able to accommodate you.

16. **What is the daily schedule?**
    This is a hard question to answer in that each day onboard is very different. However, we do have a schedule by which we operate the ship.
A ship does not sleep at night. The operations of the vessel must be carried out around the clock. To accomplish this, the professional crew and student crew are divided into three watches or groups. Each watch is comprised of a Mate, who serves as watch officer, a deckhand, and members of the student crew. A watch is responsible for all ship operations during the period of time they are on duty. The following shows a sample schedule for three day of watch rotation. If you were assigned to "A" watch, your watches would be those underlined:

### Day 1
- 0800-1200 A WATCH
- 1200-1600 B WATCH
- 1600-1800 C WATCH
- 1800-2000 A WATCH
- 2000-0000 B WATCH

### Day 2
- 0000-0400 C WATCH
- 0400-0800 A WATCH
- 0800-1200 B WATCH
- 1200-1600 C WATCH
- 1600-1800 A WATCH
- 1800-2000 B WATCH
- 2000-0000 C WATCH

### Day 3
- 0000-0400 A WATCH
- 0400-0800 B WATCH
- 0800-1200 C WATCH
- 1200-1600 A WATCH
- 1600-1800 B WATCH
- 1800-2000 C WATCH
- 2000-0000 A WATCH
17. Where will I sleep?
Everyone onboard gets their own bunk. There are two areas onboard where everyone sleeps. When you arrive you will be assigned a bunk. This is your space and no one else’s. Everything you bring with you must live in your bunk with you. For this reason it is recommended that you pack only what you will need in a medium sized duffle bag. Please no hard suitcases or hard bottom duffle bags.

18. Does the ship have showers?
While at sea swim calls and saltwater showers are available.

19. What is the ship made of?
The Spirit of South Carolina is a pilot schooner that was built here in South Carolina and launched in March 2007. She is built from various kinds of native and non-native woods (such as: Live Oak, Cypress, Angelique, Fir, Teak, and Purpleheart.)

20. Does the ship have a motor?
Yes, the ship has two Diesel Cummins engines.

21. Does anyone get seasick?
Yes, some people can get seasick. Everyone’s body handles motion differently. Seasickness is not something to be scared about and shouldn’t stop someone from participating in the program. If you find that you are not feeling well, give yourself a couple of hours for your body to adjust. The process can be sped up by maintaining your activity level so that your body, brain, and environment are forced to synchronize. If after the first couple of hours you are not feeling better, talk to the medical officer or a crew member on your watch.

22. Is there anything my child can do to avoid getting seasick?
There are a variety of things one can do to not become seasick.
1. Keep hydrated.
2. Keep eating, having food in your stomach will make you feel better.
3. If you start to feel uneasy, keep your eyes on the horizon and don’t go down below.

23. Can my child bring their own seasickness medication?
Participants can bring over the counter seasickness medication, but it should be given to the medical officer upon arrival to the ship. Participants are not required to bring their own seasickness medication as the ship also has a supply.

24. Can I call or write my son or daughter?
We ask that you do not send letters or care packages to your son or daughter. Phones can be made available once in port, but while underway communication is limited to the daily reports posted on our website.

25. What if something important happens while my child is at sea and I need to communicate with them?
The ship is equipped with modern technology for emergency and safety percussions. The office communicates with the vessel on a daily basis and can relay important messages from home, but for the most part this communication is used to support the ship. If you have any important information that you need to communicate to your child – especially any information that will invoke an emotional response (i.e. the family is moving, a death in the family, the dog is sick, etc.) – please call the office so you can discuss the best way to inform your child. Please remember we want to work with parents to ensure a great experience for their child and receiving emotional information while far away from home can be a shocking and traumatic experience. We want to assist you so you can communicate with your child in the best possible way. Additional details on how to pass an urgent message to the ship will be provided in the information packet mailed once your child is accepted.