



VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE WHITSUNDAY

Module :USE OF LIFE JACKETS
Type: SOP
Version: 2

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) USE OF LIFE JACKETS

1. **Introduction**

This SOP describes the procedures for the use of Life Jackets on board VMR1. It is the responsibility of every crew member to follow this procedure.

2. **Reference**

VMR Training – Risk Assessment ; 23 JULY 2017

3. **Detailed Procedures**

Life Jackets shall be worn on VMR1 at all times when the vessel departs the home jetty. Crutch straps must be fitted and used.

It must be remembered that Life Jackets may have to be used by victims or persons involved in the rescue activity to be undertaken. In this instance, these jackets would not be available to crew members. Consequently the Skipper should consider if additional Life Jackets should be carried or worn under the prevailing circumstances.

Jackets must be inflated before entering the water by pulling down on the tag or by manual inflation. When entering the water wearing a life jacket, ensure the area is clear of persons and debris prior to entry. Grasp each side of the jacket below the neck and pull down keeping your elbows against your body, tuck your chin in against your chest and keep your feet together. This will reduce the risk of the jacket being forced up possibly injuring the neck. Hold your nose between your thumb and forefinger. Only the buckles or straps should be fastened to allow for quick removal if required to do so.

When donning a Life Jacket, the fit should be firm but not tight and you should take into account clothing worn. If clothing is removed or added the fit should be reassessed.

If required to abandon the vessel, enter the water as described in the manner above. Swim parallel to the on-coming sea, this will prevent the vessel being washed onto you or you being washed into the side of the vessel. If there is a current, swim with the current as swimming against it will tire you quickly.

If the crew abandons the vessel, the group should stay together and with the vessel or liferaft as it will be more easily seen by searchers. Avoid removing clothing as it affords some protection against hypothermia.

4 SUMMARY

The use of Life Jackets is paramount to the safety of all crew members on board VMR1, therefore, it is mandatory that all crew members wear Life Jackets when required to as stated above.

The vessel's Skipper is responsible for ensuring that all his crew are both proficient and competent in the use of all types of Life Jackets carried on board and are capable of donning them, both in and out of the water. Any crew member unable to meet these criteria shall not be permitted aboard VMR1 under any circumstances

If we all follow these guidelines we will be fully prepared in the unlikely event of MOB or abandoning ship.

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