

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



# powerboating

SEA SAFETY GUIDELINES



# Marine Safety Working Group

## Aim

To use its collective expertise and experience to create and communicate marine safety information and messages to endeavour to reduce accidents and to prevent the loss of life on Irish waters.

## Objectives

- To establish strong working relationships with other national and local organisations to create/promote accident prevention programmes.
- To establish cause and trends in accidents at sea.
- To develop accident prevention programmes.
- To provide a co-ordinated approach to the dissemination of safety information in response to individual enquiries.
- To measure effectiveness of prevention programmes.

[www.safetyonthewater.ie](http://www.safetyonthewater.ie)

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Preparation is the key to safe boating. The right boat, knowledge of weather conditions, powerboating skills, appropriate clothing and safety equipment are essential.

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Once at sea, it's vital that your crew are organised, know what they are doing, understand the 'rules of the road' and what to do if things go wrong.

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Knowledge can be the difference between life and death. So familiarise yourself with recovery procedures, distress signals, first aid and rescue techniques.

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## **Useful contacts** **29**

We probably can't answer all your questions in this booklet. So we've included a list of people who may be able to help.

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## **Yacht and Boat Safety Scheme** **31**

For added protection at sea, join the safety identification scheme. It's a free service and you'll find an application form at the back of this guide.



before you go

## Get the right boat

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Be realistic about the type of powerboat that will suit you. Bigger or faster does not necessarily mean better – you will get more fun from a boat that provides good all round performance, is easy to handle and carries the right number of people.

- Get expert advice when buying. If you are buying second-hand, an independent survey by a marine expert will show if the boat is in good, seaworthy condition and assess the standard of equipment.
- If you hire or charter a powerboat, make sure it is comprehensively insured with full cover for everyone on board. Check that the boat is fully equipped with safety equipment and that all paperwork is in order. Check that the Inspection Certificate is in date.
- For more advice on buying or charter, call the ISA on [01 2800239](tel:012800239).



## Master basic skills

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A powerboat in the wrong hands could be a lethal weapon! You must possess sufficient skill to use the boat safely. This means basic knowledge of boat handling, navigation, rules of the road, use of safety equipment and maintenance of the boat and its engine.

The ISA operates the National Powerboat Training Scheme for all levels of ability, starting with a one day introduction for novices and extending to advanced techniques. For information call the ISA on [01 2800239](tel:012800239) or visit the ISA website at [www.sailing.ie](http://www.sailing.ie)

Needless to say, anyone involved in watersports should be able to swim. For information on where to learn, contact Irish Water Safety on [1890 420202](tel:1890420202) or visit their website at [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie)



## Get free safety advice from the RNLI

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The RNLI provides sea safety advice in a friendly and confidential manner and can arrange to send a trained adviser to discuss your sportsboat's safety equipment totally free of charge. The service is called SEA CHECK (Safety Equipment Advisory Check) and has provided practical advice to thousands of boat owners since it was introduced in 1999.

- For more information, or to arrange a SEA Check, call freefone [1800 789 589](tel:1800789589) or register online at [www.rnli.org.uk/seacheck.asp](http://www.rnli.org.uk/seacheck.asp)



## Choosing a powerboat

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Never overload a powerboat. A boat with too many people or too much equipment will perform sluggishly, be harder to manoeuvre, may become unstable or get swamped by waves and is more likely to suffer a man overboard.



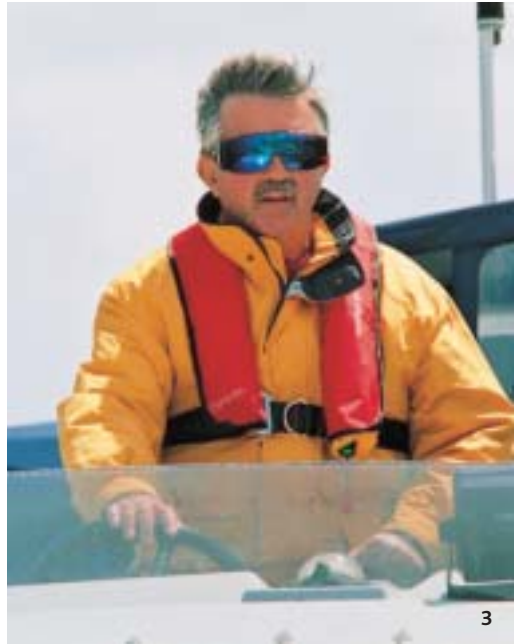
- A vee hull is the classic powerboat shape. It combines a central vee that cushions the ride through waves with flat panels for fast acceleration. Hull forms range from shallow vee for best performance on flat water to deep vee for the smoothest ride across waves.
- A RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat) combines inflatable tubes with a rigid vee hull and central driving position that is normally big enough for two people. This creates a safe and versatile boat which has a fast and comfortable ride. Limited internal space means that additional crew have to sit on the tubes.
- A solid dory or cathedral hull boat is very stable and provides the largest possible deck space. It will be a fast boat on flat water at the expense of a hard ride in waves.

## What to wear

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The effects of wind chill and cold water mean there are few days when you can go boating in Ireland without protective clothing. Shorts and a T-shirt may seem fine on a hot day, but it is never as warm on the water as on dry land and it may become much colder. As skipper of a powerboat you have responsibility for everyone on board. They must have access to clothing which will keep them dry and warm, whatever the weather, and protect against the ultimate danger of hypothermia.

- Make sure protective clothing is comfortable and does not restrict movement around the boat or vision.
- Waterproof trousers and jackets for marine use will protect against spray, rain and wind. Breathable fabrics are likely to be most comfortable over longer periods of time. Bright colours and retro-reflective strips are strongly recommended.
- Base and mid layers should be fleece and fibre pile garments, which trap warm air and provide quick drying comfort.
- An alternative for colder seasons is to wear a drysuit made from waterproof material with latex neck, wrists and ankles to keep all the water out. Drysuits are highly effective, but are expensive and may be uncomfortable in warmer weather.
- Always wear marine shoes or boots which provide the best possible grip on the boat or while launching and retrieving on a slipway.
- Thermal headgear helps conserve body heat if you are out on a cold day.
- Marine gloves provide a firm grip on the wheel in wet weather and protect against injury when handling synthetic ropes. They also help to keep your hands warm.



## Here comes the sun

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- Sunglasses filter out bright reflected light on boat and water, making it easier to spot hazards. They provide some protection against spray and wind.
- Make sure everyone on board uses a 15+ sun block on exposed skin. Lip balm is also recommended.
- Beware of dehydration. Always carry plenty of water or non alcoholic drinks.

## Wearing personal floatation devices

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- By law all powerboats must have sufficient lifejackets or suitable personal floatation devices for everyone on board. This means having lifejackets or suitable personal floatation devices which will fit all of your crew including children.
- It is the skipper's responsibility to show the crew where lifejackets are stowed, how to don and secure them and when and how to operate them.
- It is recommended and best practice for all the crew to wear a lifejacket or suitable personal floatation device when on deck or in an open boat. Remember – it is important to use the crotch straps.
- Lifejackets or suitable personal floatation devices should be worn when a boat is out in poor weather conditions, restricted visibility, or at night.
- By law anyone under age 16 must wear a lifejacket or suitable personal floatation device on deck or in an open boat.
- People drown every year because they do not wear lifejackets or suitable personal floatation devices.

## Understanding personal floatation devices

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Buoyancy is measured in newtons – 10 newtons equal 1kg of floatation. There are four European standards for lifejackets or buoyancy aids which must all carry the CE mark.



1. Buoyancy aids with 50 newtons are only for use by swimmers in sheltered waters when help is close at hand. They are not guaranteed to turn a person from a face-down position in the water.
2. The 100 newton lifejacket is for those who may still have to wait for rescue, but are likely to be in sheltered and calm water.



3. The 150 newton lifejacket is for general offshore and rough weather use where a high standard of performance is required.
4. The 275 newton lifejacket is primarily for offshore and extreme conditions and those wearing heavy protective clothing.



Personal floatation devices are available with a choice of foam-only buoyancy, air-only buoyancy or air-foam buoyancy.

- Inflatable personal floatation devices may be automatically activated on entering the water or can be inflated manually or orally.

They must be checked and maintained as recommended by the manufacturer. Spare gas cylinders should be carried.

- It is recommended that all personal floatation devices are fitted with a whistle, light and retro-reflective strips and should have crotch straps.
- Crotch straps should be fastened under the crotch, NOT on the outside of the hips. There is a real risk of drowning if personal floatation devices are not fitted properly.

## Emergency electronics



### VHF and GMDSS

- A VHF radio will enable you to summon help by calling the Coast Guard and alerting other vessels on channel 16.
- VHF radios with the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) are equipped with Digital Selective Calling (DSC), which allows a distress alert to be transmitted at the touch of a button.

### EPIRBs

Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) are a feature of the GMDSS system. They transmit a one-way distress signal, which can be activated manually or automatically. For instance, if a boat sinks, an EPIRB fitted with a Hydrostatic Release Unit will float free and automatically transmit a distress signal, which relays its exact position to the nearest Coast Guard coordination centre. An active EPIRB also enables lifeboats or helicopters to obtain a direct radio bearing. Ensure your EPIRB is correctly installed and make regular checks of the battery and hydrostatic release.

- For more information about GMDSS, contact the RNLI on [1800 789589](tel:1800789589), the ISA on [01 2800239](tel:012800239) or the Maritime Radio Affairs Unit (MRAU) on [01 6782367](tel:016782367).



### Radio licensing

Make sure your boat has an up-to-date radio licence. If you fit DSC equipment you will need to obtain a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number. For more information, contact the Commission for Communications Regulation (COMREG) on [01 8049600](tel:018049600).



## EPIRB registering

It is vital that your EPIRB is registered so that full details of your boat are known if the EPIRB is activated. Registration is provided free of charge by the Maritime Radio Affairs Unit (MRAU), which can be contacted on [01 6782367](tel:016782367). Do not transfer your EPIRB to another boat without informing the MRAU of necessary changes. If you sell a boat with an EPIRB, it must be registered to the new owner.



## Mobile phones

Never rely on the use of a mobile phone to replace marine VHF radio for distress and safety calls. It is not a safe or reliable substitute! However, it may be useful in some circumstances.

- In an emergency dial 112 or 999 and ask for the Coast Guard.
- The service is free – the Coast Guard is always there to help.



## Training

Make sure you are properly trained and qualified so you can operate your radio kit effectively. The skipper should attend a recognised Short Range Certificate (SRC) or Long Range Certificate (LRC) course. It is a legal requirement that at least one member of the crew is qualified to use the equipment on board. The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources administers the SRC. Courses run typically over a two day period and include routine, safety, urgency and distress communications as well as radio voice procedures and techniques. Details available from the ISA.

- Make sure your crew knows how to operate your VHF radio or EPIRB. There is a risk of setting off a false distress alert due to lack of training.



## Close at hand

### Flares

Flares are an essential part of any boat's safety equipment. They should be stored in a suitable waterproof container. All flares must be in-date.

- Distress flares for inshore use provide cover up to five miles from land. An inshore pack includes two red hand flares visible up to seven miles on a clear night, plus two hand held orange smokes visible up to three miles by day, but more visible than red flares in bright sunlight.

- Make sure the crew know where the flares are. For safe use get them to read the instructions printed on the sides – it will be too late in an emergency!

Out-of-date flares must be disposed of safely. Misuse of distress flares is illegal. A list of authorised disposal points can be obtained from the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.



### First aid

A comprehensive first aid kit and basic first aid knowledge could prove invaluable until professional assistance arrives. It is recommended that at least one crew member should have a current first aid certificate.

- The RNLI produces a video 'First Aid Afloat'. Call them on [1800 789589](tel:1800789589) for more information.
- The ISA or Irish Water Safety can provide details of suitable first aid courses.



### Throwing lines

A throwing line is recommended for use in an emergency. The brightly coloured floating line is coiled inside a throwing sack. Achieving a long distance throw with good accuracy requires practice, with a possible reach of over 20 metres.

## Powerboat safety equipment

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Minimum requirements are likely to include:

- Kill cord to cut the ignition when the driver leaves the controls.
- Lifejackets for all crew plus waterproof clothing.
- Boarding ladder to help get back on board.
- Alternative propulsion such as paddles and a small spare outboard engine.
- Anchor and line which must be secured. A length of chain adds weight and greatly improves the holding capability of an anchor. The amount of chain and rope should be at least five times the depth of water.
- Mooring lines, tow rope and a throwing line.
- Bucket, bailer or manual bilge pump.
- Air pump and repair kit for the inflatable tubes on a RIB.
- Spare fuel and oil which, if required, is pre-mixed as appropriate and in ready-to-use tanks to avoid transferring fuel in a moving boat.
- Engine tool kit and basic spares including spark plugs and shear pins, plus spare fuel line and bulb.
- Stainless steel marine knife or multi-tool.
- First aid kit including wound dressings, triangular bandages and survival bag.
- Distress flares suitable for inshore use.
- Hand-held VHF.
- Navigational aids including compass, charts and GPS.
- Powder or CO2 fire extinguisher.
- Foghorn.
- Clear markings to allow easy identification of the boat in an emergency.
- Towing warps and extra rope.
- A radar reflector must be fitted under international regulations 'if practicable'.

**Regular servicing of all safety equipment is highly recommended**

## The RNLI's engine check list

- The engine plays a vital role in the safety of a yacht. It must start every time and be ready to get you out of trouble in an emergency.
- To help powerboat owners ensure their engines are as reliable as possible, the RNLI produces an 'Engine Check List' with comprehensive advice which is available free of charge. To request your copy freefone the RNLI on [1800 789589](tel:1800789589).



## Killcords

All powerboats must be fitted with a killcord that stops the engine every time the driver leaves the controls - whether he does so voluntarily, or involuntarily in an emergency. Never operate the boat without the kill switch in place and the cord properly secured to your leg, or strong point on your buoyancy aid or lifejacket. Regularly check that the killcord is functioning by using it to turn off the engine.



## Remember!

- Read the engine handbook, keep it to hand and make sure you are familiar with its contents.
- Make sure the engine is regularly maintained. Engine failure is the main cause of lifeboat calls to powerboats.
- Winter is the ideal time to get the engine serviced. Ensure this is done by a reputable service agent.
- Always carry at least 20 per cent more fuel than you expect to need.

## Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers must be checked and maintained in line with manufacturers' recommendations. Make sure the extinguisher is secure and fully accessible. Check pressure and expiry date.

- A BCF or carbon dioxide gas extinguisher puts out fire by excluding air.
- A dry powder extinguisher also puts out fire by excluding air, but is only suitable for treating a fire on which it can settle.
- Water puts out fires by absorbing heat quickly, but must not be thrown over burning oil or petrol which would spread the fire.

## Planning a trip

Under international regulations, you must have a plan before going afloat. You need to consider weather, tides, the limitations of your boat and crew and any navigational hazards on your trip. Always have a contingency plan and leave details with someone ashore.

### Weather check

Always check the weather forecast before you go and be prepared to change your plans or cancel the trip. Remember that the weather changes. You have no right to frighten the crew – or yourself. Services of particular relevance might include:



- Weatherdial – 1550 123 855
- Weatherfax – 1570 131 838
- Teletext
- Irish Coast Guard Weather forecasts – After an initial announcement on VHF channel 16, these are broadcast on each Coast Guard radio station's normal working channel.
- National and local radio and TV.

### Tide check

Most slipways and launch sites are tidal. It is very important to check the times of high and low water and assess how they will affect your trip when you head for home.

- If the tide turns to a wind against tide direction, the sea may become much rougher.
- An ebbing tide may create dangerous areas of shallow water.

### Organising the crew

The skipper has responsibility for everyone on the boat. Brief them on what you plan to do and all safety issues, no matter how short the trip. Ensure everyone is prepared and try not to expect too much from them. People soon get sick of the thrill of bashing through waves at high speed – particularly young children.

## Yacht and Boat Safety Identification Scheme

The Yacht and Boat Safety Identification Scheme, administered by the Irish Coast Guard, provides vital information in an emergency. See the back page for more information and the registration form.



## Organising the boat

Be aware of the limitations of your boat. Do not over estimate its speed or ability to handle difficult conditions. Remember that the sea can change rapidly.



- The boat should be comprehensively insured with full cover for everyone on board.
- Do your navigation before you go. Check all relevant charts, tide tables and pilots. Take those that are required on board.
- Before the first trip of the season, make a thorough check of the boat and engine to ensure everything functions correctly.
- Check the tubes of a RIB to ensure they are correctly inflated and there are no leaks. If you have any doubts, take the boat to a service agent.
- Check that bungs are in position and the propeller is undamaged.
- Make sure all gear and fuel tanks are securely stowed. If a line or painter is secured at one end, make sure it is not likely to foul the propeller if it falls over the side.
- Before you leave the launch site, make sure your trailer and tow vehicle are properly parked and secured. Get permission to launch if required.
- It is a wise precaution to leave details of where you plan to go with a reliable person on shore. This should include your route, expected times of departure and arrival, description of boat and contact names for all people on board. Keep your shore contact advised of changes and let them know when you get back.



Practical tip from the Marine Safety Working Group



*Before embarking on a passage, check the engine oil and take a reserve supply with you. Ensure that you have more than enough fuel for the trip.*

# under way



## Drive with care

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Powerboats have to share the water with many other craft.

- Keep a good allround lookout. Wear prescription glasses or goggles if you need them.
- Know the collision avoidance rules.
- Abide by speed limits in restricted areas – if your bow is lifting, you are going too fast.
- Watch the effect of your wash, particularly when close to other boats.
- Slow right down through anchorages.
- Keep away from sailing boats, canoes and anglers.
- Keep well clear of people being taught to canoe or sail.
- Avoid all areas with swimmers. Do not approach a bathing beach under power.
- Don't throw rubbish in the sea, or spill fuel, oil or paint.
- Stay away from buoys, pots and markers being used by local fishermen.
- Avoid disturbing wildlife and abide by restrictions to preservation areas.

Learn to use neutral – it is the most important gear. Never go directly from forward to reverse. Anticipate what comes next and use neutral to manoeuvre or slow down.

### Feeling sick?

- Seasickness medication works for some people and should be taken well before going afloat. Check the instructions for possible side effects, which may include drowsiness.
- If someone needs to be sick, the boat must stop. Due to the rolling motion, hanging over the side can be dangerous. Make sure they are sick downwind!
- Keep them warm and encourage them to drink water to offset dehydration. Do not carry on regardless. Assess whether the best policy is to get them ashore or head for home.

## Rules of the road

The primary role of these rules is to prevent collision. They rely on common sense and good practice. This is only a brief summary. Complete 'International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea' are available from the ISA. Phone [01 2300239](tel:012300239) for more information.

### Under power

- Boats under power give way to sail.
- Two boats under power which are approaching each other head-on should both turn to starboard (to the right).
- When boats under power are crossing, the vessel with the other vessel on its starboard side (on the right) must give way.



### Bad visibility

- A small powerboat must show combined green and red side lights and a raised white light to show which way it is heading at night or in bad visibility.
- A motor vessel underway in fog should give a long blast with a foghorn every 2 minutes.

#### Sound signals with a foghorn

- altering course to starboard.
- ● altering course to port.
- ● ● going astern.
- ● ● ● ● your intentions are unclear.

## General rules

- It is the responsibility of the skipper to maintain a good look-out at all times.
- An overtaking boat must keep clear.
- There is a risk of collision if the bearing of an approaching vessel remains constant.
- Vessels of less than 20m should not impede vessels using a traffic separation scheme or confined to a narrow channel.
- Give way to vessels fishing, vessels not under command, vessels restricted in their ability to manoeuvre or vessels constrained by their draught.

## Safe speed

- Don't drive the boat fast unless you need to. You will only use more fuel!
- Make an absolute rule that all crew must be safely seated or holding on before the boat starts moving. Check that they are ready to go before you accelerate and that they are comfortable with your speed. Any slippery areas should be treated with non-skid paint or stick-on strips.
- 'Bow riding' is dangerous and is illegal in some countries.
- Slow down in bumpy conditions or when there are waves ahead. Warn everyone if the boat is going to change speed or direction or is about to hit unexpected waves.
- Beware that back injuries are common on small, fast craft. If you drive too fast, you also risk people falling over the side.



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## Engine sense

- Always make an engine check when you set off. The outboard must be locked down with a jet of cooling water flowing.
- Do not rely on leaving the engine in neutral when coming alongside people in the water. If in any doubt, always turn the engine off.
- Keep an eye on fuel consumption and ensure there is more than enough to get you home.
- Take extra care if anyone on board is a smoker. Make sure all fuel canisters are secure and that no one is smoking nearby when you refuel.
- You must have absolute confidence in being able to stop and start the engine first time, whether it's electric or pull start. Regular maintenance is vital.



## Don't forget

The kill cord must be properly secured to your body. Either lead it round a strong point on your buoyancy aid or lifejacket, or round your leg. Then secure it back onto itself, making sure the clip is fully closed. Do not secure the kill cord to your wrist - the temptation to unhook may be too great.

## If in doubt...

- Never press on with a trip regardless.
- Be realistic about the situation.
- Be prepared to change your plans and make for safety in good time.
- If things go wrong and you're not sure you can handle it, you must call for help – don't leave it too late.



Practical tip from the Marine Safety Working Group

*If in doubt... Never press on with a trip regardless. Be realistic about the situation. Be prepared to change your plans and make for a safe haven in good time. If things go wrong and you're not sure you can handle it, you must call for help – don't leave it too late.*

## Water skiing

- It takes at least three people to go water skiing - driver, observer and skier.  
Everyone should be competent at resuscitation and first aid.
- A water ski boat must be insured for water skiing.
- Always operate a water ski boat with maximum care. Make sure that boat and skier stay a safe distance from all other water users and will not cause a nuisance. Beware of sensitive areas.



### Water skiers

- Always wear a buoyancy aid plus wetsuit or drysuit. Use an approved buoyancy aid and helmet for jumping.
- Check your ski equipment for loose wing nuts, bindings, splinters or sharp metal.
- Do not jump from the boat while it is moving.
- Never wrap the rope around fingers, hand or foot. Never push your neck, arm or leg through the bridge of the handle.
- Do not shout "Hit it!" to the driver until the rope is taut and your ski tips are up.
- Never ski in shallow water or at night. Do not ski directly ahead of, or to the side of another boat.
- Watch the water ahead at all times. Keep well clear of other boats, moorings, jetties, rocks and other obstacles.
- Avoid falling forwards. Sit down, or curl into a ball if falling sideways. Always throw away the handle.
- Recover skis quickly after a fall. Hold up your hands or a ski to signal all is well.
- Come in slowly to land and run parallel to the shore. Sit down if coming in too fast.



emergency

## Calling for help

If you need to summon help from a nearby boat:

- Slowly raise and lower your arms in two big arcs
- Give a continuous blast on the foghorn.
- Use your VHF if you can identify a nearby boat by name or position.

### Emergency radio procedures

It is vital that radio procedures are clear and effective in an emergency. To help boat owners ensure they will know what to do if the worst happens, the Marine Safety Working group produces an *Emergency Radio Procedures sticker* which is available free of charge. To request your copy, freefone the RNLI on [1800 789589](tel:1800789589), or call the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on [1850 392392](tel:1850392392).



### Firing flares

- Familiarise yourself with the firing instructions.
- Always fire flares downwind so that smoke and debris is blown away and there is no danger of setting your clothes or the boat on fire.
- The RNLI SEA Check service can provide flare demonstrations for clubs and associations. Please call freefone [1800 789589](tel:1800789589).
- Do not fire rocket or parachute flares in the vicinity of a helicopter.

### Lifesaving signals

International regulations require you to have access to an illustrated table of the recognised lifesaving signals so that you can communicate with the search and rescue services or other boats if you are in trouble.

## Man overboard

If a powerboat is driven sensibly there should be little chance of an accident. But if the crew is larking about while the boat is driven at speed, someone may fall over the side. Their first danger is being hit by the propeller, their second is getting left behind and lost.

- Keep the MOB in sight and retrieve them with minimum delay. Cold water can rapidly kill an unprepared person in the water.

### What can the MOB do?

- Remain as calm as possible.
- Raise your arm and use the lifejacket whistle to attract attention.
- The greatest threat to survival is cold. Crossing your legs and holding your arms tightly together will help prevent loss of heat.
- In most cases you should not attempt to swim for the boat as this will promote heat loss and exhaustion. Wait until you can grab a line thrown from the boat.
- In rough conditions, turn your back to the waves to keep airways clear of spray.

### MOB action

- Throttle back and shout "Man overboard!"
- Instruct a crew member to watch the MOB and point continuously.
- If possible note your position. Many navais have a MOB function which may prove vital if contact is lost.



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- If you cannot see the person in the water or have any doubts about making a recovery, send out an immediate distress alert. Inform the emergency services straight away if you recover the MOB.
- If you can see the person in the water, a simple 180 degree turn is quickest.
- Start your recovery manoeuvre, allowing room for a controlled approach. Beware of loose lines fouling the propeller.

## Approaching the MOB

- Approach slowly from downwind, aiming to one side of the the MOB. Use stern power to stop when the MOB is just ahead, turning the bow at an angle to the wind so it is blown towards them.
- If you are not absolutely confident of your boat handling skills close to the person in the water, throw a heaving line as soon as you get within range. You can then pull the casualty alongside for recovery.
- Never allow the propeller to get near the MOB. Ensure the engine is in neutral and stop the engine if it is safe to do so.

## Recovering the MOB

This may be the hardest part of the whole procedure:

- If you have a boarding ladder and the MOB is able to help themselves, this may be the safest and most obvious method. Beware that a stern-mounted boarding ladder can be dangerous to use in a rough sea. A safer alternative may be the protected leeward side.
- The MOB may be suffering from shock and hypothermia. Be prepared to administer immediate first aid. Assess if the MOB needs professional medical attention.
- If the MOB is exhausted or unconscious, a sling may have to be improvised to help roll the MOB up out of the water.
- A leaflet on hypothermia is available from Irish Water Safety on [1890 420202](tel:1890420202).

## Engine failure

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The main causes of engine failure are likely to be no fuel, using the wrong mixture or a blockage:

- A blocked fuel filter will reduce power until the engine stops. Change the filter and restart the engine. If dirty fuel is the culprit, several changes may be required.
- A blocked salt water inlet will cause rapid overheating, indicated by the lack of a cooling water tell-tale, increased steam from the exhaust and eventual seizure. Check for blockage and clear as necessary. Also check the pump is functioning and for leaks in the system.
- Beware of rope getting wrapped round the propeller. Always carry tools that include a suitable knife.
- A powerboat will drift rapidly on wind and tide if the engine fails. Every effort should be made to anchor the boat while the crew attempts to get the engine working. If necessary, use alternative propulsion such as oars or paddles.
- In deteriorating weather or with approaching nightfall, no time should be lost in calling for help from the emergency services.
- Stay with the boat which will be easier for a lifeboat or helicopter to spot than people in the water. Attempting to swim to shore is usually a very dangerous option.

## Powerboat capsize

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A powerboat can capsize if it is driven too fast, badly handled with poor weight distribution, or swamped and rolled by heavy seas. Be aware that light boats such as small RIBs and inflatables are liable to flip, particularly if driven too fast upwind over waves. If the worst should happen:

- Count heads and make sure no one is still under the boat.



- Everyone should stay with the boat and hold on to whatever possible. If anyone lets go, wind and tide may push the boat away faster than they can swim. Only consider abandoning the boat if it has been driven into shallow water and you can wade ashore.
- If you capsize a rigid boat, trapped air will help it to float. Once righted, it may become very unstable with insufficient buoyancy to stay afloat. It is vital to bale out water before too many people get back on board.

## Getting a tow

If you need to be towed for any reason:

- Have a plan for securing the tow line to your boat when it is passed by the lifeboat.
- As a lifeboat approaches, the coxswain will inform you of his intentions. Advise him of hazards such as ropes in the water. Follow his instructions – he is the expert.
- Do not secure the tow line to fittings that are not strong enough for the job. If in doubt, back up the tow line using additional ropes.
- Avoid using knots or loops that cannot be released under load. Provide protection to prevent chafe.
- If you accept a tow from a commercial or private vessel, it is wise to check if any fee is expected. There is no 'salvage' fee when you are towed by a lifeboat, but a voluntary contribution to the RNLI is always very welcome!



## Fire on board

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If you have a fire on board:

- Try not to breathe in smoke which may be poisonous.
- Try to extinguish the fire where possible.
- Fire requires oxygen. If there is smoke coming from the engine compartment, or from under the engine cover, only open the cover enough to insert the nozzle of the fire extinguisher.
- Get everyone away from the fire and ready to abandon the vessel, wearing lifejackets or buoyancy aids.
- Notify the emergency services.

## Helicopter rescue

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- Use a red hand-held or orange smoke flare as a signal to the helicopter if requested. Do not fire parachute flares or mini flares when the helicopter is close by.
- Once contact has been made, the pilot will tell you his intentions. Follow his instructions – he is the expert.
- Make sure you understand the pilot's instructions as you will not be able to hear your radio when the helicopter is overhead.
- Beware that the helicopter down-draught can be very strong.
- Allow the winch wire to earth in the water before grabbing it. Ensure it does not snag on anything. Never secure it to the yacht.



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## REMEMBER!

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**The emergency services are here to help, but would rather do so before you get into trouble! Free safety advice is always available – freefone 1800 789 589 and talk to an expert.**

# Useful contacts – as referred to throughout the booklet



## General

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### Lifeboats

#### **Royal National Lifeboat Institution**

15 Windsor Terrace, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Telephone: (01) 284 5050 email: [lifeboatsireland@rnli.org.uk](mailto:lifeboatsireland@rnli.org.uk) [www.rnli.org.uk](http://www.rnli.org.uk)



#### **Irish Water Safety**

The Long Walk, Galway

Telephone: 1890 420202 (LoCall) email: [info@iws.ie](mailto:info@iws.ie) [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie)



#### **Irish Coast Guard**

Leeson Lane, Dublin 2

Telephone: (01) 678 2000 email: [admin@irishcoastguard.ie](mailto:admin@irishcoastguard.ie) [www.marine.gov.ie](http://www.marine.gov.ie)

In an emergency, call 112 or 999 and ask for the Coast Guard.

## Training courses

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#### **Irish Sailing Association**

3 Park Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Telephone: (01) 2800239 email: [info@sailing.ie](mailto:info@sailing.ie) [www.sailing.ie](http://www.sailing.ie)

## EPIRB registration

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#### **Maritime Radio Affairs Unit (MRAU)**

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources,  
Leeson Lane, Dublin 2

Telephone: (01) 678 2367 [www.marine.gov.ie](http://www.marine.gov.ie)

## Radio licensing

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#### **Commission for Communications Regulation (COMREG)**

Block DEF, Abbey Court, Irish Life Centre, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1

Telephone: (01) 8049600

# Marine Safety Working Group

The aim of the Marine Safety Working Group is to promote water safety. The group is made up of a number of organisations representing statutory bodies, search & rescue organisations and water users.

## Who we are:

### Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources

Leeson Lane, Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6782000  
www.marine.gov.ie



### Irish Coast Guard

Leeson Lane, Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6785444  
In an emergency call 999 or 112 and  
ask for the Coast Guard.



### Irish Water Safety

The Long Walk, Galway  
Tel: 1890 420202 (LoCall)  
www.iws.ie



### Irish Sailing Association

3 Park Road, Dun Laoghaire,  
Co. Dublin  
Tel: (01) 2800239  
www.sailing.ie



### Royal National Lifeboat Institution

15 Windsor Terrace,  
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin  
Tel: (01) 2845050  
www.rnli.org.uk



### Bord Iascaigh Mhara

PO Box 12, Crofton Road,  
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin  
Tel: (01) 2845144  
www.bim.ie



### Health & Safety Authority

10 Hogan Place, Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6147000  
www.hsa.ie



### Waterways Ireland

20 Darling Street, Enniskillen,  
BT74 7EW, Northern Ireland  
Tel: 048-66323004 (from R.O.I.)  
028-66323004 (from N.I.)

## What we do:

The government department responsible for safety of life at sea & prevention of pollution from ships.

Responsible for co-ordination & implementation of marine search and rescue operations, pollution control & marine radio communications in Irish waters.

Irish Water Safety is the statutory body established to promote water safety in Ireland. We offer courses nationwide that develop skills in swimming, survival and rescue. We recommend that all members of the public learn swimming and lifesaving skills.

We are the governing body representing sailing, windsurfing, powerboating and personal watercraft in Ireland. We offer a range of training courses for all types of recreational boaters through our network of affiliated clubs and "Recognised Teaching Establishments".

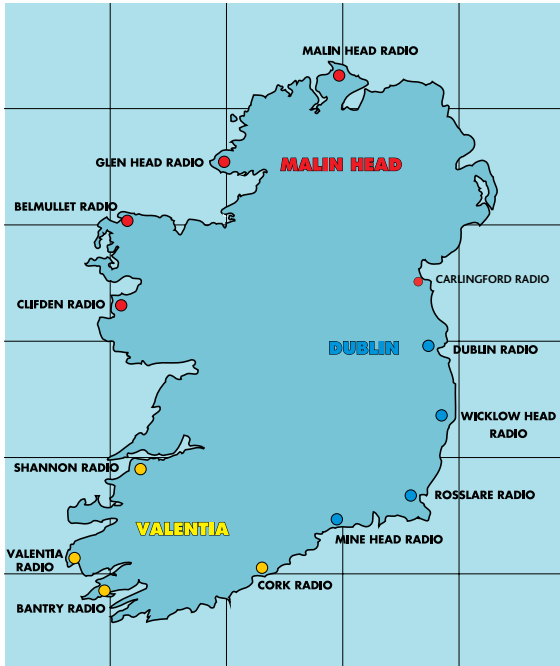
The RNLI exists to save lives at sea. This is achieved by providing a fleet of lifeboats, with 24 hour cover and crewed by well-trained volunteers. In addition, we work with other national organisations to promote sea safety. We rely on voluntary donations.

We are the principal development agency for the Irish seafood 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.

The Health and Safety Authority promotes and enforces good standards in workplace safety. Working with employer and worker representatives, it seeks to ensure that those in control of workplaces adopt safe working practices, as required by law.

Waterways Ireland is a North/South body responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of inland navigable waterways, principally for recreation purposes. The body has its headquarters in Enniskillen, with regional offices in Scariff, Carrick-on-Shannon and Dublin.

# Irish Coast Guard Services



## Maritime Rescue Centres and Coast Radio Stations

**Dublin MRCC**  
Irish Coast Guard  
Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 6620922  
Fax: (01) 6620795

**Valentia MRSC**  
Valentia Island  
Co. Kerry  
Tel: (066) 9476109  
Fax: (066) 9476289

**Malin Head MRSC**  
Malin Head  
Co. Donegal  
Tel: (074) 9370103  
Fax: (074) 9370221

## How to join the Yacht and Boat Safety Scheme – it's free and could help save your life.

- Complete the enclosed questionnaire in ink and send it to the Irish Coast Guard, Department of the Marine and Natural Resources, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2.
- Enclose a recent photograph of your craft, if you have one.
- Please fill in the information on the section to the left of the form, cut it off and give it to someone ashore who is concerned with your safety.
- If the ownership, name of craft, an address given or the craft's appearance (colour etc.) changes in any way, please inform the Irish Coast Guard.
- This card is valid for three years. If it is not renewed within that time, it will be considered invalid and removed from our records.

Name of craft:

Address of the Maritime Rescue Centre which holds details of this craft:

Dublin MRCC  
Irish Coast Guard  
Headquarters  
Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 6620922

Fax: (01) 6620795

Email: [admin@IRISHCOASTGUARD.ie](mailto:admin@IRISHCOASTGUARD.ie)

If you are worried about the safety of this craft, please contact the Irish Coast Guard

In an emergency, dial 999/112 and ask for the Coast Guard

IRISH COAST GUARD  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, MARINE AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
LEESON LANE  
DUBLIN 2



AFFIX STAMP



## YACHT AND BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Details of owner:<br>Name:<br>Address:<br><br>Tel. No:<br>Signature:<br>Date: |  | Name of Craft:<br><br>How and where is the name displayed:<br><br>Type of craft:<br><br>Sailing or fishing number:<br><br>Colour of craft:<br><br>Hull above water:<br>below water:<br><br>Superstructure:<br><br>Sail:<br><br>Spinnaker:<br><br>Length:<br>feet:                      metres: |  | Type of rig:<br><br>Speed and endurance under power:<br><br>Details of radio:<br><br>HF MF Trans/Rec:<br><br>VHF Channels and call sign:<br>MMSI No:<br>Other equipment: |  | Type of distress signals carried:<br><br>Dinghy type:<br><br>Colour:<br><br>Life raft type:<br><br>Serial No:<br><br>Are life jackets carried? |  |
| Details of Shore Contact:<br>Name:<br>Address:<br><br>Tel. No:                |  | Usual base:<br><br>Usual mooring:<br><br>Usual activity (eg fishing, racing etc):<br><br>Usual sea areas:  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Name of club or Association:  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Also available in the Safety on the Water range

Our range of **FREE** Safety on the Water booklets give the essential safety information that you need – whatever you do on the water.

### Sports and subjects include:

- Sailing
- Dinghy sailing
- Motorboating
- Windsurfing
  - Diving
- Sea angling

To order any of these booklets, or to find out more about free water safety advice, contact any of the organisations listed on page 29



Department of Communications,  
Marine and Natural Resources

