

EMERGENCY  
PROCEDURES FOR  
PLEASURE CRAFT



**SAFETY**  
**W** ON THE  
**WATER**

## WHO WE ARE:

### **DEPARTMENT OF THE MARINE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6785444

### **IMES**

Irish Marine Emergency Service  
Department of the Marine and Natural Resources  
Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6785444

**Emergency Tel: Ring 999 or 112\* and ask for Marine Emergency.**

### **NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL**

4 Northbrook Road  
Ranelagh  
Dublin 6  
Tel: (01) 4963422

### **ISA**

Irish Sailing Association  
3 Park Road  
Dun Laoghaire  
Co. Dublin  
Tel: (01) 2800239

### **RNLI**

Royal National Lifeboat Institution  
15 Windsor Terrace  
Dun Laoghaire  
Co. Dublin  
Tel: (01) 2845050  
or alternatively contact:-

### **RNLI**

Royal National Lifeboat Institution  
West Quay Road  
Poole  
Dorset BH15 1HZ  
Tel: 0044 1202 663174

### **BIM**

PO Box 12  
Crofton Road  
Dun Laoghaire  
Co. Dublin  
Tel: (01) 2841544

\*New European standard emergency number.

## WHAT WE DO:

We are the Government Department responsible for the safety of life at sea and the prevention of pollution from ships.

We are the Division/Service of the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources responsible for search and rescue, intervention in shipwreck and casualty and response to pollution at sea. We provide commercial marine communications and maintain 50 coastal rescue stations manned by volunteers available to respond to marine emergencies.

We as a statutory body have a responsibility to promote through education a nationwide water safety awareness.

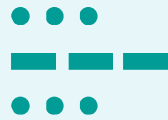
We are the governing body representing sailing and windsurfing in Ireland. We can advise on all aspects of boating safety. We have a network of clubs and recognised teaching establishments that operate training courses for all types of leisure craft.

We exist to preserve life from disaster at sea. This is achieved by providing a fleet of lifeboats, with 24 hour cover, and crewed by well-trained volunteers. In addition, we work with other national organisations to promote sea safety. We are funded entirely by voluntary contributions.

We are the principal development agency for the seafish industry and promote safe working practices for the industry which involves Fisheries Training for both new entrants and practitioners, developing codes of practice, production of training materials and trials of preventative measures against risk on board fishing vessels.

Department of the Marine  
and Natural Resources  
Roinn na Mara agus Acmhainní Nádirtha

Irish Marine Emergency Service  
*Slanú Roinn na Mara*



**Lifeboats**  
Ireland



Bord Iascaigh Mhara  
Irish Sea Fisheries Board



**IRISH SAILING  
ASSOCIATION**



Water Safety  
re and

- Move the crew and the liferaft as far away as possible from the seat of the fire and smoke. Follow the same procedure for launching the liferaft as described on the previous page.
- If you are unsuccessful, then the only course of action left is to **ABANDON SHIP!**
- Don't delay in calling **IMES** if you have problems. It is better for the lifeboat or helicopter to launch and then be recalled **than to be called out too late!**



## FIRE



- A fire at sea can be a most terrifying experience! It is important to make regular checks on gas bottles, hoses and fuel containers to reduce the possibility of vapours escaping into the bilges. Petrol cans should be stowed properly and securely
- Ensure electrical wiring and connections are in good condition.
- Fire extinguishers should be in date, easily accessible, suitable for purpose and need checking regularly.  
**Make sure that your crew know how to use them!**
- If you find a fire on board, get everyone out of the accommodation. Remember to take the fire extinguishers on deck with you.
- Once everyone is clear, try to extinguish the fire and where possible, reduce the air getting to it by sealing off vents and hatches.
- Do not go back into the cabin or any smoke filled space.

## FOREWORD

This booklet has been produced by the Marine Safety Working Group which has representatives from the following Government Departments and National Institutions:

Department of the Marine and Natural Resources  
Department of the Environment and Local Government  
Irish Marine Emergency Service  
National Safety Council  
Irish Sailing Association

Department of Education  
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment  
Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands  
Royal National Lifeboat Institution  
Bord Iascaigh Mhara

The purpose of this book is to provide useful guidelines on preparing for and dealing with being rescued.

There is a check list available on request to accompany this booklet called **Emergency Radio Procedures**. It should be positioned in a convenient place on board your vessel to prompt you at the critical moment.

For information on radio operator courses, sea survival training and safety demonstrations, contact the **ISA** on **01 2800239**

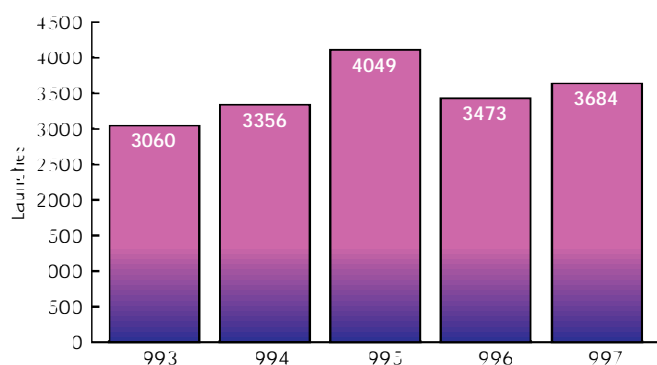
Further copies of this booklet are available from any of the organisations/agencies mentioned above. See back page for addresses and telephone numbers.



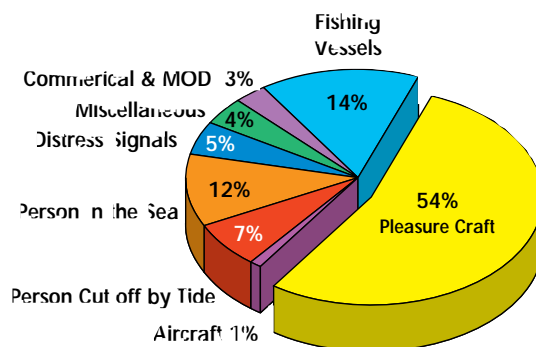
FOREWORD

## INTRODUCTION

If you should ever find yourself in a situation where you have had to call out the marine emergency services, there are quite a few ways in which you can assist to make the rescue go as smoothly as possible. The points covered by these guidelines are worthy of consideration, should such a situation arise.



**Services by lifeboats to pleasure craft 1993-1997**  
(Based on RNLI statistics)



**All lifeboat services by category 1993-1997**

- **ALWAYS BRIEF YOUR CREW BEFORE DEPARTING ABOUT SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES.**
- Don't delay in calling **IMES** if you have problems. It is better for the lifeboat or helicopter to launch and then be recalled **than to be called out too late!**

- Don't forget to take the grab bag, plus extra water containers into the liferaft.
- **REMEMBER - ALWAYS CLIMB INTO YOUR LIFERAFT AS A LAST RESORT. DO NOT ABANDON YOUR VESSEL TOO PREMATURELY!**
- Don't delay in calling **IMES** if you have problems. It is better for the lifeboat or helicopter to launch and then be recalled **than to be called out too late!**

LIFERAFT





## LIFERAFT



- Always ensure the liferaft is ready for immediate launching. Do not stow it below deck or under other equipment.
- Unless the vessel is on fire or sinking fast, it is better to remain onboard until the last possible moment. It is much easier for the rescue services to locate a vessel than a liferaft or people in the water. You will also suffer less from exposure.
- If you decide to abandon the vessel, make sure the end of the static line is secured to the vessel **before** throwing the liferaft overboard. You may have to pull out about 8 metres of static line before the liferaft inflates. It is a good idea for a heavier person to board the liferaft first to help stability and assist others onboard.

## CLOTHING/LIFEJACKETS



- If you are in an emergency situation, ensure all crew members are wearing lifejackets and that they are properly secured.
- Put on warm protective clothing and headgear in case you end up in the water during the rescue operation. This should be done as soon as possible as you may become too busy as the situation develops.
- Have a grab bag ready in case you need to abandon at short notice. This should contain emergency equipment i.e. Hand held VHF, flares, EPIRB, water, and thermal protective aids e.g. survival bags – **not** space blankets which are unsuitable.
- Stow the bag in an easily accessible place eg. just inside the companionway.

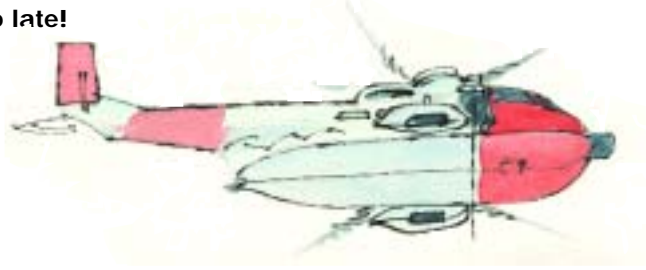
For further information on lifejackets and buoyancy aids contact **IMES** on **01 678544**

## RADIO/ELECTRONICS

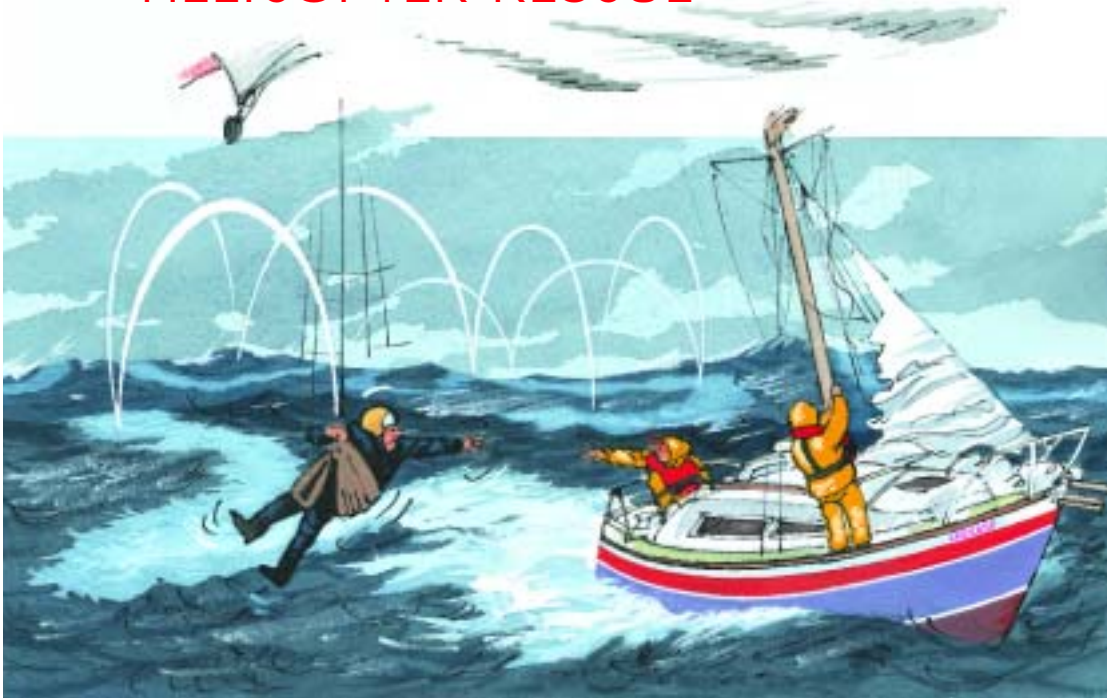


- Keep a checklist with the correct radio distress procedures and your call sign adjacent to the radio. It is easy to get muddled when things go wrong.
- Follow the checklist instructions when making a distress call.
- Maintain a radio watch on Channel 16.
- Activate the EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) if you have one. This will assist rescue craft to locate you.
- If you have electronic nav aids, eg Decca, Loran C, GPS, use them to update the information passed to the lifeboat/helicopter.
- Conserve power, where possible, so that vital equipment can be used for as long as possible.
- Don't delay in calling **IMES** if you have problems. It is better for the lifeboat or helicopter to launch and then be recalled **than to be called out too late!**

- Allow the winchwire to earth in the water before grabbing it. Ensure that it doesn't snag on anything and **never secure it to your boat.**
- If the Hi-line technique is to be used, have a bucket to hand to collect the loose line on deck – refer to Marine Notice No.21/92.
- Don't delay in calling **IMES** if you have problems. It is better for the lifeboat or helicopter to launch and then be recalled **than to be called out too late!**



## HELICOPTER RESCUE



- It is imperative that loose gear e.g. debris from a dismasting, sails and covers, ropes etc. - is secured. This is particularly important as the helicopter downdraught can be very strong.
- Use a red hand held or orange smoke flare as a signal to the helicopter if requested. **NEVER USE A PARACHUTE FLARE WHEN THE HELICOPTER IS NEAR BY.**
- Once contact has been made with the helicopter, the pilot will tell you exactly what his intentions are e.g. Hi-line technique.  
**Follow his instructions – He is the expert.**
- Winching normally takes place from the stern of the vessel, ensure there is a clear area. **LIFEJACKETS ARE TO BE WORN ON DECK AT ALL TIMES.**
- Do not use the radio when the helicopter is overhead unless told to do so.
- If possible, keep the vessel as steady as you can. You will be given instructions regarding course and speed if you still have power available.

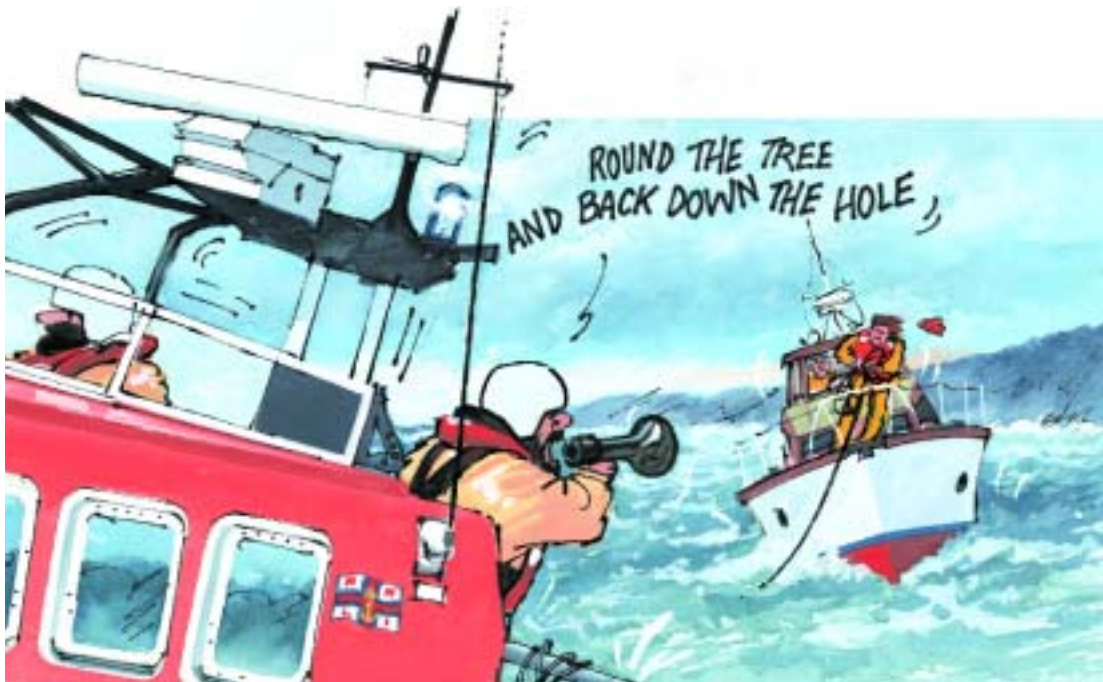
## RECOGNITION



RECOGNITION

- Flares should always be in date and to hand.  
**Make sure you and your crew know how to use them!**
- When firing parachute flares, remember to aim well clear of sails, mast and rigging. Fire them slightly downwind so that they can achieve maximum height. **DO NOT FIRE THEM IF A HELICOPTER IS CLOSE BY.**
- Fire flares to leeward so that smoke and debris is blown clear.
- It is important to be easily recognisable from the air, so a large brightly coloured sheet or cover spread over the deck can be of assistance.
- Listen on Channel 16 for instructions. You may be asked to give a long count on your VHF radio e.g. 1–10 for direction finding purposes.

## TOWING PREPARATIONS



- Have a plan for securing the tow line to your vessel when it is passed by the lifeboat. **Practice this as a routine drill.**
- As the lifeboat approaches, the coxswain will discuss his intentions with you. Advise him of any known hazards, e.g. ropes, sails in the water around you. **Follow his instructions - he is the expert!**
- Do not secure the tow line around the base of a deck stepped mast or to fittings that are not strong enough for the job. If in doubt, back up the tow line using additional ropes to sheet winches or other strong points on deck.
- All-weather lifeboats are equipped with a small canvas drogue which may be passed to you for streaming astern of your vessel under certain conditions, particularly if you have lost your rudder. This will make the tow more manageable and also reduce the tendency to broach in following seas.

- Where possible, provide suitable protection for the tow rope in way of the bow fairlead(s) to prevent chafe.
- A good set of wire cutters and a knife are worth carrying to cut away rigging after a dismasting.
- Where possible turn the tow rope up around the towing/mooring post. Avoid tying knots or making loops which cannot be released under load.
- Some craft tow better using a bridle arrangement rather than a single line.
- Don't delay in calling **IMES** if you have problems. It is better for the lifeboat or helicopter to launch and then be recalled **than to be called out too late!**

