

Home and Dry



**MAN OVERBOARD
TOOLKIT**

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Life on the open water brings rewards, but it brings a host of challenges too. And one of the key risks, Man Overboard, is something that many fishermen have either experienced or heard tales of.

This short guide details equipment, drills and risk assessments to help you stay safe and includes tips for all, whether you're a skipper, crew or a single-handed fisherman.

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SECTION 1

DRILLS AND RISK ASSESSMENTS



Tips for Skippers

Drills



Who should complete drills?

In short, everyone – whether your vessel is above or below 15m – needs to run regular drills so everyone knows what to do in an emergency. This includes vessels that are single handed. Drills should be recorded and include date, type of drill, names of crew involved, results and any modifications to procedures that may be required.

When should I do these?

You should complete drills regularly, at least once a month. And if over a quarter of your crew has changed recently, you should carry out a drill straight away so that everyone is up to speed.

How does a drill influence my vessel's certificate?

Showing you can run drills will determine if your owner/skipper certificate is renewed or endorsed.

What drills should I run?



→ Drills for Single Handed Vessels:

- **Man Overboard** (Deployment of self-recovery systems, are they in good condition and fit for purpose? MOB ladders should extend a minimum of 4 feet below the surface of the water and be deployable from the water).
- **Abandon Ship**
- **Rescue** another vessel's casualty from the water
- **Fire**
- **Hull Damage/Taking Water/Sinking**
- **Collision/Grounding**
- **Anchor**
- **Coming Fast**

→ Drills for Crewed Vessels:

- **Man Overboard**
- **Muster Stations Drills**
- **Fire**
- **Hull Damage/Taking Water/Sinking**
- **Collision/Grounding**
- **Abandon Ship**
- **Rescue** another vessel's casualty from the water
- **Anchor**
- **Coming Fast**

What am I responsible for?

The health and safety of yourself, your crew and the safe operation of your vessel

Ensuring all crew members have read and understood the vessel's risk assessments

Ensuring all crew members are trained and supervised on board

Ensuring that all crew have completed mandatory safety training and have provided copies of certificates

Ensuring all crew members know how to work safely on board

Regularly assessing risks to health and safety and putting measures in place to prevent accidents

Assessing if equipment is serviced and suitable for the task to be completed and the conditions, i.e. weather, sea states, visibility

Developing an operational procedure for work processes which could create a MOB risk – and communicating this with your crew

Putting measures in place to prevent MOB such as using physical barriers, automated equipment that mean the crew do not have to approach machinery in operation, or harnesses

Communicating with your crew where the highest risk of MOB is on your vessel and the necessary steps to prevent this

Providing your crew with personal flotation devices (PFDs) and personal locator beacons (PLBs) if the risk of MOB cannot be eliminated following a documented risk assessment

Checking your crew know how to activate a PLB and correctly fit a PFD

Ensuring all crew members understand how to recover a MOB from the water and how to operate rescue equipment effectively



REMEMBER

Any work that requires you or one of your crew to lean over the side of the boat should only be undertaken in cases of emergency. Only do this after you have carried out a proper risk assessment and checked that control measures are in place to prevent MOB.

Tips for Crewmates

→ What am I responsible for?

- Knowing how to **fit a PFD correctly** and how to **activate a PLB**
- Ensuring that all your **mandatory safety training** has been completed
- Ensuring you have read and understood the vessel's **risk assessments**
- **Listening to**, and understanding the **skipper's instructions**
- Being **aware** of areas of risk on the boat and acting accordingly
- Understanding the measures in place to **prevent MOB** (e.g. barriers) and not changing these without agreement from the skipper
- **Understanding** how to recover a MOB from the water and how to operate rescue **equipment effectively**



⚠️ REMEMBER

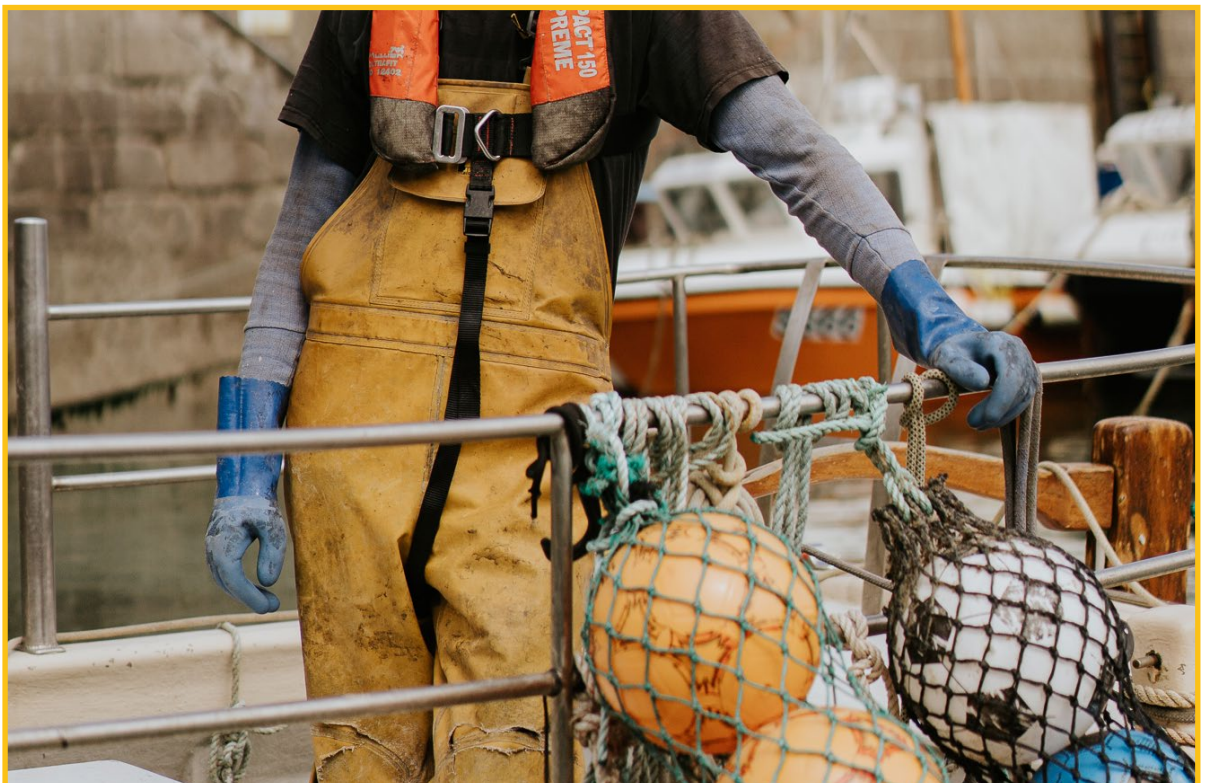
Your skipper will tell you where the biggest risk of going overboard is when you come aboard and receive your vessel induction. They might miss something (we're all human, after all), so it is important to share where you feel is dangerous with them to help prevent an accident.

Tips for Single Handed Fishermen

Taking steps to prevent MOB is even more important when you work single handed, as you won't have someone with you to help you get back on board. Think, what adjustments could you make to your vessel? And remember it is mandatory to always wear a PFD and PLB which have been properly serviced.

Consider

- Using a **harness when** working at the rail
- Separating yourself from your gear **using pound boards**
- **Securing loads** which are likely to move about on deck
- Adding **additional barriers** and raised bulwarks



For further information, read Marine Guidance Notice 570 [here](#)

SECTION 2 – MAN OVERBOARD



Knowing how to run a MOB recovery drill is as important for the crew as it is for the skipper. Just think – it could be the skipper who goes overboard!

What should I know?

- How to run a quick and effective search of the vessel for the missing individual
- How to quickly launch a rescue craft/life raft and use recovery equipment effectively
- The effects of hydrostatic squeeze and how to treat an individual suffering from hypothermia
- How to recover a person from the water who may be unconscious and therefore unable to help themselves

What increases the risk of MOB?

- The pitch and roll of small vessels
- Sudden accelerations
- Working on complex fishing operations in exposed areas of the vessel
- The repetition of hauling in and letting out of gear over the side or stern
- Working on wet slippery surfaces
- Cluttered decks, insecure loads
- Fatigue which results from long working hours
- Loss of concentration
- Feeling unwell
- The effects of drugs and alcohol



How can we reduce these risks?

DECK SURFACES:

The surface of all decks should be so designed or treated as to minimise the possibility of personnel slipping and falling overboard, particularly in areas where fish are handled.

ROPES:

Ropes and lines should be separated from where the crew stand to avoid the risk of standing inside a line under tension.

EQUIPMENT:

When working in an exposed area in adverse weather, you should use a safety harness with a safety line attached, as well as wearing a PFD at all times.

BULWARKS AND GUARDRAILS:

The height of bulwarks or guardrails above deck should be at least 1m.

LIGHTING:

All passageways, working spaces and working areas on board the vessel should be well lit and not obstruct visibility from the wheelhouse.

WINCHES:

Winches should be designed, guarded and fenced so that moving parts may not lead to man overboard risks.

NET HAULING:

The passageway between bulkheads, deckhouses or the like and fully rolled up hauling equipment with nets should be 600mm as a minimum.

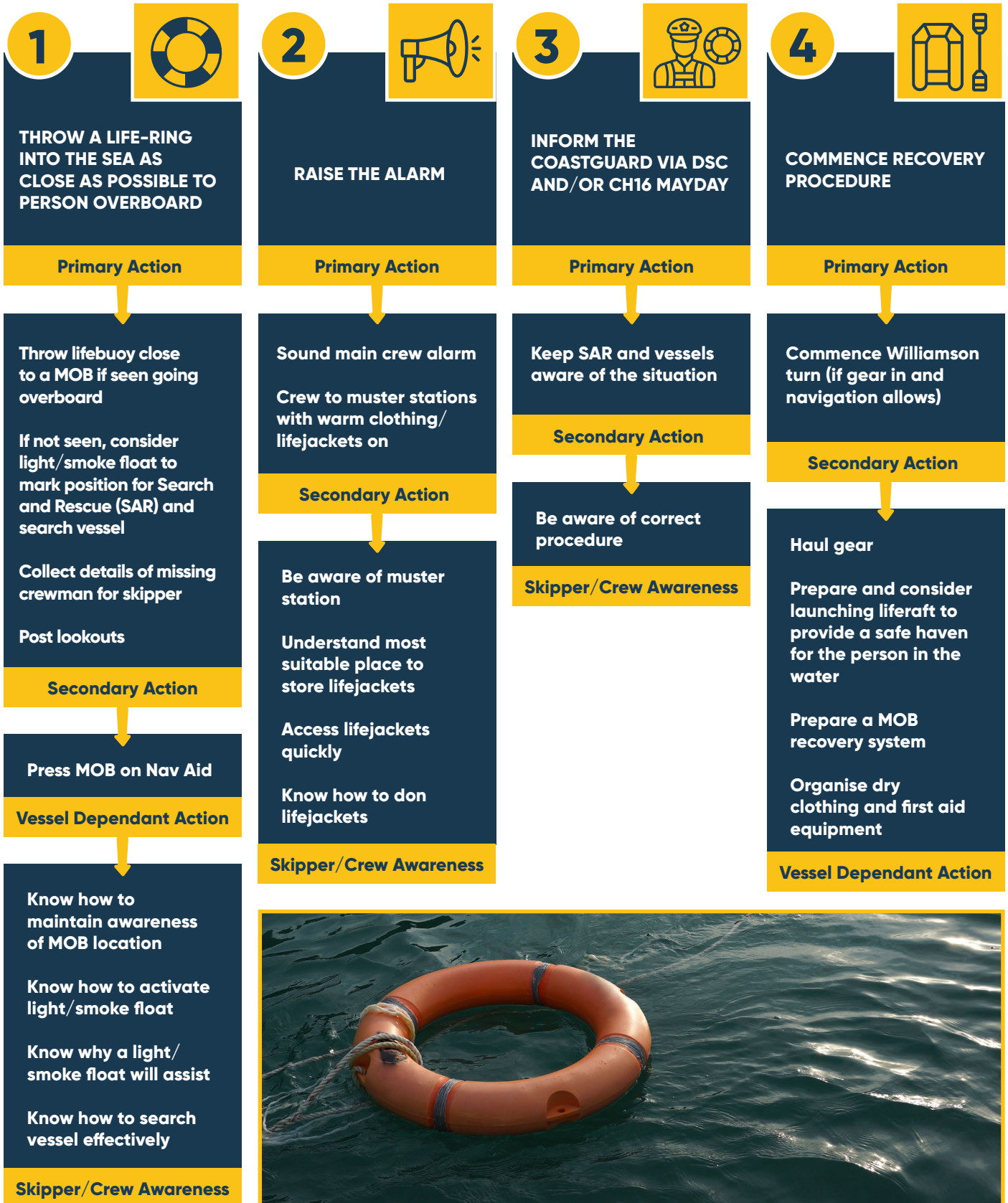
WELLBEING:

Taking regular breaks to reduce fatigue and loss of concentration and accessing wellbeing and mental health support when required.



What to do in the event of a MOB situation

The following provides guidance on the actions of the vessel's skipper and crew. These actions are generic and may vary from vessel to vessel, so we recommend that you identify the requirements particular to your vessel through practice drills.



For further information, read Marine Guidance Notice 571 [here](#).

SECTION 3 - EQUIPMENT



Personal flotation devices (PFDs)

PFDs should be worn at all times on board, where there is a risk of going overboard– but which one do you need?

150N

PFDs with performance standard 150N are intended for general offshore and rough weather use where a high standard of performance is required.

275N

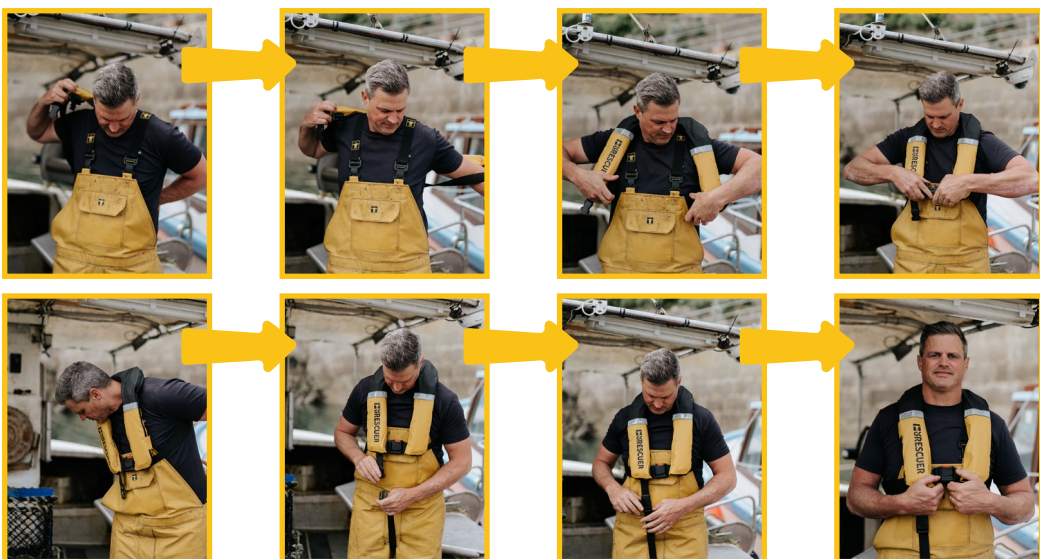
PFDs with performance standard 275N are intended primarily for offshore use and by people of significant weight or who are using items of significant weight and thus require additional buoyancy.

All PFDs should be fitted with an emergency light, retro reflective materials and a whistle as standard. Crotch straps should also be worn.

⚠️ REMEMBER

Don't forget to service your PFD in line with the manufacturer's instructions for the specific PFD you have. A range of brands are available. Keep a log of when you do this in your vessel's safety folder.

→ How do I fit a PFD correctly?



For more information, visit [Marine Guidance Notice 588 here](#)

Recovery Systems: What can I use to recover a person who has gone overboard?

Choose the recovery system that is right for your vessel. Remember, when making this choice, you will be asked to show how you can recover an unconscious person at an inspection.

Crews should be well trained in the use of these systems and appreciate the limitations of the use of these recovery systems in poor weather conditions.

REMEMBER

- Check your recovery equipment is stored correctly
- Check your recovery equipment monthly to make sure it's in a serviceable condition
- Ensure your recovery equipment is easily and quickly accessible

Radios

All vessels fitted with a radio must have a radio licence, which can be obtained from:

OFCOM: Apply for a maritime radio licence

Spectrum Licensing
Riverside House
2a Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 9HA

Spectrum Licensing
0300 123 1000 or 020 7981 3131
E-mail: spectrum.licensing@ofcom.org.uk

Vessels with operational radio kit, for example GMDSS or VHF, must have a person on board with the appropriate operator certificate. Further information on obtaining an operator certificate can be obtained from the MCA Seafarer Training and Certification Branch on 023 8032 9231 or by email at exams@mcga.gov.uk.

REMEMBER

Knowing how to keep both yourself and your crew mates safe is vital – you might be called upon to help at any time. Keep this guide saved on your mobile for easy access or bookmark the Home and Dry webpage.

Have you considered taking your crew to one of the Man Overboard Awareness training events run by Seafish in conjunction with the RNLI? Find out more [here](#).

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