

SAFETY
ON THE
WATER

angling

WATER SAFETY GUIDELINES



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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.

Yacht and Boat Safety Scheme 33

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.



angling safety

Planning a trip

To get the most out of your trip and ensure your safety you should have a plan before you go. You need to consider location, weather, tides, the limitations of your boat and any potential hazards on your trip. Always have a contingency plan and leave details about your trip with someone.



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 in Ireland can quickly change for the worse.

Services of particular relevance might include:

- Weatherdial – Tel: 1550 123855
- Weatherfax – Tel: 1570 131838
- www.met.ie
- 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

Tides and currents

If you are fishing on the sea, it is very important to check the times of high and low water and assess how they will affect your trip. Details can be found in tide tables, usually available locally.

- Coastal slipways and launch sites are tidal. This may prevent you launching or recovering your boats as otherwise planned.
- If the tide is flowing, or turns to flow, in the opposite direction to the wind, the sea may become much rougher. This may affect anglers in boats and those fishing from steep shores and rocks.
- An ebbing tide may create areas of shallow water that are a hazard to boats.
- A rapidly rising flood tide can cut off beach anglers and bait diggers from the shore.



If you are fishing on a lake or river, consider the strength of the current and factors that might affect it.

- If water levels are high or rising, currents will be stronger. This may be caused by changing tides or high rainfall some distance from where you are fishing.
- If you are fishing in narrow sections or near dams, weirs or sluices you may encounter strong currents.

Local advice

Seek advice from local angling sources when fishing in unfamiliar waters; they should be able to identify hazards and opportunities in the area.

Choose your company

Never fish by yourself. Plan to fish in groups of three or more and always within sight of each other. In this way, if someone is falls into the water, one person can stay and help while another alerts the emergency services.



Going to sea?

Under international regulations, you must have a plan before going to sea in a boat. 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.

Tell someone where you are going

It is a wise precaution to leave details of where you plan to go with a reliable person. This should include your fishing area, route, expected times of departure and arrival, description of boat and contact names for all people on the trip. Keep your contact advised of changes and let them know when you get back.

Learn to swim

Needless to say, anyone involved in water-based activities should be able to swim. For information on where to learn, contact Irish Water Safety on 1890 420202 or visit their website at www.iws.ie.

What to wear

The effects of wind chill and cold water mean there are few days when you can go angling in Ireland without protective clothing. Shorts and a T-shirt may seem fine on a hot day, but it is never as warm on or near the water as on dry land and it may become much colder. All anglers must have access to clothing that 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 or vision.
- Waterproof trousers and jackets will protect against spray, rain and wind. Breathable fabrics are likely to be most comfortable over longer periods of time. Bright colours and retroreflective strips are strongly recommended safety features.
- Base and mid layers should be fleece and fibre pile garments, which trap warm air and provide quick-drying comfort.
- Always wear suitable shoes or boots that provide the best possible grip.
- Thermal headgear helps conserve body heat.
- Gloves help ensure grip in wet weather and protect against injury when handling lines and synthetic ropes. Of course they also help to keep your hands warm.
- Some form of eye protection is essential anywhere near people who are casting angling lines.

Here comes the sun

- Sunglasses filter out bright reflected light from the water, making it easier to spot hazards. They may also provide some protection against spray, wind and hooks.
- 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.

Personal floatation devices

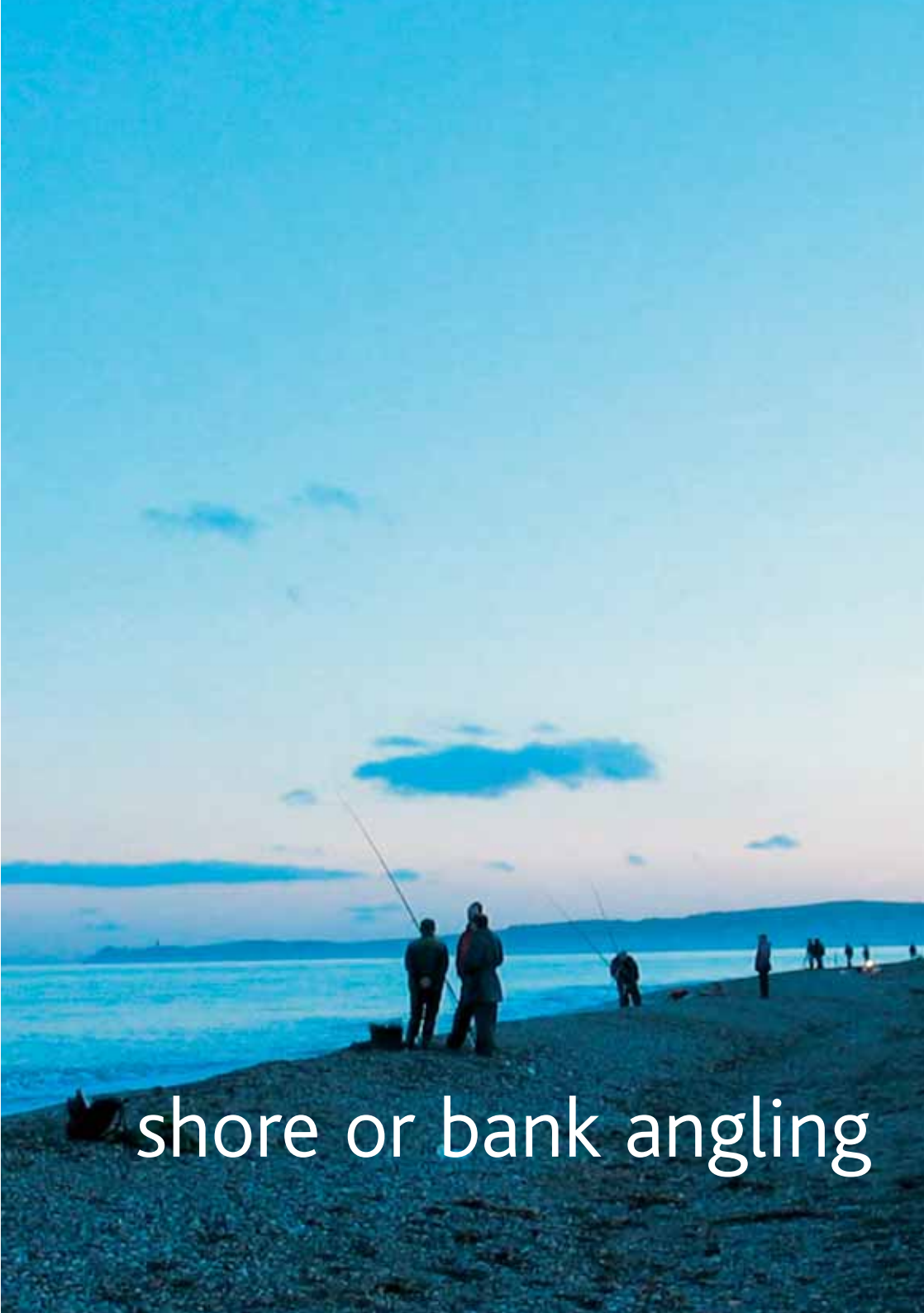
It is recommended and best practice for anyone on or near the water to wear a suitable personal floatation device (PFD). In some cases in Ireland it is a legal requirement (see page xx.)



- PFDs are available with a choice of foam-only buoyancy, air-only buoyancy or air-foam buoyancy.
- Inflatable PFDs 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 PFDs are fitted with a whistle, light and retroreflective 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 a PFD is not fitted properly in this way.
- Some PFDs are specially designed for anglers, allowing free movement for casting as well as including pockets and other useful features.

Buoyancy is measured in Newtons, where 10 Newtons equals 1kg of floatation. There are four European standards for lifejackets or buoyancy aids that 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.



shore or bank angling

Get the right kit

As mentioned in the previous section, warm waterproof clothing is essential in Irish weather. When angling from the shore, choose your footwear carefully and be aware of slippery or loose rocks underfoot. (Also see below.)

Avoid shock!

Fishing rods, especially those made from carbon fibre, make excellent conductors for electricity. Every year people are injured and killed through electrocution while angling.

- Watch out for overhead wires. Remember that electricity can arc from a wire to an object near the wire, such as your rod.
- Watch out for weather likely to produce thunderstorms. In thunderstorm weather, dismantle the rod and put it away.

Watch where you're going

Beware of tripping over mooring lines on quay walls, and other hidden dangers around the shore. If fishing beneath cliffs, beware of falling rocks.

Wading

When wading, keep one foot on the ground at all times. Shuffle your feet rather than making rapid or aggressive movements, which may throw you off balance. Always allow at least 30cm between the water's surface and the top of your wader.

- A wading staff is essential to provide you with support and to probe a river or lake bed for deep holes.
- Avoid wading in soft or boggy rivers or lake beds.
- When wading in unfamiliar waters, beware of strong currents – you may be able to wade with the current, but find it very difficult to wade against it. (Also see page xx.) [previous]

Always check that you have easy access back onto the bank or shore. Be aware that in wet weather the banks can become muddy and slippery. Rising water levels and faster currents can cause the banks to collapse, making it more difficult to retreat to dry land.

The grip on the soles of waders is extremely important. A deeply grooved rubber heel, with the rest of the sole made of felt, is ideal.

If using waders while shore angling, never go beyond knee height as incoming waves can suddenly increase the depth of water. You should also watch out for receding waves on a surf beach, which can undermine the sand underfoot.

Tide and waves

When fishing on the beach or on rocks, be aware of the dangers posed by changing tides (see page xx earlier) and rough or large seas. Avoid exposed areas where large waves are likely.

- Wave conditions can change as the tide changes. Know whether the tide is rising or falling and what direction the tide is flowing. If the wind is against the tide this will generally cause rougher seas.
- Spend at least 20 minutes observing the area before you start fishing. Waves and swell tend to have cycles, so allowing a little time ensures you can gauge the conditions that are likely over a full cycle.
- Keep a look out for wash from boats or shipping in the area, which may create larger waves. Even large ships a long way offshore create wash waves that will eventually come ashore.
- If waves or a swell are threatening your fishing spot, leave immediately before it gets too bad.



boat angling

Getting the right boat

Be realistic about the type of boat 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 boat, make sure it is comprehensively insured with full cover for everyone on board. Check that the boat is fully equipped with safety equipment. By law in Ireland skippered charter boats must hold a Passenger Boat Licence issued by the Government. Check that all paperwork is in order.
- For more advice on buying and chartering, call the Irish Sailing Association (ISA) on 01 2800239.



Consider whether the type of boat is suited to the fishing area that you intend using.

- A planing boat is faster and will get you to and from your fishing area more quickly but may be more expensive to buy and run.
- Displacement boats, whilst being slower, are often cheaper to buy and run. Usually they will be more suitable for rowing.
- Inflatable boats may be unsuitable as angling boats as they can be damaged or punctured by hooks or gaffs.
- 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.
- A deep-V hull will be more comfortable in rough weather but may be less stable and have less room on board.

Avoid making changes to the boat such as adding higher seats to make casting easier or building on high cuddies or wheelhouses. These may raise the centre of gravity of the boat and make it more likely to capsize. Get professional advice from a qualified surveyor before making any changes to a boat's design.

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

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.

Avoid standing in small open boats while casting as this might upset the balance of the boat and capsize it or you might accidentally fall in.

Master basic skills

A boat 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 training schemes for all types of boat users and levels of ability, starting with one-day introductory courses for novices and extending to advanced techniques. For information call the ISA on 01 2800239 or visit the ISA website at www.sailing.ie.

Get free safety advice from the RNLI

The RNLI provides sea safety advice in a friendly and confidential manner and can arrange to send a trained adviser to discuss your boat'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 freephone 1800 789589 or register online at www.rnli.org.uk/seacheck.asp.

Angling boat safety equipment

Minimum requirements include:

- appropriate personal flotation devices for all crew (see above) plus waterproof clothing
- a kill cord to cut the engine ignition when the driver leaves the controls
- a 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, a tow rope, a throwing line, towing warps and extra rope
- a bucket, bailer or manual bilge pump
- an air pump and repair kit for the inflatable tubes on RIBs and inflatables
- 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
- an engine tool kit and basic spares, including spark plugs and shear pins, plus spare fuel line and bulb
- a stainless steel marine knife or multi-tool
- a first aid kit including wound dressings, triangular bandages and survival bag
- distress flares suitable for inshore use
- a hand-held VHF radio
- navigational aids including compass, charts and GPS
- a powder or CO2 fire extinguisher
- a foghorn
- clear markings to allow easy identification of the boat in an emergency
- a radar reflector, which must be fitted under international regulations 'if practicable'

Regular servicing of all safety equipment is highly recommended

Personal floatation devices for boat anglers

For general information and advice on choosing lifejackets and buoyancy aids see page xx.

- By law in Ireland all boats must carry sufficient suitable personal floatation devices (PFDs) for everyone on board. This means having PFDs that will fit all on board, including children.
- It is the skipper's responsibility to show everyone where the PFDs are stowed, how to put them on and secure them, and when and how to operate them.
- By law in Ireland anyone on deck or on board an open boat that is under 7m long must wear a suitable PFD.
- Suitable PFDs should be worn when a boat is out in poor weather conditions, restricted visibility, or at night.
- By law in Ireland anyone under the age of 16 years must wear a suitable PFD on deck or in an open boat irrespective of the boat's size.
- People drown every year because they do not wear suitable PFDs.
- It is important to make sure that your PFD is a proper fit and is being worn correctly. Use the crotch straps.

Kill cords

All powerboats must be fitted with a kill cord that stops the engine every time the driver leaves the controls – whether they do so voluntarily or involuntarily in an emergency.

- Never operate the boat without the kill switch in place
- The kill cord must be properly secured to your body (see page xx) [later]
- Regularly check that the kill cord is functioning by using it to turn off the engine.



The RNLI's engine check list

- The engine plays a vital role in the safety of an angling boat. It must start every time and be ready to get you out of trouble in an emergency.
- 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.
- To help boat 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.
- Always carry at least 20 per cent more fuel than you expect to need.



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 First Aid Afloat video. Call on 1800 789589 for more information.
- The ISA or Irish Water Safety can provide details of suitable first aid courses.



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 smoke flares, 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. (See page xx for of how to use flares in an emergency.)

Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers must be checked and maintained in line with manufacturers' recommendations. Make sure the extinguisher is secure and fully accessible. Check the 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 it must not be thrown over burning oil or petrol as this would spread the fire.

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.

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.
- 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.



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. 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.



- 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. 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.
- For more information about GMDSS, contact the RNLI on 1800 789589, the ISA on 01 2800239 or the Maritime Radio Affairs Unit (MRAU) on 01 6782367.

Mobile phones

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

ü In an emergency dial 112/999 and ask for the Coast Guard. The service is free – the Coast Guard is always there to help. (Also see page xx.) [later]



Training

Also see page xx but 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 are available from the ISA on 01 2800239.

- 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.

Practical tip from the Marine Safety Working Group

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

Drive with care

All boats have to share the water with many other craft.

- Keep a good all round look out. 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 other 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 into 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.

Engine sense

- Always make an engine check when you set off. Outboards must be locked down and have 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 your kill cord. 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.



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 2800239 for more information.

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.

Under power

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

Safe speed

- Don't drive the boat fast unless you need to. You will only use more fuel!
- Make an absolute rule that everyone on board is 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.
- '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.



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.



in an emergency

If someone falls into the water

From the shore or bank

If someone gets into trouble in the water, try to summon help. Do not put yourself at risk. If there are breaking waves or fast currents only a trained lifesaver should attempt rescue.

A throwing line is recommended for use in emergency. The brightly coloured floating line is coiled inside a throwing sack. Make sure everyone knows how to use it and remember – achieving a long distance throw with accuracy requires practice.



From a boat

If a boat 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 man overboard (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.

What can you do?

- Throttle back and shout 'Man overboard!'
- Instruct a crew member to watch the MOB and point continuously.
- If possible note your position. Many navigational aids have a MOB function that can prove vital if contact is lost.
- 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 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 person 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 to place the ladder on the protected leeward side.
- The MOB may be suffering from shock and hypothermia. Be prepared to administer immediate first aid. Assess whether 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.

Engine failure

The main causes of engine failure are likely to be running out of 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 boat will drift rapidly with the 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 as this 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.

Fire on board

If you have a fire on board:

- Try not to breathe in smoke as it 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.

Boat capsize

Boats can capsize if they are driven too fast, badly handled with poor weight distribution, swamped and rolled by heavy seas or tipped by sudden movements in weight. 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:

ü count heads and make sure no one is still under the boat.

ü 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.

ü 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.

Calling for help

Always carry a reliable means of raising the alarm. For anglers fishing from the shore or riverbank this is likely to be a mobile phone.

If you are relying on a mobile phone:

- be aware that you may not have coverage in some areas. Check where the nearest fixed telephone line is located as a back up
- check that it is charged and stored in a suitable weather or waterproof case. However, do remember that your fellow anglers may not appreciate hearing a mobile phone ringing while they are fishing!

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

Boat anglers should carry flares and a VHF Radio and know how to use them.

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, or call the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on 1850 392392.

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's SEA Check service can provide flare demonstrations for clubs and associations. Please call freefone 1800 789589.
- 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. These are widely available in almanacs and other marine publications.

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 their intentions. Advise them of hazards such as ropes in the water. Follow their instructions – they are 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!

Helicopter rescue

- 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 boat.



REMEMBER!

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 789589 and talk to an expert.

Useful contacts – as referred to throughout the booklet

General



Royal National Lifeboat Institution

15 Windsor Terrace, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Telephone: (01) 284 5050 email: lifeboatsireland@rnli.org.uk www.rnli.org.uk



Water Safety Ireland

The Long Walk, Galway

Telephone: 1890 420202 (LoCall) email: info@watersafety.ie www.watersafety.ie



Irish Coast Guard

Leeson Lane, Dublin 2

Telephone: (01) 678 2000 email: admin@irishcoastguard.ie

www.marine.gov.ie In an emergency, call 112 or 999 and ask for the Coast Guard.

Training courses



Irish Sailing Association

3 Park Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Telephone: (01) 2800239 email: info@sailing.ie www.sailing.ie

EPIRB registration

Maritime Radio Affairs Unit (MRAU)

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

Telephone: (01) 678 2367 www.marine.gov.ie

Radio licensing

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 and rescue organisations and water users.

Who we are: Who we are:



Department of Communications, Marine and 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 112 or 999 and ask for the Coast Guard.

Water Safety Ireland

The Long Walk, Galway

Tel: 1890 420202 (LoCall)

www.watersafety.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.ie



Bord Iascaigh Mhara

PO Box 12, Crofton Road,
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Tel: 01 2845144

www.bim.ie

Health and 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 66 323004 (from ROI)

028 66 323004 (from NI)

What we do:

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

Responsible for coordination and implementation of marine search and rescue operations, pollution control and 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.

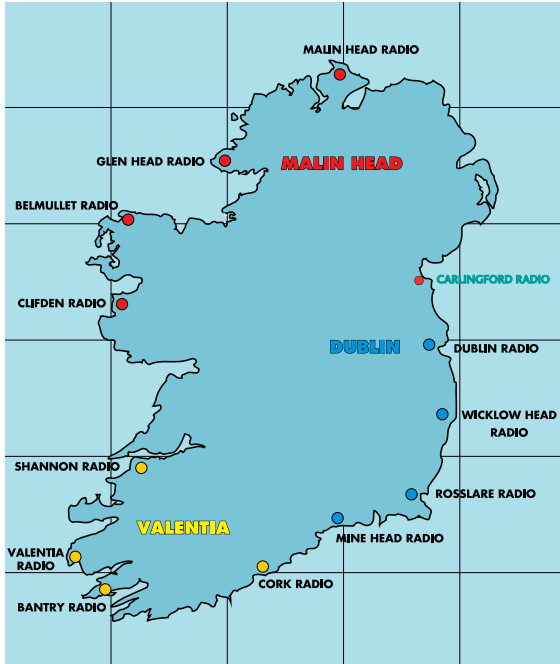
We are the governing body representing sailing, windsurfing, powerboating and personal watercraft in Ireland. We offer a range of training courses for all types of recreational boaters through our network of affiliated clubs and training centres.

We exist 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 are funded entirely by 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.



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:

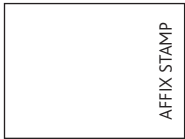
Address of the Maritime Rescue Centre which holds details of this craft:

Dublin MRCC
Irish Coast Guard
Headquarters
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 6620922
Fax: (01) 6620795
Email: admin@IRISHCOASTGUARD.ie

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

YACHT AND BOAT SAFETY SCHEME

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

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
Powerboating
Windsurfing
Diving
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 xx.

Department of Communications,
Marine and Natural Resources

0800 328 0600

or visit our website

www.rnli.org.uk/seasafety

