

South African Maritime Safety Authority



Marine Notice No. 2 of 2009

Method of donning a Lifejacket and Abandoning Ship

TO VESSEL OWNERS, OPERATORS, SKIPPERS AND MASTERS, TRAINING INSTITUTIONS
AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Summary

This marine notice serves to improve safety at sea in two very important areas:

- Abandoning Ship Procedure
- Donning a lifejacket

During the recent casualties experienced around the South African coastline, it has come to light that most seafarers do not follow safety procedures when donning lifejackets and when abandoning ship. The incorrect methods and procedures used led to unnecessary deaths which could have been avoided.

Vessel owners, operators, skippers and masters are therefore requested to instruct their crew to practice more regularly on how to properly use their safety equipment, with the emphasis on abandoning ship.

Training Institutions are requested to put more emphasis on lifesaving methods especially the procedures of donning lifejackets and abandoning ship to ensure that students are familiar with the correct procedures to follow in times of crisis.

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Issued by and obtainable from:
The South African Maritime Safety Authority
161 Lynnwood Road
Brooklyn, Pretoria

PO Box 13186
Hatfield 0028

Tel: +27 12 366 2600

Fax: +27 12 366 2601

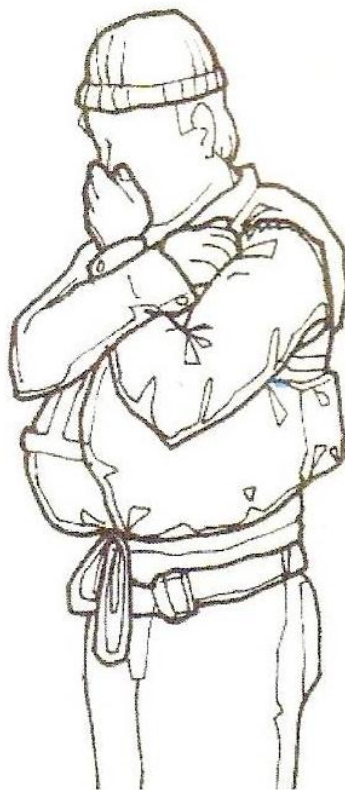
E-mail: marinenotices@samsa.org.za

Web Site : www.samsa.org.za

INCORRECT METHOD OF ABONDNING SHIP WITH A LIFEJACKET:



THE CORRECT METHOD OF ABANDONING SHIP WITH A LIFE JACKET:



A typical Abandon Ship Emergency Drill:

Scenario: Despite the crew's best efforts to control the fire or the flooding, the situation gets out of control and the drill leader gives the order to abandon ship.

Setting up the drill: This drill can be added to the end of a fire or flooding drill to save time and make the drills more challenging. To prevent the fire or flooding drill from being cut short, the drill leader should tell the crew not to abandon ship until the order is given. The crew will only **simulate** launching life rafts, activating EPIRBs, and abandoning the vessel. However, immersion suits should be donned and appropriate survival equipment brought to the abandon ship station.

Initiating the drill: When the fire or flooding drill has been concluded; the abandon ship signal will be given; this is a verbal command issued by the Skipper or Master.

Critical points to look for during drill:

Alarms/Communication

- Does person on watch alert all crew members? How?
- Are Rescue Services and other vessels made aware of the problem?
- Does the entire crew recognize the Abandon Ship signal?
- How soon is the entire crew aware of the emergency?
- Are any crew members unaware of the emergency due to an inoperative signal or lack of communication?
- Does the crew communicate with each other?
- Are all crew members accounted for?
- Are signals used or simulated before abandoning ship to attract nearby assistance?
- Are all crew members able to make an adequate Mayday call and find the vessel's position?

Response

- Do crew members react in accordance with their Emergency Assignments?
- Do crew members readily undertake unassigned but needed jobs (cross-trained)?
- Does the crew work together as a team?
- Do crew members anticipate or react to events?
- Do crew members know their abandon ship station?
- Do obstructions block escape routes or access to survival equipment?
- Is life raft painter **always** secured (simulated) once the life raft is released?
- Do all hands have an immersion suit (where required) of a size that fits appropriately even with deck clothing on?
- Can all crew members completely don their immersion suits in 60 seconds?
- Does the crew use a buddy system in donning suits and launching rafts?
- Does the crew simulate throwing flotation equipment (buoys, etc.) overboard?
- Does the crew gather the EPIRB, extra clothing, water, food, flares, logs and any other survival equipment, and are these items protected from washing overboard?
- Are watertight doors and hatches closed, if there is time, before abandoning vessel?
- Do crew members simulate entering the water properly wearing immersion suits?
- Can all crew members describe how and when to launch a life raft and entry procedures?
- Is the crew aware of procedures for recovering a life raft?
- Are all crew members aware of immersion suit features, proper care and stowage?
- Can all crew members describe how to operate and test EPIRBs?
- Is the EPIRB tested and logged at the end of the drill?
- If flares are lit, is a Sécurité given on channel 16?

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HOW TO DON A LIFE JACKET:

(Donning procedures vary according to the type of lifejacket; however the principal remains the same.)



Place Lifejacket over head.



Use the upper tape to secure two halves together in front of chest.



Take waist tape around back, return to front and tie over the flap.





Tie the tape with a Reef Knot or Double Granny Knot.