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He that will not sail till all dangers are over must never put to sea.

- Thomas Fuller

Safety & Rescue

It is impossible to plan for all possible dangers at sea, but a wise sailor anticipates and prepares for the worse. He then relies on skill, luck, and his own ingenuity to get him through the unexpected.

Fuel Range

Before leaving port, you need to compute your fuel range for the journey. This requires knowledge of your average boat speed, distance you intend to travel, fuel consumption of your engine, and fuel capacity of the boat.

When computing the range, it is often best to compute the range with a fuel capacity 1/8 less than the actual capacity of the boat.

One Third Rule

When calculating fuel range, remember the 1/3 Rule

1/3 to get there

1/3 to get back

1/3 in reserve

Computing Fuel Range

Speed (knots) X Fuel capacity (gallons) = Consumption (gallons/hour) X Distance (nautical miles)

Range (distance) = (Fuel capacity X speed) ÷ Fuel consumption

The range is the distance you can travel on that amount of fuel.

Fire Extinguishers

Boats with engines must carry USCG approved fire extinguishers except boats smaller than 26 feet that have outboard motors and no enclosed compartments where gas fume can collect. Boats larger than 26 feet can usually meet the requirements by carrying two or three extinguishers of size I or II (sizes are marked on the extinguishers).

Class A - Used for combustible material that leaves ash.

Dry chemical - Messy but good fire fighting properties.

Class B - Used for flammable liquid. Fights fire with carbon dioxide or dry chemical.

Halon - Good below deck but not above deck.

Class C - Used for electrical fires.

Carbon dioxide - Good in unoccupied, closed space.

Man Overboard

In the event of a man overboard, it is imperative that you act quickly. Whoever first spots a man overboard, should immediately shout "Man overboard!" to alert the crew.

One person should be assigned to keep a constant eye on the person overboard while continually pointing to the person in the water. The person assigned to watch should not take his eyes off the man in the water for even a second or risk losing sight of the man.

Lifejackets, throwable personal flotation devices (PFDs), and anything else that floats should be thrown into the water. This will litter the water and mark the area where the man fell overboard and also provide the man in the water with flotation devices.

If a GPS is available, a man overboard waypoint should be immediately set, and rescue operations should begin. Be careful trying to retrieve a man overboard under power. The propellers can present a grave danger to the man in the water.

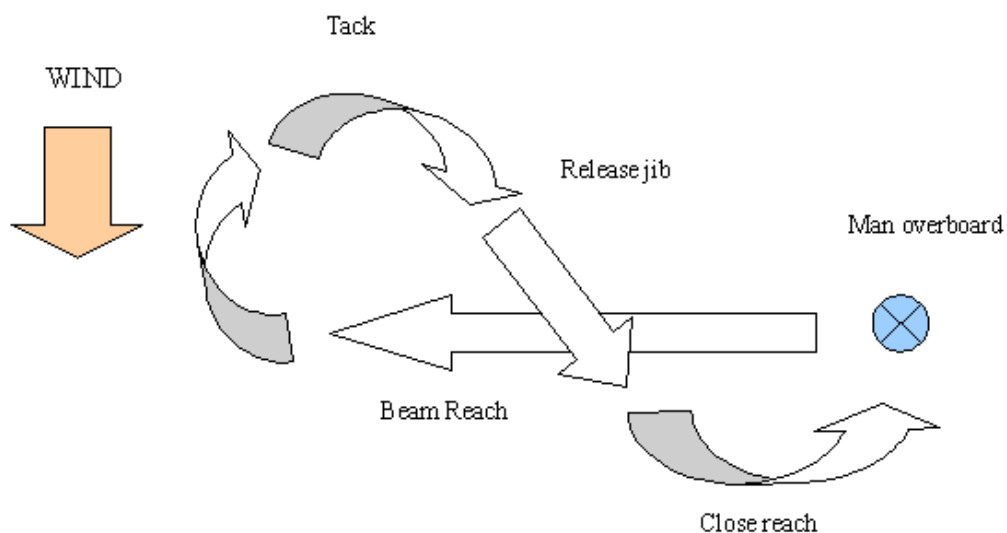


FIGURE EIGHT or QUICK TURN

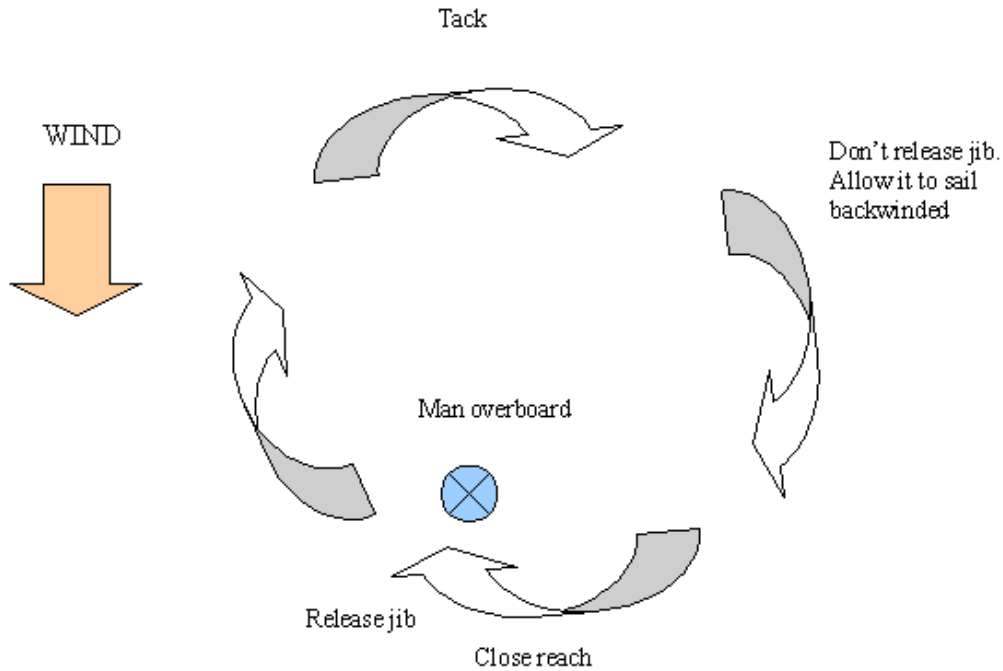
Figure Eight Method

Sail a maximum of four boat lengths on a beam reach.

Tack into the wind and fall off on a very broad reach. Cross the boat's original course.

Head up into a close reach when the person is abeam of the boat. Release the jib.

Ease the main and bring the boat to a stop beside the person.



QUICK STOP

Quick Stop Method

Immediately turn the boat to wind and perform a tack. Allow the jib to backwind.

Sail on a beam to broad reach for two or three boat lengths and then head downwind.

Hold the downwind course until the person is abeam of the boat.

Jib the boat and release the jib.

Approach the person on a close reach and bring the boat to a stop beside the person.



Heave-to Method

Immediately tack the boat, but don't release the jib.

Move and secure the tiller to leeward, and trim the mainsail so the boat lies closed-hauled or on a close reach (hove-to).

While hove-to, the boat will make slow progress leeward and should end up just windward of the person in the water.

Float Plan

You should always leave a float plan with a friend or relative--do not file a float plan with the Coast Guard.

The float plan should give a complete description of the boat and passengers and the expected itinerary. But most important, the float plan should contain the time and date to contact authorities if you have not returned, and it should have the telephone numbers of the appropriate authorities

What to include on a float plan

1. Your name, address, and telephone number.
2. Description of the boat: type, color, trim, registration numbers.
3. Number of persons aboard: names, addresses, ages.
4. Medical problems of any crew members.
5. Engine information: number, type, horsepower, fuel capacity.
6. Survival equipment and number: PFDs, flares, mirror, smoke signals, flashlight, food, paddles, water, anchors, dinghy, EPIRB.
7. Radio: number, type, frequency.
8. Expected trip itinerary: dates and destinations.
9. Automobile information: make, year, model, color, license number, and where parked.
10. Trailer information: make, year, license number, and where parked.
11. Date and time of your expected return.
12. Date to notify Coast Guard or local authority if you haven't returned.
13. Phone numbers and addresses where Coast Guard or local authority can be reached.

Upon your return, do not forget to announce your return to the person with whom you left the float plan.

Essential Offshore Safety Equipment

Two anchors of appropriate size and strength with three fathoms of chain and sufficient rode.

Life jackets, one for each person on board.

Throwable lifesaving device with dye marker, automatic light, and whistle.

Life raft rated for the number of people on board.

Fire extinguishers rate for all the systems on board.

Working compass and spare, both adjusted for the vessel.

Charts of the area of use.

Distress signaling devices—smoke for day, flares for night.

Towrope and bridle of a size and strength to handle the vessel in the worst conditions encountered, and a light messenger line with a monkey's fist or other appropriate weight at the throwing end.

First-aid kit.

Radio receiver capable of receiving marine weather reports and bulletins.

Waterproof flashlight with spare batteries.

Radar reflector.

Patching materials for leaks, collisions, broken hoses, etc.

Tool kit: mechanic's tools for engine repairs and carpenter's tools for damage control.

Spare parts for essential systems.

Safety harness for deck work in foul weather and repairs aloft.

Coast Guard Droppable, Floatable Pumps

The Coast Guard often provides vessels in distress with emergency pumps by either making parachute drops, by lowering on helicopter hoist, or by delivering by vessel. The most commonly used type of pump comes complete in a sealed aluminum drum about half the size of a 50-gallon oil drum. One single lever on top opens it up. Don't be smoking, as there may be gas fumes inside the can. The pump will draw about 90 gallons per minute. There should be a waterproof flashlight on top of the pump for night use. Operating instructions are provided inside the pump container.

--*United States Coast Pilot*, 31st edition, 1998

How to Make a Distress Call

The distress call consists of:

- the distress signal MAYDAY (spoken three times);
- the words THIS IS (spoken once);
- the call sign or name of the vessel in distress (spoken three times).

The distress message follows immediately and consists of:

- the distress signal MAYDAY;
- the call sign and name of the vessel in distress:
- particulars of its position (latitude and longitude, or true bearing and distance from a known geographical position);
- the nature of the distress;
- the kind of assistance desired;
- the number of persons aboard and the condition of any injured;
- present seaworthiness of the vessel;
- description of the vessel (length, type, cabin, masts, power, color of hull, superstructure, trim, etc.);
- any other information which might facilitate the rescue, such as display of a surface-to-air identification signal or a radar reflector;
- your listening frequency and schedule;
- THIS IS (call sign and name of vessel in distress). OVER.

Only use MAYDAY when loss of life or vessel is imminent.

Use PAN PAN (pronounced "pon-pon") when you have an urgent message concerning safety of a person or vessel.

Use SECURITE (pronounced "say-curatay") when you have a message about navigational safety or weather.

[Top of page](#)

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545