

# Single handed fishing



Maritime &  
Coastguard  
Agency



## Fishing on your own is dangerous...

As all fishermen know, fishing solo is risky so you need to think about what might go wrong when there's no-one around to help you if, for example:

♦ you get injured ♦ there's a sudden vessel loss ♦ you fall overboard

**Take action to prevent accidents and maximise your chances of survival...**

### Tell someone

Make sure you tell someone like a friend, relative or the Coastguard, where you're going and when you'll be back.

### Remove as much risk as possible

For example: non-slip decks, separating yourself from pots/creels, ropes and wires, and checking that bulwark heights are sufficient, etc.

If you can't eliminate the risk you **MUST** wear a PFD or a safety harness.

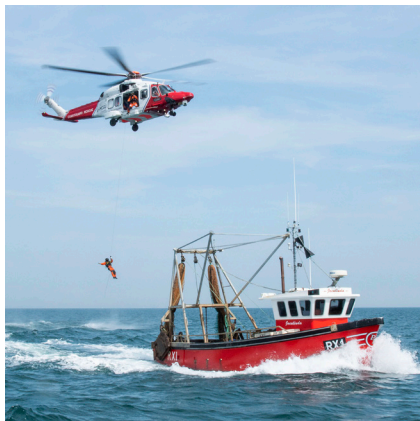
### Free Safety Folder

Develop your own risk assessment using the free online Safety Folder, developed by the fishing industry for industry. You can also get monthly reminders about safety equipment and vessel maintenance:

[www.safetyfolder.co.uk](http://www.safetyfolder.co.uk)

### Be alert

Always keep a good lookout!



### Personal flotation device (PFD)

**ALWAYS** wear your PFD and make sure it has enough buoyancy to turn you on your back, keeping your mouth clear of the water, even if you become unconscious.

Wearing a PFD will dramatically increase your survival time; fisherman Reegan Green survived for one hour because he was wearing a PFD and was rescued safely. Without a PFD, cold water shock can kill in less than five minutes.



**WEAR A SUITABLE PFD:** We recommend a 150N automatic PFD, either as a separate item or as part of your oilskins. Remember, getting back on board your vessel is hard and buoyant waistcoats or work vests aren't suitable for single handed working - they have limited buoyancy.

**REGULARLY CHECK** your PFD for damage and make sure the gas cylinder is secure. PFDs are available with a safety harness, allowing you to quickly clip in a safety line.

### Personal locator beacon (PLB)

Even if you're wearing a PFD, to survive you need to alert rescuers. Wear a GPS 406MHz PLB or fit one in your PFD. Wear it on the top portion of your PFD; the aerial must be clear to transmit and above the water.

If you're in difficulty an alert will be sent to the Coastguard who can use the signal to find you.



### Emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs)

Equip your vessel with an EPIRB. It will send an automatic distress call and transmit your location if your vessel capsizes or sinks.



### Register your EPIRB OR PLB

See MSN1816 – Mandatory Registration of EPIRBs: [www.gov.uk/406beacon](http://www.gov.uk/406beacon)





## Be prepared...

**Wear a safety line** - Which can be attached with a sliding ring to an overhead wire running the length of the deck. Ideally the overhead wire should connect to an engine cut out, so that a high load on the wire stops the engine.

### Overboard ladder

A fixed ladder at the stern or a rope ladder, that can be pulled down from the bulwark by a lanyard from the water, will help you get back aboard if you fall overboard.

### Vessel controls

- ◇ Have additional vessel controls in a position so you can control the vessel from the deck
- ◇ Can you easily reach the winch / hauler controls?
- ◇ Do you need an additional emergency stop?
- ◇ Can you stop the engine if you go overboard?

### Safety equipment

Is all safety equipment in good order and easily accessible? The online Safety Folder sends reminders to service or replace equipment: [www.safetyfolder.co.uk](http://www.safetyfolder.co.uk)

### Weather

Check the weather forecast before leaving and regularly throughout the trip.

### Carry a knife

Place knives in strategic positions around the deck that you can reach in an emergency.

### Radio communications

Test your radio before leaving the harbour, and communicate regularly with the Coastguard and local vessels during your trip.

**Maintain your vessel** - Your life depends on it! Use the Safety Folder to remind you what needs doing: [www.safetyfolder.co.uk](http://www.safetyfolder.co.uk)

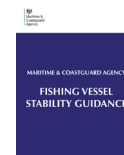
### Mandatory 'Code of Practice' equipment

The Codes gives the minimum requirement but the owner or skipper may carry additional equipment to benefit the crew or vessel.

### Stability

Capsizes can happen quickly and without warning. Check your vessel's stability using a roll or heel test. See MGN 503 and MGN526 for further information and how to do these tests: [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Also see our Fishing Vessel Stability Guide: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-vessel-stability-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-vessel-stability-guidance)



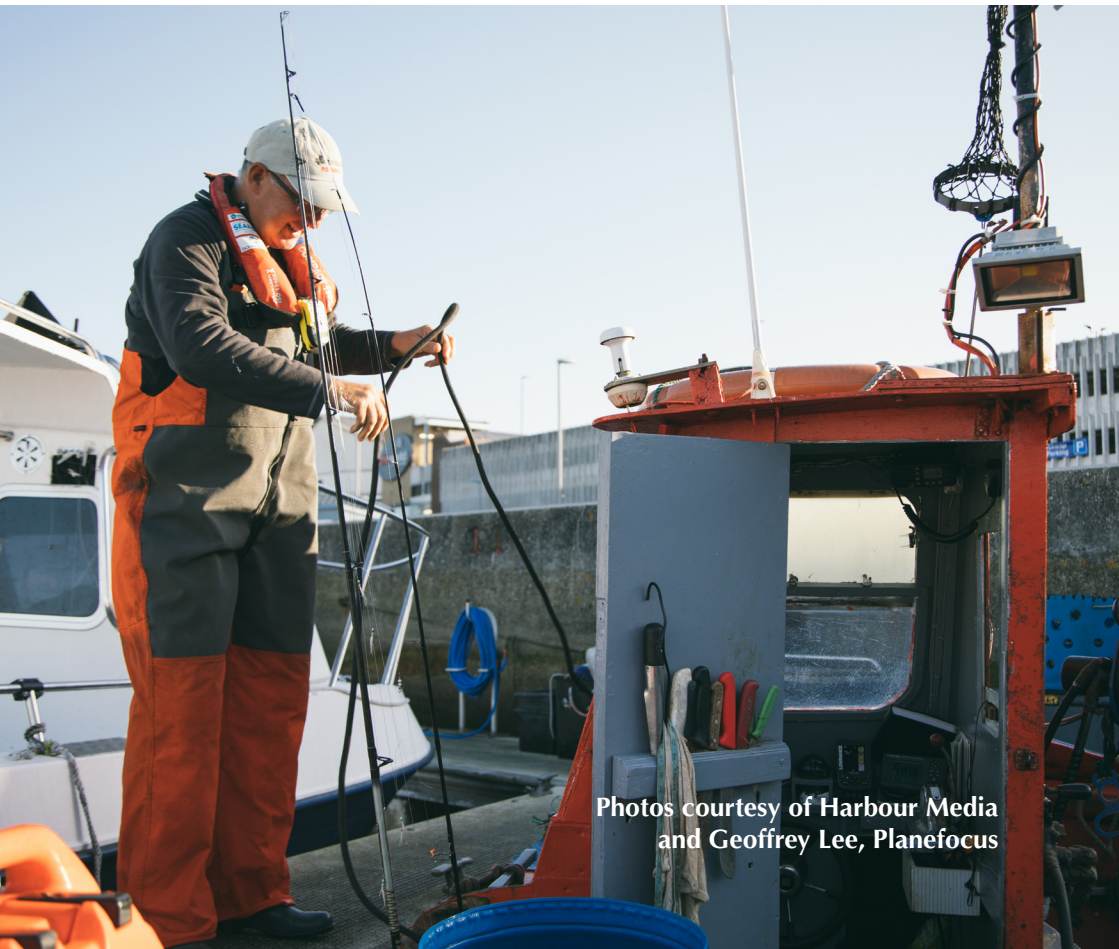


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For more information, see our Fishermen's Safety Guide available online:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishermens-safety-guide](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishermens-safety-guide)

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