



Skipper's Pre-Departure Safety Briefing Checklist: Instill a "Culture of Safety"

To be adapted for your vessel: Seminar Handouts at sas.cruisingclub.org

"The art of the sailor is to leave nothing to chance." - Annie van de Wiele

1. **Welcome and thank everyone for being part of the crew.** Tell them they are on board to have fun – SAFELY!
2. **Culture of Safety**

Emphasize that safety is a first priority on the boat and should be foremost in everyone's mind. All crew should feel responsible and comfortable in asking questions and bringing up any concerns around safety issues. It is important as a leader to set the bar, stress a safety ethos amongst your crew and its importance as a team responsibility.
3. **Explain general steps in any emergency**
 - a. Call out the alarm, ensure everyone is on deck, identify place to assemble and what actions to take. Place boat in most stable condition.
 - b. Review crew roles: e.g. second in command, medical, roles in an emergency and watch system.
 - c. Explain Skipper's orders: e.g. close proximity to other vessels, weather change.
4. **Location and operation of key safety equipment**
 - a. Show location of posted boat diagrams of boat thru hulls and safety equipment including damage control kit and tools, fire extinguishers, fire blanket, engine compartment port, first aid kit. Diagrams should be legible and in large enough font to be read at night.
 - b. Communications: demonstrate use of VHF-radio and how to make a routine or distress call on Channel 16. Show how to use DSC distress calling button (a laminated distress call template is recommended). Identify crew who will know how to operate satellite communications.
 - c. Instruct crew on how to start and stop the engine, use of autopilot and chart plotter.
 - d. Visual distress signals: Show types of flares and explain how/when to use.
 - e. MOM: show location. Explain deployment of MOM and its importance in MOB recovery.
 - f. Lifesling: show location and explain deployment of Lifesling.
 - g. MOB button on chart plotter: show location of MOB button on chart plotter and explain how to use.
 - h. Life raft: Show location, discuss deployment plan.
 - i. EBIRB: Show location and discuss deployment plan.
5. **MOB**
 - a. Emphasize MOB prevention: how to move safely on boat and how/when to use jacklines. Require each crew member to have their own pre-fitted appropriate life vest; explain boat's policy on when/where to use underway or in dinghy. All crew should wear life vests with harnesses when underway and tethers at night and when sea state and winds dictate. Anything can happen and recovery is not guaranteed even with best efforts.
 - b. Discuss and practice methods of recovering a person in the water and the steps of the response to a MOB. Post steps where they can be regularly seen.
 - c. Identify and instruct crew on operation of any gear that is potentially hazardous, e.g. booms, travelers, winches, and danger zones such as when the main sheet sweeps in a gybe, intentional or not.
6. **Fires**
 - a. Emphasize prevention and danger, need for speed and when/how to abandon ship. If there are multiple types of extinguishers explain which one is used for each type of fire. Smelling burning insulation means jump to action.
 - b. Show how to activate a fixed fire suppression system if installed.
 - c. Point out alarms and switches and fuel turn offs e.g. propane tanks.
7. **Flooding**
 - a. Identify location of thru hulls, location and contents of damage control kit, and steps/roles for finding and containing a leak. Discuss when it might be time to abandon ship.