

Man Overboard (MOB) Procedure for Shrimpers

By Mark Peek, Shrimper 356 (*Haggis*) (Winter 2003)

My wife and I have just finished our second Shrimper season. We sail at Rock Sailing and Water Ski Club where we have thoroughly enjoyed the racing and occasional cruising.

My wife is new to sailing and has taken to it like a duck to water and since I have fairly recently retired, this means that we have an all-absorbing hobby that we can do together.

So far so good, but the question has been asked, "What happens if you (the helmsman) falls out of the boat"? A good question, I am sure you will agree, and possibly one that other wives and crew ask, particularly those who have little or no helming experience.

I thought it might be useful if a man overboard procedure was written specifically for Shrimpers and then practiced (using a dummy!) by those Shrimper sailors who might be alarmed by this event.

Following is a suggested procedure which, until the new season, remains untested. Your readers may care to comment so that the ideal method can be agreed.

MOB PROCEDURE FOR SHRIMPERS

NB Always carry on board and quickly accessible, the following:

- (a) A horseshoe lifebuoy
- (b) A long length (about 30m) of buoyant line, one end securely attached to the lifebuoy (a) and the other end to the boat. All this could be stowed in a stern locker
- (c) A hook-on boarding ladder if your Shrimper does not have the permanent type
 1. Act quickly but DO NOT PANIC
 2. Uncleat both main and jib sheets
 3. Regularly look up to see where the MOB is
 4. Furl the jib - the boat will now point head to wind if the tiller and mainsheet are left completely free. She will, after a short time, stop moving forward and drift with the tide (as will the MOB) and downwind.

The object of the first three points above is to keep the distance between the boat and the MOB to a minimum. It is also being assumed that the crew is not capable of controlling the boat on their own.

5. Take hold of the lifebuoy in one hand and some hanks of the buoyant line in the other and throw the lifebuoy towards the MOB. If the first throw is not satisfactory pull in and try again.
6. When the MOB gets to the lifebuoy, pull in and give assistance in boarding the Shrimper having fitted the hook-on ladder.

7. Both have a brandy.

This procedure needs to be practised regularly until the crew has confidence that they can be successful. Practice using a dummy made by attaching a fender to a bucket with a short length of line. Obviously during practice the helmsman must take no part other than as an observer.

MAN OVERBOARD (MOB) PROCEDURE FOR SHRIMPERS (2)

By Peter Skinner, Shrimper 515 (*Black Dog*) (Spring 2004)

I was interested to read Mark Peek's letter concerning Man Overboard drill. This is something that has exercised my mind for some years and I have come up with a slight modification to Mark's drill.

The problem as I see it is that, by the time the "inexperienced" crew has un-cleated the main and jib sheets a considerable distance could have been opened up between the boat and the MOB. 30 seconds traveling at 4 knots and the boat will travel approximately 200 feet (10 boat lengths).

An alternative, which I have practiced many times and always works, is somewhat as follows:

1. The crew (or helm if the crew has gone into the drink) immediately puts the helm full down i.e. towards the boom and keeps it fully down. The boat will almost turn on its own length and so keep close to the MOB. This allows thinking time and a period to let the heart palpitations subside.
2. The crew can now hurl the lifebuoy into the water towards the MOB, who should only be a few feet away from the boat.
3. The boat will continue to circle going through the wind and keeping close to the MOB.
4. The main and jib can now be un-cleated and the MOB pulled by the lifeline attached to the lifebuoy to the stern or the side of the boat, and the MOB recovered using the hook-on ladder.
5. It is essential to carry a hook-on ladder. I don't know if you have ever tried to climb back on board whilst at sea without a ladder, fully clothed. It is almost impossible and requires great deal of strength on the part of the crew and the MOB.

You will enjoy trying this and it always works. Use a fender for practicing (unless you have a masochistic crew!). The only time I have had a MOB was during a race when my crew was catapulted over the side by the boom when recovering the whisker pole coming off a run. I finished the race and came back for him later! !