27 January 2026

Boat Safety and Briefing The Crew



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Boat Safety

- What does the Skipper need to brief on?
- What does the crew need to know?

Briefing

Boat Safety Drills

- Gas
- Electricity
- Messages including distress
- Winches
- Crush injuries, mooring and anchoring
- First Aid
- Boat Equipment

Actions on:

- Fire
- Man Overboard
- Recovery
- Starting the engine

Crew responsibilities, Food and water, Navigation, Route Planning and Personal Safety.....

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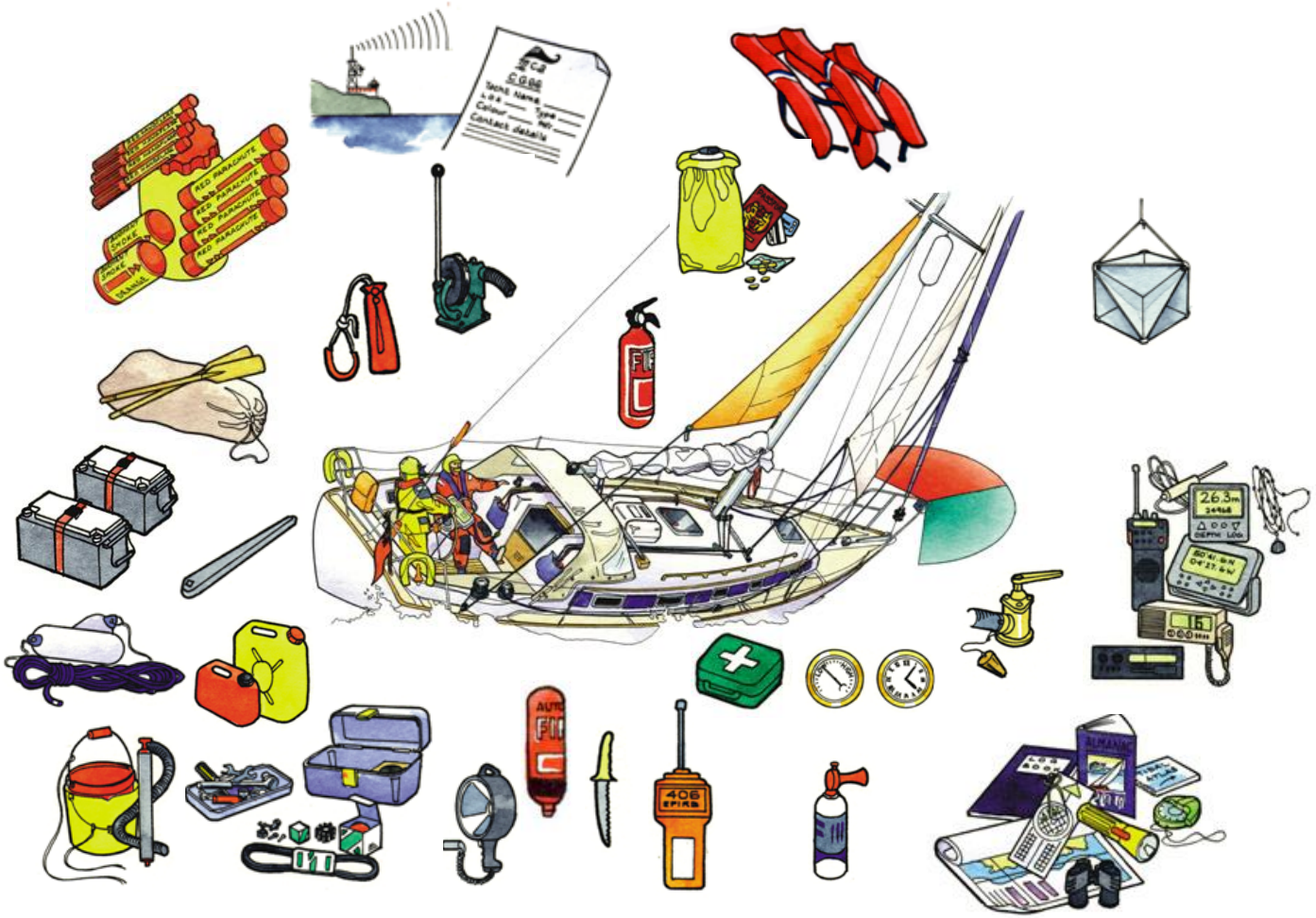
Safety Equipment



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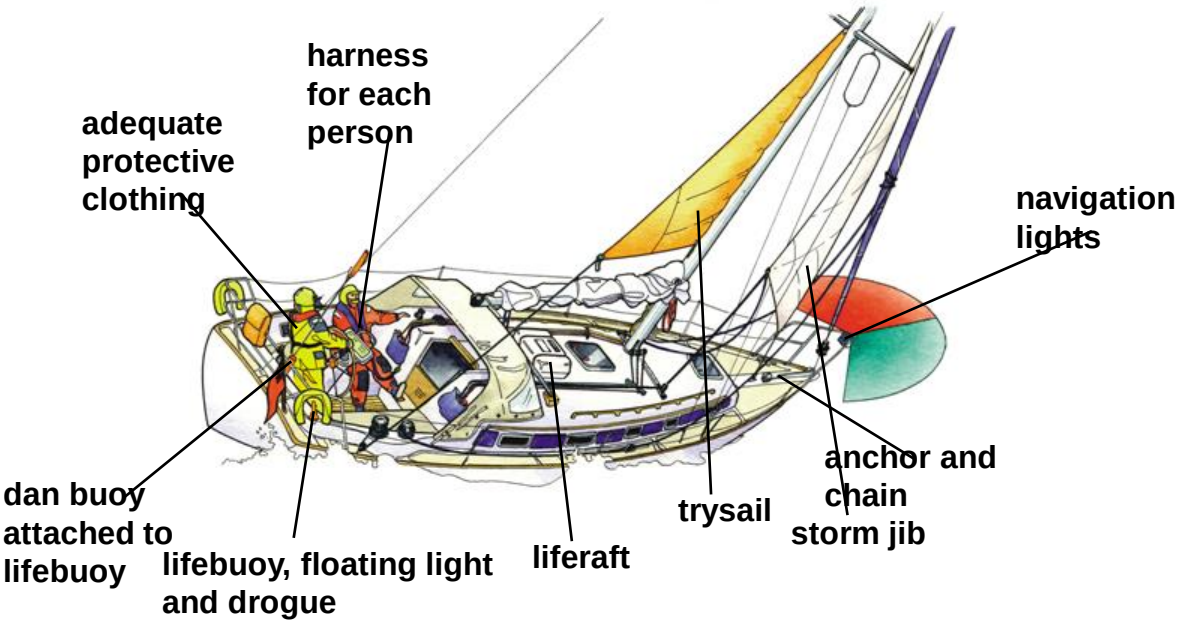
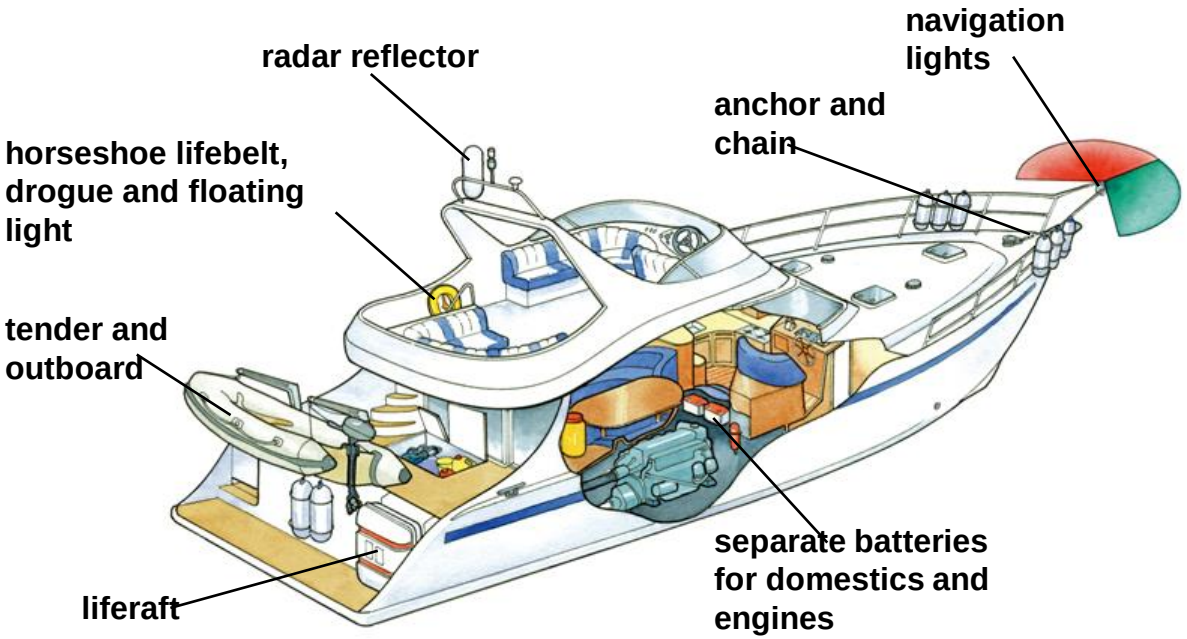
Safety Equipment



Safety Equipment



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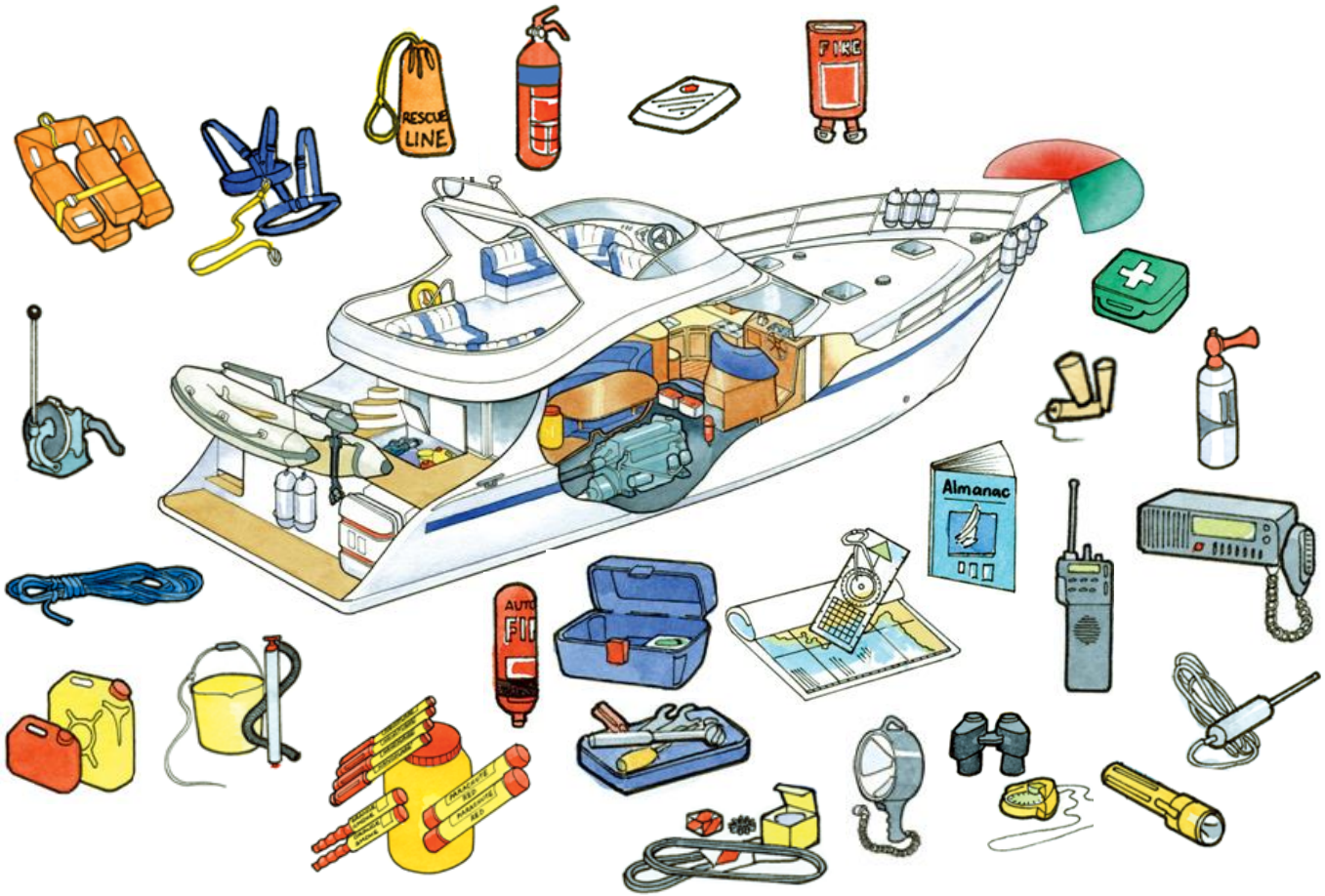
Safety Equipment



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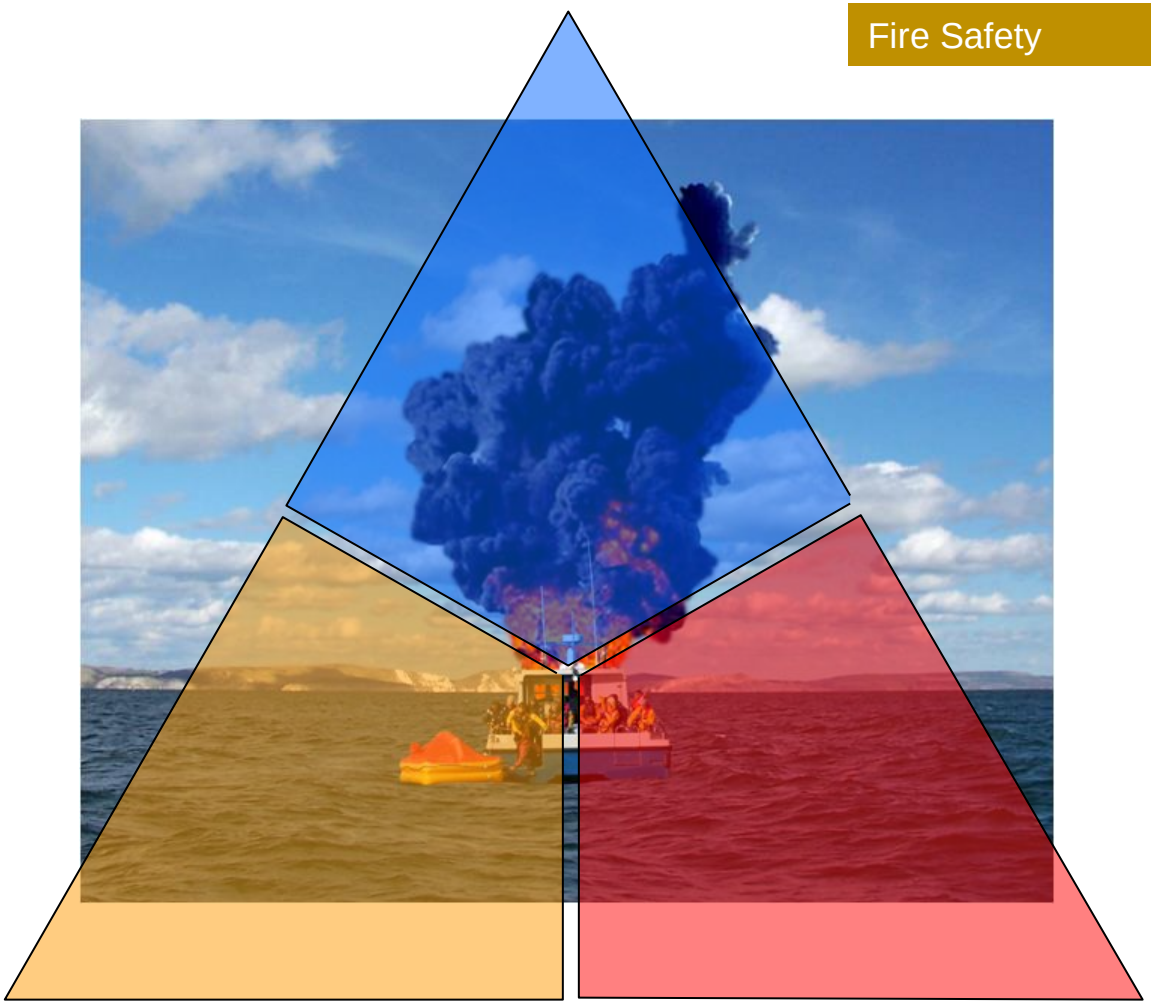
Fire Safety



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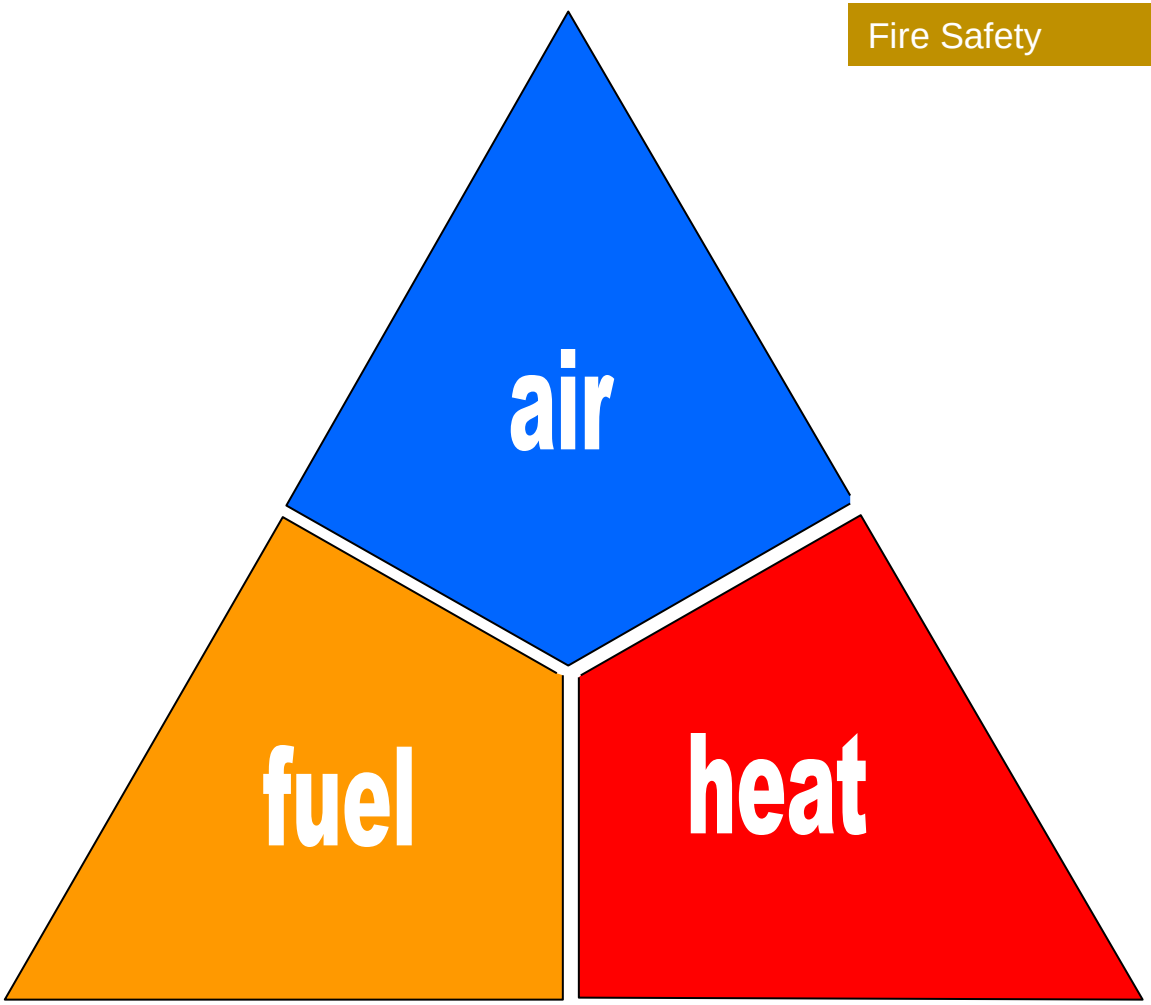
Fire Safety

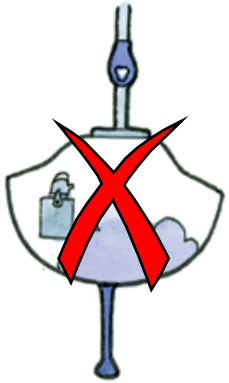


Common causes of fire



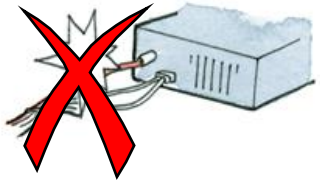












Extinguishers



Dry powder – don't use on flammable liquids

Extinguishers



CO_2 / Halocarbon – good for enclosed spaces, such as the engine compartment

Extinguishers



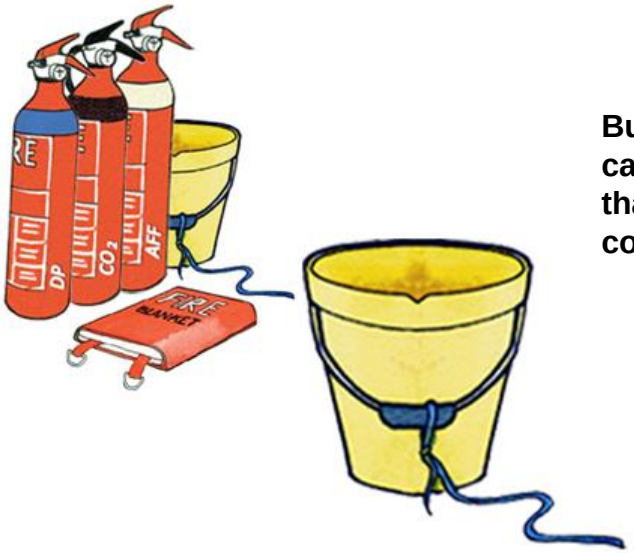
AFFF – foam, good for flammable liquids

Extinguishers



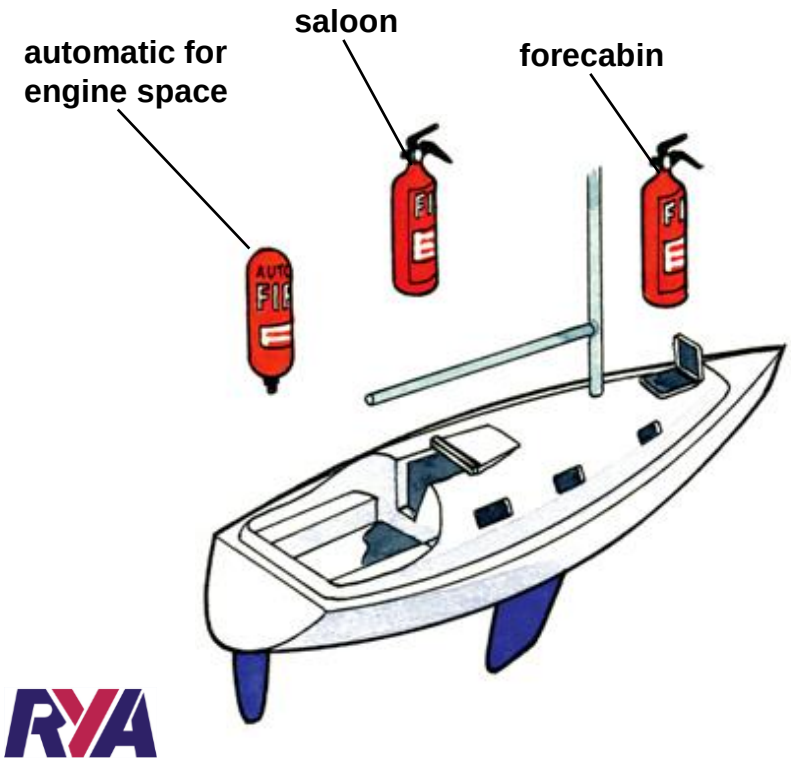
Blanket – good for smothering flames

Extinguishers



Bucket – splashing water can be more effective than throwing entire contents at once

Location of extinguishers

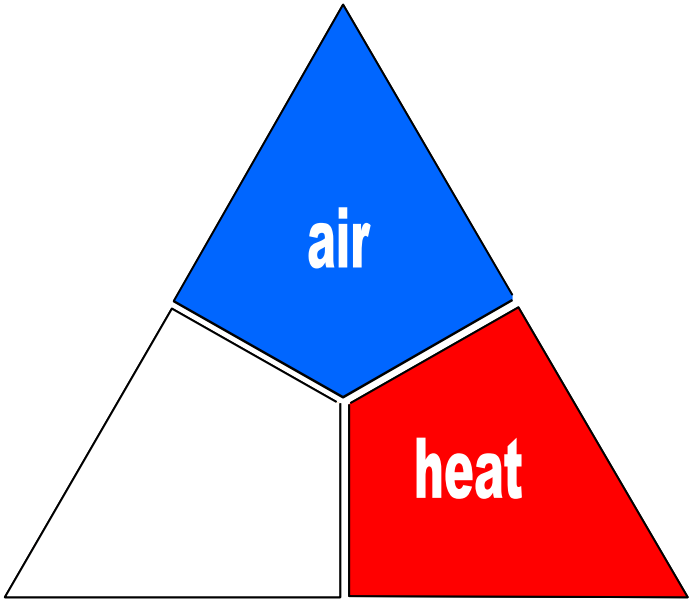


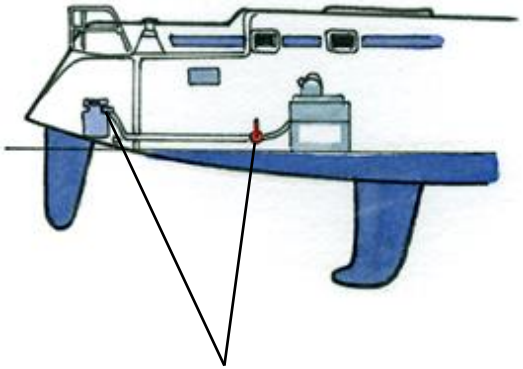
Extinguishers should be to hand near the exit to each accommodation space

The engine should have its own dedicated extinguisher

The engine's extinguisher should be automatic or be activated remotely

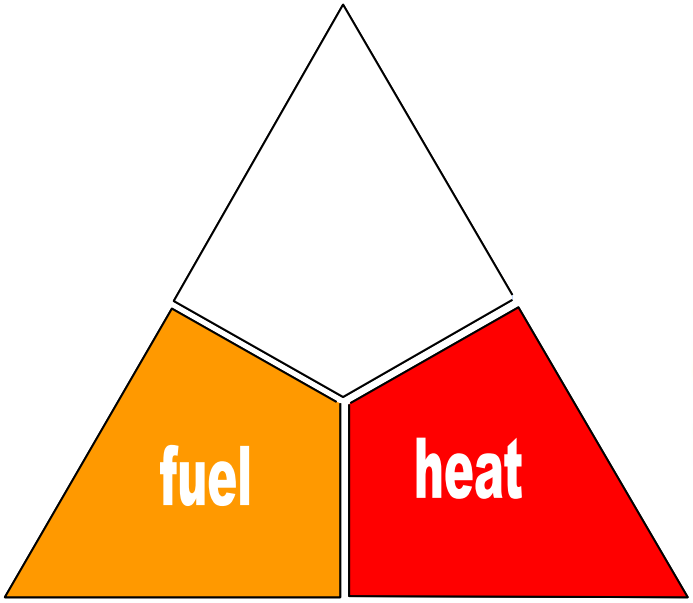
Fighting the fire





shut off fuel valves

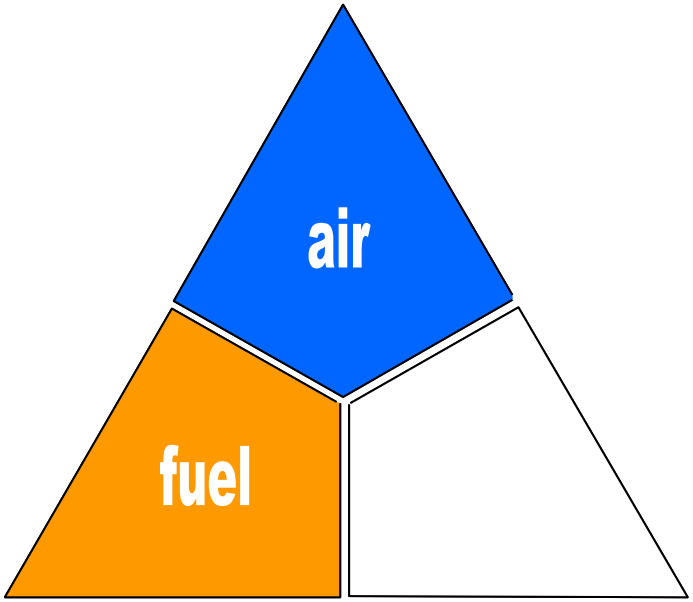
Fighting the fire





smother the flames

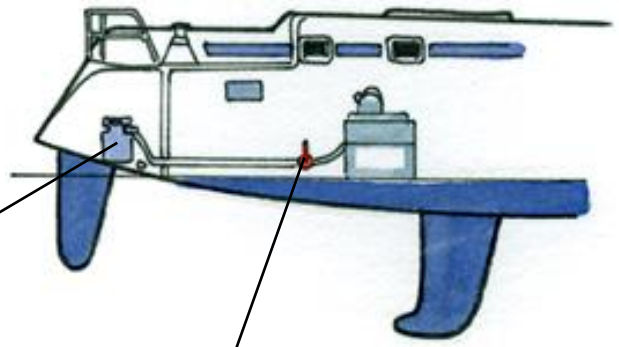
Fighting the fire





cool the fire

Gas safety

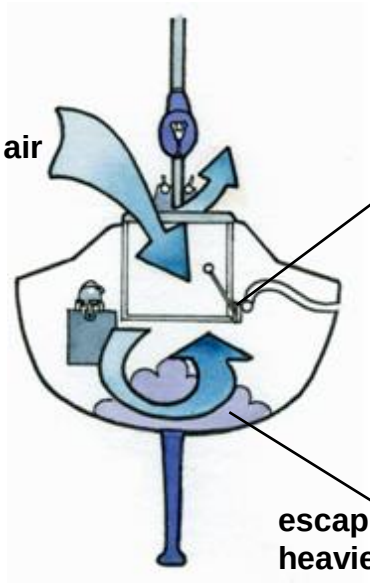


keep gas bottle in a sealed locker that drains overboard

shut-off valve inside near cooker

Gas safety

To clear gas – open hatches and turn downwind to vent fresh air through the boat



bilge pumps are designed to pump water, many won't clear gas very effectively

escaping gas is heavier than air and will sink into the bilges

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Distress flares



Be sure to carry sufficient distress flares for your cruising area

They should be carefully stowed in a tough waterproof container

Ensure your flares are in date

Distress flares

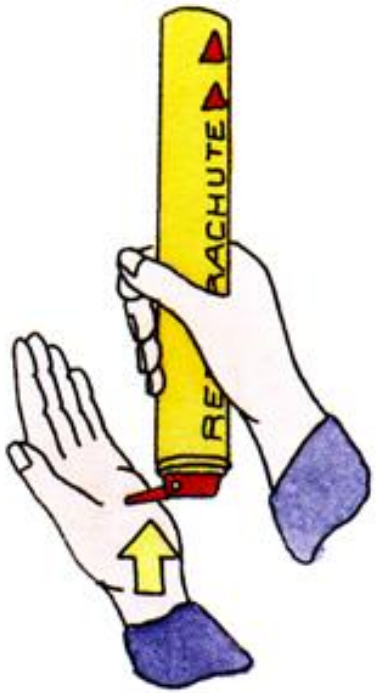




Buoyant orange smoke should be used during daytime only

Particularly useful when airborne rescue services are in the vicinity

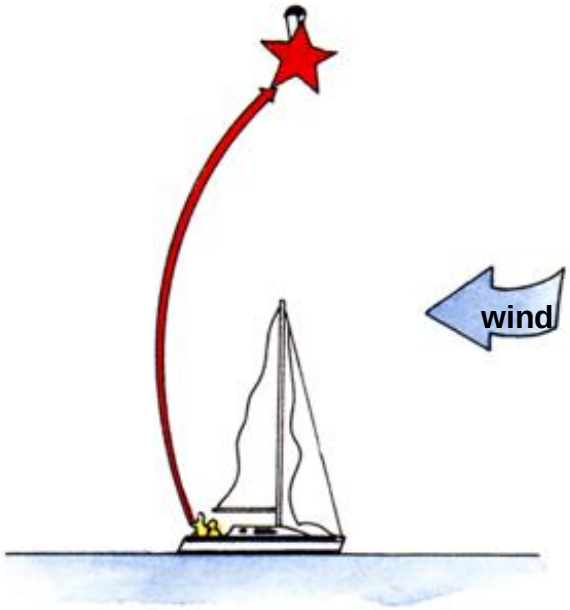
Red parachute rocket



Parachute rockets can be seen from a greater distance than hand-held flares

They should be fired in pairs to give rescuers a better chance of taking a bearing

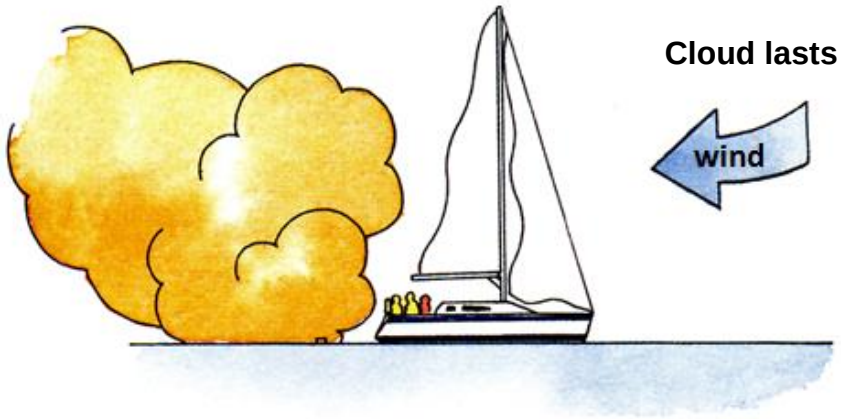
Red parachute rocket



Fire the rocket slightly downwind

To attain maximum height

Buoyant orange smoke



Orange smoke is for daylight use only

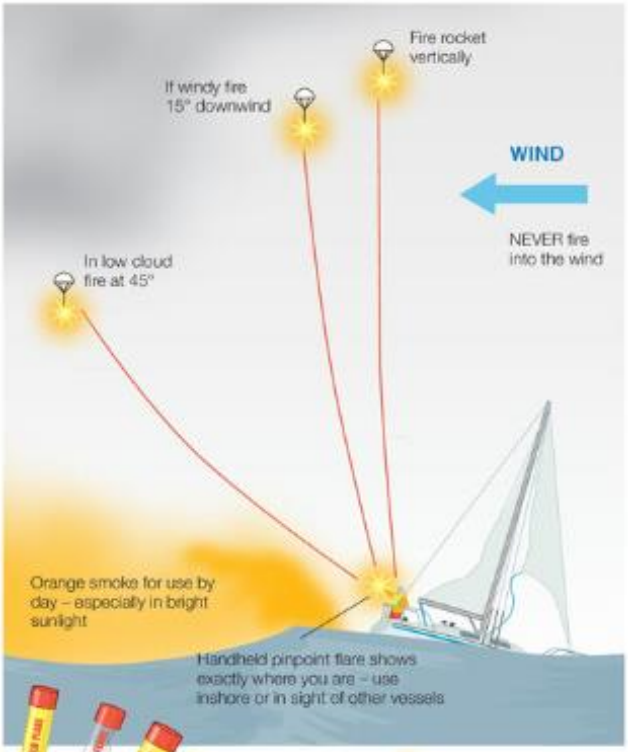
Best used when you can see rescuers searching for you

Throw downwind

Cloud lasts three or four minutes

FLARES

Never fire a parachute rocket if a helicopter is approaching.







Hold at arm's length downwind. Don't look directly at the flare.

Raising the Alarm

Other Distress Signals



Raising and lowering arms.



Fly a ball over a square.



Code flag V is not a distress signal but means 'I require assistance.'



Continuous sounding of the fog horn.

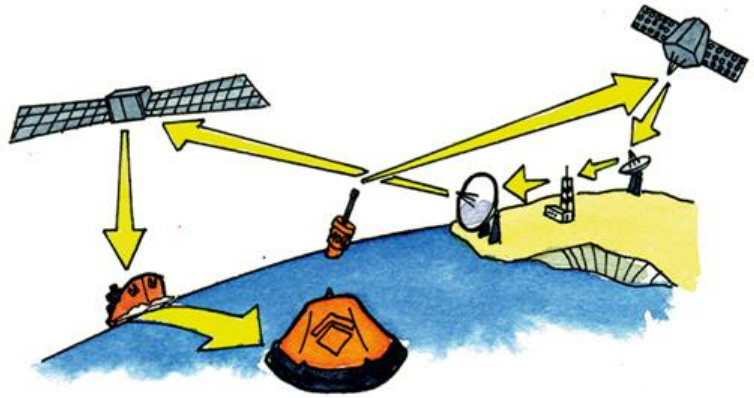


SOS by any means.



Electronic distress signals

Today though, most offshore skippers consider modern electronic systems to be their first choice for signalling distress



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Electronic distress signals

EPIRB

Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon



Electronic distress signals

SART Search And Rescue Transponder

enabling the rescue vessel or helicopter to home in to the SART's position

AIS



Distress Call- What information do you want to pass?

What needs to be first?

Mobile phone

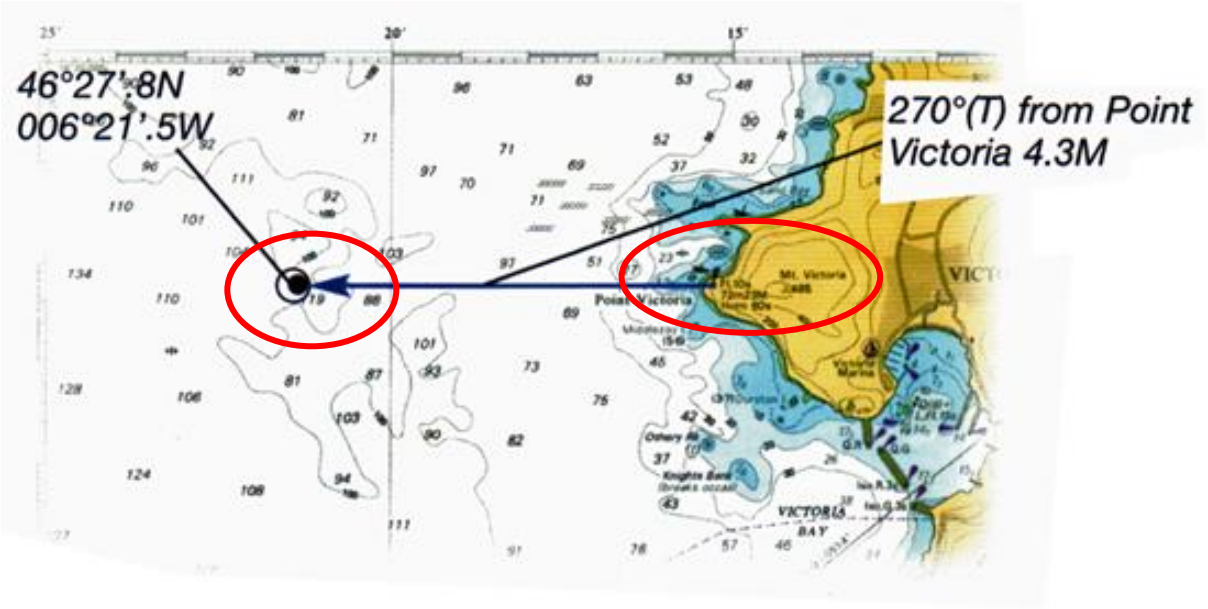
Raising the alarm by VHF radio

VHF



Use the VHF radio to alert the coastguard and other vessels in your area via broadcast

Attract attention, Indentify, Location, Distress



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VHF

Digital VHF (DSC) call

Raising the alarm by VHF radio

You may not have time to send a voice call but modern VHF sets can send a distress alert call at the press of a button

Can be linked to a GPS receiver to give your position to other VHF





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Distress Call- What information do you want to pass?

What needs to be first?

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What required?

Attract attention – clear the air
Identify
Locate
What is the problem
What do you want to assist
Anything useful to those helping
Invitation to respond

Mayday Message

When life or vessel in grave and imminent danger

Distress Call	
Distress message identifier	
Position	
Nature	
Assistance required	
Persons on board Further Info	
Invitation to reply	Over

Mayday Message

When life or vessel in grave and imminent danger

Distress Call	Mayday, Mayday, Mayday. This is the yacht Tiger,Tiger, Tiger
Distress message identifier	Mayday Tiger
Position	My Position is 46 degrees 27 decimal 8 N 006 degrees 21 decimal 5 W
Nature	Have hit a submerged object and are sinking
Assistance required	We require immediate assistance
Persons on board Further Info	There are three persons on board. colour, liferaft launched, sails up.
Invitation to reply	Over

Mayday Message

Cabin Note?

Distress Call	Mayday, Mayday, Mayday. This is the yacht Tiger,Tiger, Tiger
Distress message identifier	Mayday Tiger Callsign SDH6F MMSI 235 762000
Position	My Position is
Nature	
Assistance required	
Persons on board Further Info	
Invitation to reply	Over

Callsign and

Marine Mobile Service Identity

Safety Briefing

Boat Safety Drills:

- Gas
- Electricity
- Messages including distress
- Winches
- Crush injuries, mooring and anchoring
- First Aid

Actions on:

- Fire
- Man Overboard
- Recovery
- Starting the engine

Route Plans and Personal Safety:

- Swimming ability
- Lifejackets and safety harnesses

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Safety Briefing

Boat Safety Drills:

- Gas
- Electricity
- Messages including distress
- Winches
- Crush injuries, mooring and anchoring
- First Aid

Actions on:

- Fire
- **Man Overboard Drill - Discussion**
- Recovery
- Starting the engine

Route Planning and Personal Safety:

- Swimming ability
- Lifejackets and safety harnesses

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Next ….. Personal Safety

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