

Water Awareness and Charge Certificate Manual

Module 18: Pulling Boat and Dinghy Emergency Procedures

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Outcomes

After completing this module, the certificate holder will:

- Be able to recover a person lost overboard
- Be able to right a capsized dinghy
- Be able to perform rescues using a boat under oars.

1 SAILING DINGHY EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1.1 Man Overboard

1.1.1 Introduction

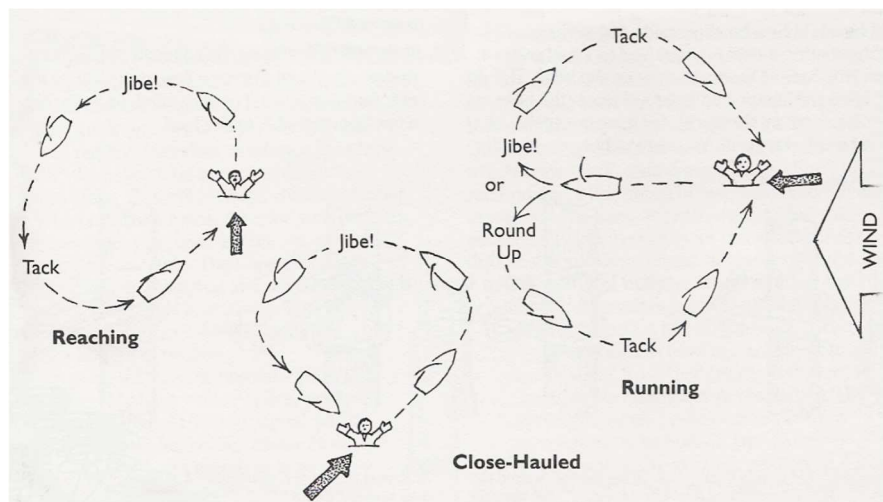
A person going overboard from a yacht is generally considered an emergency, with considerable danger of that person being lost. In a dinghy, on the other hand, a person going overboard is something of a joke. In certain circumstances it can be dangerous, for example, if the water is extremely cold or if there is panic. Man overboard from a dinghy rarely occurs and that is basically when toe straps break or during capsizes.

1.1.2 Procedure to Adopt

- Immediately someone goes overboard, take control of the boat and check that man's position in the water.
- Let the jib flap and steer on to a beam reach. Put the centreboard / dagger board half- or three quarters-down and check the person's position.
- Tack on to a reciprocal beam reach, keeping sight of the person as far as possible.

As you approach him/her, bear away on to a broad reach to bring the boat just to the leeward of the person.

- Luff up on to a close reach as you approach, and allow the sails to flap to slow down.



- When alongside the person, pull the tiller sharply towards you and then let it go. Grab hold of the person and help him/her aboard.

1.2 Capsize Drills

Every sailor, irrespective of experience, will experience a capsize at some or other time during his/her sailing career. It is therefore important to know what you are doing when such a capsize occurs and that there exists teamwork between the coxswain and his/her crew member.

One important point to bear in mind before we even tackle the procedure to follow when a capsize occurs is that you must **NEVER** leave your boat. In heavy winds especially,

your boat will drift faster than you can swim, which could endanger firstly your own life or that of the crew and secondly cause expensive damage to your boat.

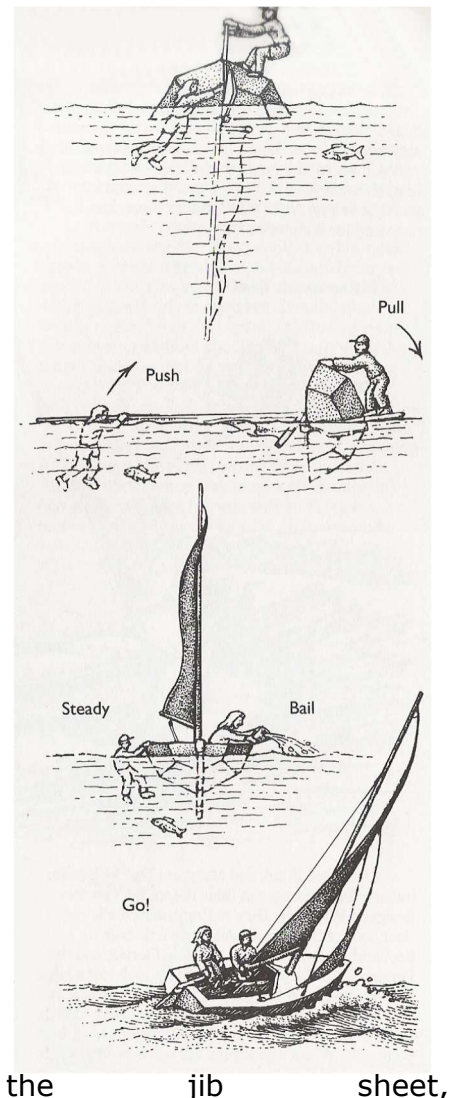
A boat can capsize either towards the wind (windward capsize) or away from the wind (leeward capsize). The leeward capsize is the most common form of capsize that you will experience and is normally a gentle capsize where the boat will heel over and fill up with water. The windward capsize is in contrast both a sudden and spectacular capsize, giving the coxswain and crew little time to think about what has happened.

Buoyancy plays a most important aspect of recovery from a capsize, and the ideal is that when a capsize has taken place that the boat lies parallel to the water with the centreboard about 50cm above the waterline and the sails parallel with the water.

Another tip is, if for any reason you fail to right the boat after two or three attempts, try lowering the mainsail. If this is not successful, climb on to the hull of the boat and wait for outside assistance.

1.3 Recovery from a Capsize

- After capsizing, check that the other crew member is accounted for and safe.
- The crew member then checks that the centreboard is fully extended (down). He then sorts out the mainsheet, checks that it is not cleated, and moves to the transom where the coxswain is and checks that the rudder is also secure in its position. He then passes the mainsheet to the coxswain, who swims with it as a safety chain to the centreboard position.
- The coxswain then holds on to the centreboard and releases the mainsheet.
- The crew member, once he notices that the coxswain has reached the centreboard, then moves into the boat and passes the jib sheet over the hull to the coxswain.
- Once the coxswain has the jib sheet in hand, he warns the crew member and climbs on to the centreboard. The crew member then proceeds to lie parallel to the boat.
- Standing close to the hull of the boat the coxswain, while holding on to the jib sheet, leans backward to start the righting movement.
- As the boat starts to right, the coxswain continues to pull on the jib sheet until he is able to grip on to the gunwale of the boat. He then tries to scramble aboard.



The crew member in the meantime has been scooped aboard and should be able to assist the coxswain aboard if required.

1.4 Righting an Inverted Boat

- Find the jib sheet and swim to the opposite side of the inverted boat.
- Kneeling on the gunwale, gently pull on the jib sheet and centreboard until the boat comes to the horizontal position and proceed as normal.

NB: Never stand on the hull of the boat to right it, and use only gentle movements otherwise you will damage the centreboard and the hull of the boat.

1.5 Righting a Boat with Mast in the Mud

- If your boat has its mast stuck in the mud, swim the boat around the mast until the inner hull and sails are facing the wind.
- Using the wind to assist you, swim the boat in the direction of the wind until the mast breaks free from the mud.
- Right the boat in the normal procedure.

2 BOAT UNDER OARS EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

2.1 Man Overboard

THE DRILL COVERED HERE IS FOR A **CONSCIOUS, CALM PERSON**.

The general procedure is as follows:

- 1) Throw something that will float to the person if you can. If the person is not very close by then don't waste time trying to throw something.
- 2) Warn your crew – "**MAN OVERBOARD**".
- 3) Make a fast turn towards the person using your crew.
- 4) Call the Bowman to his post – "**BOWMAN TO YOUR POST**".
- 5) Try to make your approach into the wind. This helps to slow your gig down and make it easier to control. If conditions are bad then it may be better to go straight to the person, provided you are at least going across the wind.

NEVER, EVER APPROACH ANYTHING FROM UPWIND (WITH THE WIND BEHIND YOU). The wind will blow you onto the object and probably over it. If you are upwind, go past the object and then turn and approach into the wind.

- 6) As you approach, call "**EASY OARS**". Gigs are heavy boats with hard bows. It will not do the person in the water much good if you ram them at racing speed.
- 7) Make your final approach under Bowman's directions.
- 8) **HOLD WATER** just before reaching the person.
- 9) If the person is calm, Bowman grasps the person.
- 10) Cox gives the command: "**PORT (or STARBOARD), BOAT OARS**". The oars, on the side where the man overboard is going to be recovered, are brought in board.
- 11) Pass the person down the boat from crew member to crew member until the Cox can take hold of the person over the side of the gig in the aft quarter.
- 12) As soon as the person is held by cox (and first stroke), cox gives the command "**LEAN**". At this command, the remaining crew lean towards the person in the water, until the gunnel is nearly touching the water surface.
- 13) The cox and possibly the stroke, pull the person until he is partially over the gunwale. At this stage, the cox gives the command "**ROLL**" at which command, the remaining crew throw their weight to the opposite side, thereby righting the boat. This righting momentum assists in lifting the person clear of the water and into the gig. The aft quarter has the lowest gunwales and so heavy objects are usually brought aboard there.
- 14) Cox gives the command "**PORT (or STARBOARD), SHIP OARS**", to get the boat under control as soon as possible.

- 15) **APPLY FIRST AID.** The person you have just rescued is guaranteed to be in shock at the very least. If conditions are bad, the Cox can either apply first aid and hand over command to the stroke, or hand the patient over to the stroke. In either case, the stroke must boat his oar first.
- 16) Return the Bowman to his oar.
- 17) Get under way.
- 18) Head for shore to deliver your patient.

2.1.1 Unconscious People

The following changes apply to unconscious people.

- Get there very fast – but don't run them over
- Approach into the wind – ALWAYS.
- Bring them over the stern, or you may need to boat all oars and crutches on one side of the boat, bring the patient to the side of the boat and carefully lean the boat over to scoop him in. In this case, use the crew to balance the boat.
- Check immediately to see if CPR is required. Administer if necessary.

2.1.2 Panicking People

In the event that the person is in difficulty and panicking:

EXERCISE EXTREME CARE – THESE PEOPLE ARE DANGEROUS

- Approach calmly.
- Either approach stern first and let them grab the stern. Beware of the rudder. It may be wise to boat it temporarily as you approach. This does make the gig harder to control, however.

OR

- Bowman passes the person an oar / rope / floating object. Keep the person at a distance. Don't give panicking people your hand. He/she will probably pull you in.
- Try not to let the person catch hold of the side of your boat until he/she reaches the stern.
- Calm the person down.
- When calm, head for the shore.

2.2 Objects Overboard

The classic example of this is an oar overboard.

- 1) Warn the crew.
- 2) Make a turn downwind.
- 3) Go a few boat lengths beyond the object. - This gives you room to manoeuvre.
- 4) Turn into the wind.
- 5) Call the Bowman to his post.
- 6) Call easy oars.
- 7) Approach the object under Bowman's directions.
- 8) Stop just short of the object either by holding water or by oars.
- 9) The Bowman collects the object.
- 10) If the object is an oar, the Bowman passes it in the water along the boat to the careless crew member.
- 11) If the boat is small, the Bowman may bring it in directly over the bows. If it is large or heavy, pass it to the stern and recover it there.
- 12) Return the Bowman to his/her oar.
- 13) Get underway.
- 14) (Optional) when you reach shore, correct the crew member who lost the oar so that he/she remembers to concentrate next time!