

OGAWA Lessons Learned from Safety and Fun Day 09 February 2020

(collated by Jim Black - C-Fleet Captain - *Wee Birlinn* - Ness Yawl)

Background

A Safety and Fun Day with DoT at Matilda Bay was organised as follows:

SAFETY and FUN Day

with DoT at Matilda Bay

Sunday 09 February 2020, 09:00 onwards

Come along, with or without your boat (preferably with), draw up all the boats on the beach together, be ready for these Department of Transport (DoT) demonstrations starting at 10:00:

- **Lifejacket demonstrations including inflation and repacking - opportunity for you to get wet and try it out for real!**
- **Flare demonstration - find out how to use these safely**

Then, particularly if some of us are already wet, we can practice boarding our boats from the water, hoisting someone else aboard, and other key skills that we hope we will never need, but you never know!

And then lunch (byo or cafe on foreshore) followed by a bit of a sail and/or row, depending on inclination, but maybe competitive for a bottle of red - all ideas welcome!

Please let me know if you plan to attend so that we can get an idea of numbers - and if there is anything you particularly want to get out of the day let me know that too.

The shore at Matilda Bay is fairly steep to, so smaller keelboats should be able to moor or raft up very close in and join the fun - look forward to seeing some of you too!

Looking forward to seeing you ALL there!

In the event the DoT ashore demonstrations and participation took up all of the informative morning, and after lunch we just sailed rather than continuing with any in-water practice - so another safety day is on the cards (whenever we are freed from "social distancing!")

Seven boats turned up, plus six skippers/crew without their boats - thanks all for taking part, and thanks Andrew for these great photos:

OGAWA Lessons Learned - Safety Day Feb 2020





Lessons Learned

I called for all participants to provide their "lessons learned" but only one comprehensive reply was received as follows, with my own comments in [...]:

Hi Jim,

Yes indeed a good day even though seabreeze.com had it at 25 knots with 30 knot gusts when we went sailing. [Note: one boat capsized on the way home - see "Silver Gull" comments in Walpole safety report]

*I really liked his statement that **the highest risk segment was males over 45 partly because of the "I know boats and you can't teach me anything" attitude.***

Life jackets.

I have never been a fan of blow up life jackets as I thought they restricted you too much but the demonstration of how easy it was to deflate a little was instructive. I really liked the small high on the body Crew Saver ones.

The fist under the strap fitting test was also a good gauge when donning. [I found to my cost that you need to have that much space in the crotch straps too! But on the positive side I was very pleased that my "Marlin" jacket did not unduly restrict me around my neck unlike some of the others seemed to do - I had no need to instantly deflate a bit to be comfortable.]

Check them regularly for wear and tear, and that the gas bottle is in date, shiny and not pitted or rusty. [I use my SCUBA diving silicone grease on the threads and over the bottle as I was taught to do on my SCUBA rig - I consider it good practice on all such gear]

When you replace a cylinder make sure firing pin is in correct position or it will go off as you screw it in.

Flares.

Don't leave them in their plastic wrappings. They will sweat and deteriorate [I'm not sure this is correct - need to check with other sources] . Also can be hard to get out of the plastic in an emergency. Best in a waterproof grab bag.

Make sure they can't rattle around in their waterproof container as they can get damaged.

Check dates regularly.

Flares sink.

Don't waste them in an emergency. Wait until you think someone can see you.

Have them where you can easily access them.

Fire them with a hard, fast pull so that your hand does not get hit by the projectile that goes off with all flares, not just parachutes.

Face them down wind with arm extended.

If they miss fire drop them overboard.

Never look at the business end to see why they have not gone off as the firing can be delayed and they may go off in your face.

Never drop a spent flare into your boat as they can cause a fire and easily burn straight through your hull.

Orange for day - Last for 60 seconds.

Red for night and day - last 45 seconds - cannot be extinguished once fired, even under water.

Parachute flares have their firing mechanism at the bottom compared with hand held that are at the top.

With all flares only hold the handle as they get very hot.

Fire parachute flares down wind. [disagree! this is the advice that was given on the day but I have serious doubts that it is correct - need to follow this up]

EPIRBS

Make sure they are handy.

Practice taking them out of their holder.

Tie them to yourself not the boat as boats sink.

Personal [and all?] EPIRBS must have their aerals out of the water to work.

Best to buy the ones with GPS [I would say essential] as the older style only have a 5 km search area.

You can no longer replace the battery on an EPIRB. [so make sure you buy one with a ten-year battery life - some only have five or seven]. When it is out of date you will need to buy a new one and reregister.

You can use them on other boats and caravans as long as you go on your AMSA registration page and put in a note re their different use. [this is a really useful safety feature - well worth using, but do not forget to cancel your note when you return your EPIRB to its normal position/use]

If you see a flare always report it. Don't assume it is not an emergency or that someone else will do so.

Dat's all Folks

John and Jenny Longley

Summary

This was a very instructive day - and the first time I had actually fired a flare or set off the CO2 inflation on my own lifejacket - we all learned something, even the most experienced of us - and had fun while doing so!

Any questions/comments about these safety matters, please contact me - always happy to discuss and research further.

JIM BLACK
C-Fleet Captain
April 2020

END