

Water Rescue Communication Information Sheets

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References:

“Chapman Piloting Seamanship and Boat Handling 63rd Edition”, Elbert S Maloney, Hearst Marine Books, New York, New York, 1995

“Swiftwater Rescue Technician 1 Student Manual, 2nd Edition”, Rescue 3 International, Elk Grove, CA, 1997

“Swiftwater Rescue Technician Advanced, Student Manual”, Rescue 3 International, Elk Grove, CA, 2000

Information Sheet #1

TOPIC: DISTRESS SIGNALS

INTRODUCTION: Recognition of standard distress signals used in water related emergencies.

Flames in Bucket
Smoke
Dye Marker (and color)
Red Meteor Flares
Parachute Red Flare
Square Flag and Ball
Mayday by Radio
Morse Code SOS

Code Flags November and Charlie
Fog Horn Sounded Continuously
Person Waving Arms
Gun Fired at One Minute Intervals
Position Indicating Radio Beacon
Radio Telegraph Alarm
Black Square and Ball on Orange

White Strobe Light (50 to 70 flash / min) – Inland Rules Only

Information Sheet #2

TOPIC: EMERGENCY REPORTING OVER RADIO FORMAT

INTRODUCTION: Introduce format for calling in emergency over radio.

Grave or Imminent Danger Threatens Life or Property

MAYDAY...MAYDAY...MAYDAY

This is (boat name)...(boat name)...(boat name)...

MAYDAY (boat name) position is (position)

We (nature of emergency)

We require (type of assistance)

Aboard are (number of people) and (safety equipment)

(boat name) is a (boat length) foot (boat type and color)

I will be listening on channel 16

This is (boat name) over.

Safety of Vessel or Person in Jeopardy and Not Life Threatening

PAN-PAN...PAN-PAN...PAN-PAN (Pronounce like "pahn")

All Stations

This is (boat name)...(boat name)...(boat name)

We (nature of emergency)

We require (type of assistance, location, boat type and description,)

(Boat name)

Over

Canceling a PAN-PAN

PAN-PAN, PAN-PAN

Hello all stations, Hello all stations

This is (boat name)

Time is (time of transmission - military time)

Cancel PAN-PAN

Out

Canceling a MAYDAY

There is no regulation requiring the cancellation of a MAYDAY message. If the situation ends that required the transmission of a MAYDAY then adopt the PAN-PAN cancellation guidelines for a MAYDAY cancellation.

Information Sheet #3

TOPIC: WATER RESCUE STANDARD GESTURES

INTRODUCTION: Standardize gestures for water rescue team.

Point With One Finger - Obstacle, Observe Object

Point With Entire Hand - Move in That Direction

While Chopping - Increase Speed

Flat Hand Chopping - Decrease Speed

Flat Hand Downward Motion - Off Plane

Flat Hand Across Throat - Kill Engine

Hand(s) on Head - OK 

Hands Grasped Over Head - OK 

Hand Raised - Need Help, Throw a Rope 

Arms Raised Up then Over to Side - Move That Way 

Arms Raised and Waving then Over to Side - Eddy Out that Way 

Arms Crossed in Front of Body - Need Medical Assistance 

Information Sheet #4

TOPIC: WATER RESCUE STANDARD WHISTLE / HORN SIGNALS

INTRODUCTION: Standardize whistle / horn blasts for water rescue team. Note: Sailing Vessels May Not Have a Whistle on Board

Swiftwater Signals

- 1 Blast - Attention
- 2 Blast - Upstream, Move Upstream
- 3 Blast - Downstream, Move Downstream
- 3 Blast Repeated - Emergency, Help

Boat Steering Signals (Not Required if Communicate Bridge to Bridge – Channel 13)

Short Blast ~ 1 second Duration; Prolonged Blast ~ 4 to 6 second Duration

1 Short Blast

I Intend to Overtake You on Your Starboard Side

Boat Being Overtaken Confirms With 1 Short Blast if Safe

I Intend to Turn to Starboard

2 Short Blasts

I Intend to Overtake You on Your Port Side

Boat Being Overtaken Confirms With 2 Short Blasts if Safe

I Intend to Turn to Port

3 Short Blasts

Backing Up or Reversing Engines

5 Short Blasts

Danger or Unsafe

2 Short Then 1 Prolonged (Morse Code "U") – You Are Running into Danger

Also Used for Vessel That Has Run Aground)

1 Prolonged Blast

Power Driven Vessel Leaving Berth or Dock

Information Sheet #5

TOPIC: FOG SIGNALS

INTRODUCTION: Standard fog signals for use in or near area of restricted visibility.

Vessel In or Near Area of Restricted Visibility – Sound Regularly at < 2 min Interval

- 1 Prolonged Blast – Power Driven Vessel Underway
- 2 Prolonged Blast (2 seconds Between Blasts) – Power Driven Vessel Stopped
- 1 Prolonged Followed by 2 Short Blasts – Sailing, Fishing, Towing Vessel,
Not Under Command, Restricted Ability to Maneuver
- 1 Prolonged Followed by 3 Short Blasts – Last in String of Towed Vessels
(Only if Last Vessel Manned)
- 4 Short Blasts – Pilot Vessel (Used in Addition to Normal Signals)

Vessel Anchored In or Near Area of Restricted Visibility

- < 12 Meters – Some Efficient Sound Signal at < 2 min Interval
- < 100 meters – Ring Bell for 5 seconds at < 1 min Interval
- > 100 meters – Ring Bell for 5 seconds in front of boat then gong for 5 seconds
in rear at < 1 min interval

Fishing and Restricted Maneuvering Vessels Use Same Signals as When
Underway In or Near Area of Restricted Visibility

In addition: Any Vessel at Anchor May Sound as a Warning to Any Approaching
Vessel 3 Blasts – 1 Short, 1 Prolonged, 1 Short

Most Boats Not Required to Sound Fog Signal If Anchored in Special Anchorage
Area

Vessel Run Aground – Same Signal as for Vessel at Anchor Except for 3 Distinct
Strokes on the Bell Before and After Rapid Ringing of Bell

Information Sheet #6

TOPIC: USE OF THROAT MIKES WITH STANDARD DART RADIOS

INTRODUCTION: Record and enhance ability to use and operate throat mikes in conjunction with standard DART issued radios.

Attachment to DART Radio

Attach to DART Radio Where Mike Goes
Use Flathead Screwdriver to Firmly Attach

Attachment to Person

Fits Next to Adam's Apple
Receiver on Outside of Elastic Band (Not Pressing Into Neck)

Switch Settings of Throat Mike - PTT or VOX

PTT is Push to Talk – Press Button on Side Unit to Broadcast
VOX is Voice Activated – Radio Cued When Vocal Activity Begins

Activating Radio During Voice Activated

Make Rumbling Sound in Throat for ½ to 1 Second Before Speaking
Listen for Cueing Mike in Headset

Transmission Quality

Speak Slowly and Clearly
Listen for Quality of Transmission in Headset

Quality of Voice Issues

Position of Probe on Adam's Apple
Check Unit for Transmission
Assist Each Other for Quality of Voice
Radio Check After Donning

Information Sheet #7

TOPIC: STANDARDIZED BOAT ROWING COMMANDS

INTRODUCTION: Standardized rowing commands allow for clear and organized movement of boats. Person steering boat calls commands. People staffing oars execute commands.

Direction of Paddling Commands

Forward Row Directly to Front

Back Paddle Row Directly to Rear

Left Turn Port Side Rows to Rear, Starboard Side Rows Forward

Right Turn Port Side Rows Forward, Starboard Side Rows to Rear

Stop Paddles Out of Water

Adjectives Used to Describe Pace or Level of Effort

Slow Row In Slow, Easy Manner

Steady Row in Steady Measured Manner

Hard Row in Hard Forceful Manner

If No Adjective Used on Command Assume Steady Pace