

# Man Overboard

One of the subjects that has come up often following the changes to the Powerboat scheme is man overboard techniques and what to teach.



## Method one - approach from downwind

Essentially the basic technique taught at Level 2 has not changed and the 'approach from downwind' preferably with the casualty on the windward bow at the point of contact, is still valid. The technique works extremely well when you have crew in the boat to assist and hence makes perfect sense on a training course. The difficulties with this technique comes when you are the only one left in the boat (i.e. skipper and one crew person in the boat to start with). The problem is that if you misjudge your approach, or it's a windy day, you will have to be quick to grab hold of the casualty.



At speed keep straight as by the time you react the casualty will be behind you

### The Main Points

- If going slow - turn immediately towards the casualty (if you see or hear them go) - this moves the prop away from them.
- Turn downwind, so that when you turn back upwind the casualty will be ahead of you - where you want them.
- Decide which side to pick up the casualty on: on small craft the side opposite the controls; on larger craft the side that best allows you to observe the casualty at all times.
- Start from 4 to 5 boat lengths downwind.
- Remove power, then once the momentum is negligible move slowly towards the casualty.
- Use neutral to manage your speed.
- When the casualty is near either bow remove power, get the crew (if available) to grab hold of them and switch off the engine.
- Manhandle the casualty towards the area of the boat from where you will recover them.



If at slow speed and you see the casualty go - turn the wheel towards them - it moves the prop away



Observe the casualty - now proceed downwind for your approach



Approaching from down wind - use neutral to control your speed



Casualty alongside windward bow



Contact with casualty - ENGINE OFF!

### Advantages

- Suits smaller craft with low freeboards.
- Allows waves to be taken head on.
- Good in a sea as the casualty is unlikely to go under the boat.

### Disadvantages

- Need to be prompt at collection time.
- Can lose sight of casualty under bow.
- Difficult if alone.

## Method two - approach from upwind

A second method which is often used with larger craft is 'upwind and parallel to the wave front'. The aim here is to bring the craft upwind above the casualty and use the wind to drift you down onto them. Bring the boat upwind of the casualty - the distance will vary depending on the wind strength. Practise by leaving two boat lengths between the boat and the casualty. This method is especially useful when you are left alone in the boat, but is applicable in other cases as well.

### Advantages

- Suits high sided vessels where windage or poor bow area access hinders the downwind approach.
- Prevents losing sight of the casualty – good on high bowed vessels.
- Less chance of over running the casualty due to less direct approach.
- Provides shelter for the casualty.
- Allows casualty to be easily brought alongside to the cockpit area where freeboard is often lowest.
- Bringing the casualty in on the downwind ('leeward') side makes craft lower in water, and so aids recovery.
- Larger landing zone for helmsman as the whole side of the vessel is a collection point. This aids 'achievability' - good for students who are struggling.
- More time to organise when drifting down.

### Disadvantages

- Can be uncomfortable being beam on to the sea.
- Small craft could be blown over the top of the casualty

## General points

- Don't make sudden changes of direction when travelling at speed - you will lose more crew!
- When travelling at speed the casualty will be behind you before any reaction turn, so it's safer to stay straight.
- Get your crew to point at the casualty - its easy to lose orientation.
- Make sure that at Level 2 you always teach ENGINE OFF at the collection and recovery moment.

## Recovery of the casualty

### In RIBs

- If the casualty is conscious it is far more comfortable to be brought in facing the boat, preferably on the 'upwind side'.
- If the casualty is unable to assist it is easier to recover them with their back to the vessel. However great care must be taken not to cause injury.

### Other craft

- Often the freeboard means that recovery at the stern via a ladder is the best option, or via a Jacobs Cradle from the side if injured.



Here the boat is brought in parallel with the wave front bow slightly upwind



The helmsman adjusts position to keep the casualty in the centre of the boat



When certain that you will make contact ENGINE OFF



Now you can assist the casualty aboard the boat