

IRC Rule Changes for 2026

IRC Technical Committee

A word used as defined by ERS is printed in **bold**.

A word used as defined by IRC Definitions is printed underlined.

Proposed additions are printed in blue.

Proposed deletions are printed in ~~struckthrough-red~~.

Effective Date: IRC Rule changes apply from 1st January 2026, except in countries with June-May validity, where changes apply from 1st June 2026. See Rule 8.12

This Version: 14 October 2025 (after IRC Congress)

1. GENDER SPECIFIC WORDING

Reason for change: To update the rule to remove gender specific wording when referring to a boat etc.

Amend IRC Rules 8.10.3, 8.13, 10.5 & 11.2:

- 8.10.3 If during **Equipment Inspection** by an **Equipment Inspector**, or during measurement carried out under Rules 10.2 or 13.6, any rated dimension is found to exceed a maximum value or to be less than a minimum value, then the **boat** is not in compliance with ~~her~~ **its** certificate.
- 8.13 Irrespective of where a boat is registered, ~~she~~ **it** shall apply for ~~her~~ **its** IRC certificates to the appointed Rule Authority in the country in which ~~she~~ **it** predominantly races. Exceptionally, with the agreement of the Rating Authority, ~~she~~ **it** may apply through another Rule Authority.
- 10.5 Subject to the RRS, when a **boat** is penalised by a protest committee as a result of ~~her~~ **its** certificate being invalidated under Rules 9.7 or 9.8, ~~her~~ **the** owner shall be liable for measurement and rating costs unless the protest committee orders otherwise. In all other cases, the protestor shall be liable for measurement and rating costs.
- 11.2 A Rule Authority may prescribe that for races under its jurisdiction requiring compliance with OSR Category 0,1,2 or 3, Rule 21.7.1 and Rule 21.6.1 is varied to the extent that a **boat** may carry one more headsail and/or one more spinnaker than shown on ~~her~~ **its** current IRC certificate not greater than HSA, HLUmax and SPA without an increase in rating.

Effect: Remove gender specific wording.

2. IRC RULES 16 & 26 – ADVERTISING CODE

Reason for change: To reference the correct updated structure of World Sailing Regulations for the Advertising Code where it is now not a Regulation but one of the World Sailing Codes:

<https://www.sailing.org/inside-world-sailing/rules-regulations/constitution-regulations/>

Amend IRC Rule 16 and 26 as follows:

- 16.1 Advertising may be displayed in accordance with World Sailing ~~Regulation-20~~, Advertising Code.

- 26.1 Competitors' advertising displayed on the **boat** is not permitted in accordance with World Sailing ~~Regulation-20~~, Advertising Code.

Effect: To use the correct reference for World Sailing Advertising Code.

3. IRC RULE 21.7.2

Reason for change: The foot offset rule text in 21.7.2 refers to “any” headsail or flying headsail. However, this could imply that is any one of the headsails in an inventory (which may not be the largest) has a foot offset the addition needs to be added to all of the headsails. It should just refer to the individual sail.

Amend IRC Rule 21.7.2 as follows:

21.7.2 Headsail area (HSA and FSA) shall be calculated from:
$$\text{HSA} = 0.0625 \cdot \text{HLU} \cdot (4 \cdot \text{HLP} + 6 \cdot \text{HHW} + 3 \cdot \text{HTW} + 2 \cdot \text{HUW} + 0.09)$$
$$\text{FSA} = 0.0625 \cdot \text{FLU} \cdot (4 \cdot \text{FLP} + 6 \cdot \text{FHW} + 3 \cdot \text{FTW} + 2 \cdot \text{FUW} + 0.09)$$

If foot offset of **any** a headsail or a flying headsail is greater than 7.5% of HLP or FLP, then foot offset shall be declared and foot offset shall be added to HLU or FLU in the calculation of HSA or FSA.

Effect: Clarification the foot offset addition is only for the specific sail in question.

4. NEW IRC RULE 22.6 – LIFELINES FOR EVENTS

Reason for change: For some events, particularly Classic events, lifelines are required. Where a boat is rated without lifelines the addition of lifelines may invalidate their certificate without amending their certificate. It is therefore proposed a boat may add lifelines for a specific event even if they are not rated in this configuration. This is the most conservative in terms of safety and rating effect.

Add new IRC Rule 22.6 as follows:

- 22.6 Boats shall declare whether OSR-compliant lifelines are fitted. A boat rated without lifelines may fit them to meet event requirements without re-issue of its certificate.

Effect: Allow fitting of lifelines for specific event requirements without changing the certificate.

5. A1 - AGE DATE DEFINITION

Reason for change: To make it clear a hull length change shall result in an age date reset, also to remove excluding transom as this is already excluded in the definition of hull shell and therefore is superfluous. Transom is therefore still excluded in the definition of age date.

Amend IRC Definition A1 – Age Date as follows:

Age date The date on which the **boat** was first launched, or the date on which the **boat** was re-launched following any **modification of hull shell or hull length**, ~~excluding the transom~~, whichever is the later.

For reference only: hull shell is defined as follows (no change):

Hull Shell The hull shell excluding all of the following: **any transom**, the deck, any superstructure, the internal structure including any cockpit, **fittings** associated with these parts and any **corrector weights**.

Effect: To make clear that a hull length change will reset age date.

6. A1 – HULL SHELL DEFINITION

Reason for change: To make it clear that an interceptor (including a vertical transom lip) is not considered part of the hull shell and therefore will not reset the age date. There will be an additional notice explaining the extent of an interceptor that is acceptable. Note that an interceptor that changes hull length will trigger an age date reset in accordance with proposal 5. Either of these additions will still result in a hull factor change as per current practice.

Amend IRC Definition A1 – Hull Shell as follows:

Hull Shell	The hull shell excluding all of the following: any transom (including an interceptor), the deck, any superstructure, the internal structure including any cockpit, fittings associated with these parts and any corrector weights .
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Effect: To make clear that an interceptor is not considered part of the hull shell.

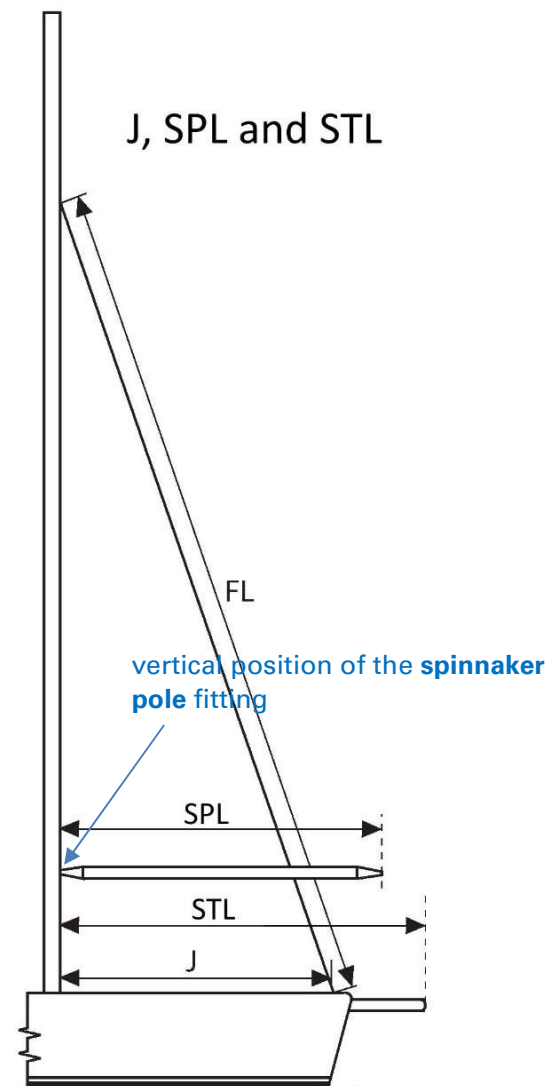
7. A4 – SPL DEFINITION

Reason for change: To clarify SPL is measured at the vertical position of the spinnaker pole fitting.

Amend IRC Definition A4 as follows:

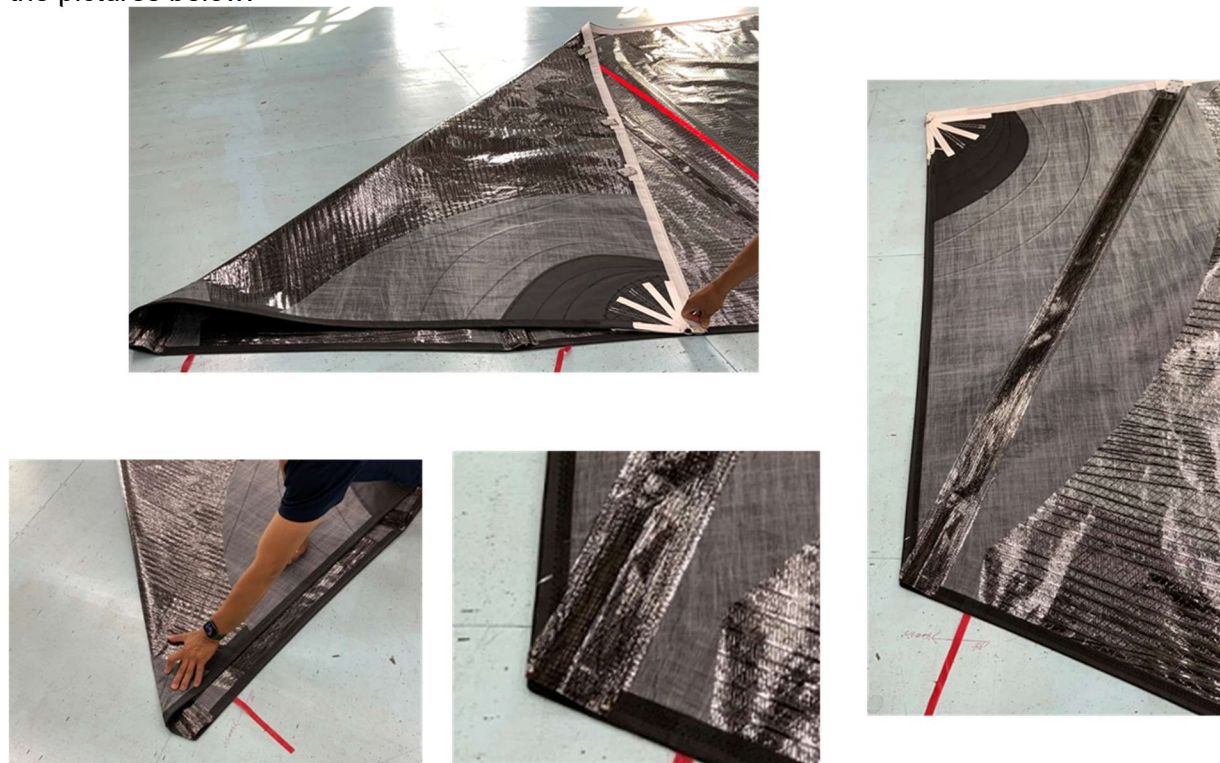
SPL The greatest horizontal distance from the forward face of the **mast spar** at the **vertical position of the spinnaker pole fitting**, ignoring any **fittings** and tracks, measured on or near the centreline of the **boat**, to the extremity of the **spinnaker pole**.

Effect: To make it clear where SPL is measured.



8. A7 - MAINSAIL MEASUREMENT DEFINITIONS

Reason for change: It has been noted that on some square top mainsails the Seven-Eighths Leech Point may be found on the head rather than the leech of the sail as shown in the pictures below:



It has been noted that the ORC Rules have a clause to address this issue:

G.1.4 - If a seven-eighths leech point cannot be found on the leech, the aft head point shall be taken as the seven-eighths leech point.

Whilst it is noted that the number of sails that this will impact is low, it is proposed that an equivalent rule / requirement is added to the IRC Rules for 2026. This will have the additional benefit of making the MUW measurement consistent between IRC & ORC for all sails which will simplify the labelling of sails using the UMS measurement stickers.

Amend IRC Definition A7 - Mainsail Measurement definition of MUW as follows:

MUW The maximum permitted **mainsail seven-eighths width**. **If a seven-eighths leech point cannot be found on the leech, the aft head point shall be taken as the seven-eighths leech point.**

Effect: Consistent sail measurements for the Universal Measurement System.

9. F2 – FOIL APPENDIX - LIFTING APPENDAGE DEFINITION

Reason for change: To increase the cant angle between twin rudders to 50 degrees (25 degrees per rudder) before they are considered a lifting appendage (foil) in IRC Appendix F as designers state that 20 degrees is limiting on several designs.

Amend IRC Definition F2 as follows:

Lifting appendage:

A **hull appendage** as identified by the IRC Rule F1, attached to the outside of the **hull** and used to produce lift. ERS E.1.2.(m) **Hydrofoil** shall not apply. This excludes:

- a straight or curved centered or off-centered appendage, fixed or fully extended when retractable, with angle less than 20° with respect to the vertical axis of the boat,
- the rudder(s). In a case of a twin rudder, the angle between the 2 rudder stocks) shall be less than ~~40°~~ 50°.

Effect: To increase the permitted relative rudder angle before they are considered foils.