

SOP-GEN-011 Small Boat Operations

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1.0 Introduction

This SOP provides guidelines for small boat operations on TDI-Brooks vessels.

The freeboards on our vessels are low enough and the vessels maneuverable enough that rescue from the vessel is the safest, fastest and the primary method of rescue for a man overboard.

The functions of the rescue boat are primarily to muster the life rafts in the event of an abandonment of the ship, to provide transportation ashore from an anchorage, and finally as a backup means of recovering a man overboard if the vessel is unable to maneuver. Some examples are if the boat were at anchor, loss of steering or propulsion or if gear was deployed over the side.

2.0 Responsibility

Small boat operations are the ultimate responsibility of the Captain. The Chief Mate is responsible for ensuring that small boat operators are properly trained and qualified. Small boat operators are required to have an STCW lifeboatman rating (VI/2) or equivalent training and experience as a swimmer.

At least two people are required to operate the rescue boat at all times.

During small boat operations, the Coxswain is in command and responsible for all personnel in the craft and its safe operation. His primary function is helmsman. The second person in the rescue boat is responsible for launching from the davit and operating the quick release hook on launch and recovery.

3.0 Man Overboard Rescue Procedures

Every effort should be made to rescue the man overboard using the vessel itself.

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If the use of a small boat is needed for emergency rescue of a man overboard, the following guidelines should be followed for safety:

- Prior to launch verify communications with bridge, deck crew and Coxswain.
- Only deploy with the permission of the Captain.
- The davit is designed and tested so that the two-person crew rides the boat down from the storage cradle into the water and disconnects the hook immediately.
- The second person in the boat is in charge of launch operations and the quick release hook from within the rescue boat.
- The AB/ Lifeboatman on the vessel is in charge of the recovery using the davit controls and at the command of the boatman on the quick release hook.
- Once the boat is launched the Coxswain assumes control.
- The painter is not released from the ship until the Coxswain signals for it to be released.
- Life jackets must be worn prior to boarding the small boat and at all times while on the small boat.
- Other personal protective equipment must be used as appropriate for the type of operations and sea conditions.
- Small boat operations after dark, in limited visibility or poor sea conditions should be avoided. If planned, they must be justified through a JSA for that particular operation.
- The small boat should have radio communication with the bridge, and the crew should be familiar with basic radio emergency procedures.
- The bridge should maintain communication and visual contact with the small boat at all times.
- Do not exceed the maximum allowable capacity of any boat.
- Ensure that appropriate safety and emergency equipment is on the small boat (*i.e.*, sound source- whistle or fog horn, thermal protective blanket/ bags, drinking water, spark plugs, tools, paddles, first aid kit, full fuel tank, lifeline and buoy, mooring lines, fire extinguisher, flashlight, sea anchor, bailer, patch kit, air pump, boat hook, compass, radar reflector.)
- For night operations, the navigation lights (red/ green position lights and white all-around MUST be working.)

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4.0 Vessel to Vessel Transfers

There are many risks involved in vessel-to-vessel transfers. For this reason, vessel to vessel transfers require the Captains of both vessels to evaluate sea state and other factors and mutually determine the risk level is acceptable before agreeing to the transfer.

A Job Safety Analysis (JSA) MUST be conducted before a vessel-to-vessel transfer may begin.

Potential types of vessel-to-vessel transfers include swing ropes, ladders, direct cross overs, and personnel baskets. The following guidelines should be considered when undertaking vessel to vessel transfers:

- Captains of both vessels agree on the safety of the maneuver.
- A JSA review is conducted by both participants prior to transfer.
- Clear the transfer point and path of all loose items and obstructions.
- Ensure that sufficient personnel are available to assist those making the transfer.
- Use a Jacob's ladder if there is a significant height difference between the two vessels.
- Instruct personnel on transfer procedures, and only transfer one person at a time.
- All personnel transferring must wear personal floatation devices and other necessary personal protective equipment.
- Prior to coming alongside, clearance should be granted by the Captains of both vessels.
- Transfers should only be made in daylight with good visibility and appropriate sea conditions.
- No one should hold equipment, luggage or other items when transferring. Keep both hands free while transferring to the other vessel.

5.0 Training

Persons designated as small boat Coxswain must be appropriately qualified. Small boat Coxswain may become qualified with a lifeboatman endorsement (STCW VI/2), by passing a small boat operations class or when the Chief Mate determines they are competent in understanding and demonstrating the safe and correct use of the equipment in boating operations.

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