

9. Distress

In this unit:

- Actions in an emergency
- Information and instructions for emergencies
- The International Code of Signals
- SMCPs: May-day and Pan-pan exchanges

Casting off Survival in a life raft

You are alone on a boat 150 NM from land. There is an accident and your boat begins to sink. You send an all stations May-day message. There is no response. All you can do now is load the life raft.

What should you take?

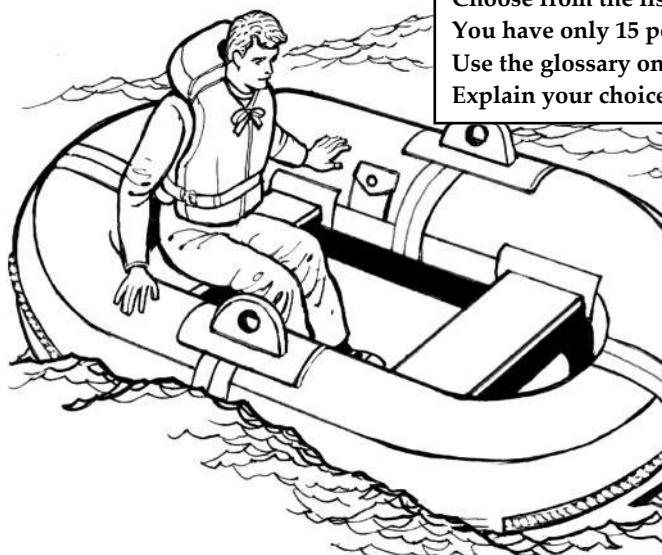
Do you plan for long-term survival or early rescue?

Choose from the lists of items below. Each item costs points as shown.

You have only 15 points.

Use the glossary on page 91 to check any words you don't know.

Explain your choices.



Personal	Equipment	Electronic devices
drinking water 1	life jacket 1	mobile phone 4
extra food 4	medical kit 3	distress radio beacon (EPIRB) 1
extra clothing 3	emergency food 2	VHF radio 4
fishing line 1	flares 3	GPS 4
bailer 1	fire extinguisher 3	batteries 4
sewing kit 1	whistle 1	laptop computer 4
matches 1	chart 1	
mirror 1	compass 1	
passport 1	sea anchor 3	
torch 1	outboard engine 3	
knife 1	can of petrol 3	

Discuss how, in a life raft, you could *keep warm, keep clean, keep dry, get drinking water and get food.*

SMCPs

Distress and urgency

A. Think about these two definitions:

May day: Great danger, help me!

Pan-pan: I've got a problem, stand by.

Study situations 1-3 and decide what each one is: a May-day or a Pan-pan.

1. A family is on a small yacht with a sail and an engine. The propeller is fouled and the engine fails.
2. A crew member falls overboard. He is wearing a life jacket but you can't see where he is. The water is very cold.
3. A coastguard sends a ship a warning of icebergs but later loses contact. The ship is missing. The coastguard needs help.

B. 🎧 Listen to a May-day call and complete the record:

RECORD OF MAY-DAY CALL

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Call sign of vessel in distress: _____ | 4. Type of assistance required: _____ |
| 2. Position of vessel in distress: _____ | 5. Action being taken by crew: _____ |
| 3. Nature of the emergency: _____ | 6. Call sign of coastguard: _____ |

C. Read the May-day exchange with a partner and check your record (above):

- Vessel:** May-day, May-day, May-day. This is Alpha-Quebec-Papa three nine. Alpha-Quebec-Papa three-nine. Alpha-Quebec-Papa three-nine. May-day. Our position is: five-five degrees north, zero-four degrees east. Our vessel is sinking. We require immediate rescue. We have nine persons on board. We are taking a lifeboat. Over.
- Coastguard:** May-day Alpha-Quebec-Papa three nine. This is Hotel-Lima-Charlie one-zero-five. Received your May-day. Over.

D. Put the parts of this Pan-Pan call into the correct order. (The 1st part is b.)

- a. We have an injured man on board. ____
 b. Pan-pan, Pan-pan, Pan-pan. 1
 c. My position is: three-seven degrees north, one-four degrees west. ____
 d. This is MV Suraya, MV Suraya, MV Suraya. ____
 e. This is MV Suraya listening on channel one six. Over. ____
 f. We are proceeding to Lisbon and require medical assistance ashore. ____

E. 🎧 Listen and check your answers.**F. Practise these distress calls with a partner.****1. Student A**

Use this information and add your own ideas to make a call.

You are master of a cruise ship. Pirates in a small boat are attacking your cruise ship.

Student B: Respond.

2. Student B

Use this information and add your own ideas to make a call.

You are a coastguard. There is a report of an overturned vessel with two people in the water. Request help from vessels in the area.

Student A: Respond

Vocabulary

Maritime emergencies

A. Have you ever been in any of these emergency situations? Describe the experience.

- a collision (kə'liʒən) (a vessel / vehicle hits another)
- an allision (ə'liʒən) (a vessel hits a stationary object)
- a man overboard
- a medical emergency
- a fire
- an explosion (ɪk'spləʊʒən)

B. Describe what you see in this picture then read the report in the red box.

Cargo ship Green Goblin is carrying a dangerous cargo. As she approaches port the cargo explodes. The crew **activate** emergency procedures and **deploy** fire fighting equipment but they cannot **extinguish** the fire. The captain **alerts** the coastguard. The crew **muster** on deck and the first officer **holds a roll call**. They prepare to **abandon** ship. Emergency teams arrive and try to **stabilize** the situation. A helicopter **air lifts** the crew. The fire **injures** two crew but everyone **survives**.

C. Find words in the report that match the definitions 1-10.

1. hurt someone: _____
2. put out a fire: _____
3. call out names: _____
4. tell others of an emergency: _____
5. meet at an arranged place: _____
6. rescue by helicopter: _____
7. put into action: _____
8. use: _____
9. does not die: _____
10. stop things from getting worse: _____

D. Complete these sentences with verbs from the account. All the verbs are regular. Put them all into the Simple Past tense.

1. Fuel on the tanker *exploded*.
2. The captain _____ the emergency services.
3. The crew _____ fire fighting equipment.
4. One man fell into the sea but he _____.
5. All hands _____ on deck for a roll call.
6. The crew _____ ship.
7. Air sea rescue _____ the crew to safety.
8. No one died but the accident _____ two hands.

Pronunciation

Consonant groups

There is a list of consonant sounds on page 2.

A lot of English words contain groups of two or more consonants.

Here are some examples: *stabilize* ('steɪbəˌlaɪz), *activate* (ækˌtəˌveɪt), *establish* (ɪ'stæblɪʃ).

🔊 Listen to the three examples and repeat.

To pronounce difficult consonant groups, it helps to split words into parts; for example: ac-ti-vate.

Stress the first part and say the word slowly: ac-ti-vate then gradually faster and faster until you can run the parts into each other.

Here are some common consonant groups:

pl - st - bl - br - ts - nd - sc

🔊 Listen to them and repeat.

The consonant groups above are in the following words.

🔊 Listen to them and repeat:

deploy, explode, explosion,

destroy, distress, mast, test, muster,

able, stable, disable, possible, visible,

break, broken, bridge,

shots, floats, tests,

manned, abandon, hands, under, land

rescue, escape, screw

🔊 Listen to these sentences and repeat.

- (st) In distress establish a muster station fast at the destroyed mast.
- (nd) The MV Andrew is under-manned and abandoned by the hands on land.
- (bl) She is visible but in trouble; disabled and unstable and unable to secure her cable.

Structures

Instructions for emergencies

A. Note the wording of this notice:



You can say it another way:

If there is a fire, break the glass.

You can reverse the sentence:

Break the glass if there is a fire.

You can also say:

In the event of fire break the glass.

Which tense is used in all the above sentences?

B. Note two different meanings of fire.

1. To fire at/on; to shoot. *The pirates fired at the ship.*

2. To be on fire; to be burning. *The ship is on fire.*

To set fire to something means to start a fire. *The pirates set fire to the tanker.*

Complete this message.

We are under attack. Armed men are _____ rockets at us.

They have _____ to our vessel. I repeat: our vessel is _____ fire.

C. Match the halves of these sentences:

1. If there is a fire	a. the event of a fire.
2. In case of	b. if you abandon ship.
3. The medical kit is	c. alert the coastguard.
4. In the event of a collision	d. wear it.
5. Activate your EPIRB	e. close all the doors.
6. Close all the doors in	f. in case of emergency.
7. If you have a life jacket,	g. emergency, push here.



Listening

Emergency procedures

A. What information do you find on a station bill? Add to this list.

- The meaning of different alarms
- Emergency duties
- _____
- _____
- _____

A *Station Bill* is a notice about what to do in emergencies. Safety officers post station bills in different places on ships and offshore rigs so that everyone sees them.



B. Look at this *station bill* for an offshore oil rig. Make some guesses about the missing words 1-13.

Offshore oil rig STATION BILL

	Alarm	Action
General Alarm	Intermittent	Stop all work Proceed to 1. _____ Roll call taken by: 2. _____
Prepare to abandon platform	3. _____ Order from OIM: 'Prepare to abandon platform'	Alert all personnel Put on 4. _____ and 5. _____ Location of extra life jackets: 6. _____ Proceed to: 7. _____
Fire		If you see a fire: 8. _____ Telephone: 9. _____ Report: 10. _____ and 11. _____
Man overboard		Throw a lifebuoy Shout 'man overboard' Do not 12. _____ 13. _____ at the man and keep him in sight

C. 🎧 Listen to the Offshore Installation Manager (OIM) talk about emergency procedures and complete the station bill. Use no more than three words for each gap.

Reading

Attacks by pirates: questions and answers

A. The men in the photograph on the right have guns. Imagine that they approach your ship.

Discuss with another student possible answers to these questions:

1. What should you do if they fire at the ship?
2. What should you do if they get on board?
3. What should you do to survive as a prisoner?
4. What do pirates want?
5. Should you try to escape or fight back?



B. Read the paragraphs a-e (below). They are answers to the questions 1-5 (above).

Match each paragraph to a question. Do you agree with the advice?

- a.** They want money and their leaders will talk to the ship's owners about a ransom. They don't want to injure or kill any of their hostages and they may muster the crew on deck to show the world's media that everyone is alive. _____
- b.** Time will pass slowly and there will be many people on board. Smile and try to communicate with the pirates. Have a routine: eat, read, sleep, keep clean and take exercise. Find a safe area to go in the event of a rescue attempt. _____
- c.** If there is an opportunity to get away, take it. Use violence only if you have a good chance of escape. If the pirates are going to kill you, try to escape even if your chances are not good. _____
- d.** If they take over your ship, stay calm. The first fifteen minutes are very dangerous. Avoid violence and try to stabilize the situation quickly. Co-operate with the pirates and let them feel in control. _____
- e.** If you're under attack, activate alarms and alert international maritime forces. Maintain full sea speed and make big waves to upset the pirates' boats. If they get close, film them and deploy fire hoses to keep them away. _____

Speaking

How should we deal with piracy?

A. Do you agree or disagree with either of these statements?

1. Pirates should be punished by death. We should not arrest them, say, 'naughty, naughty,' and release them. We should sink their boats with all hands.
2. Violence only makes more violence and killing pirates increases the risk for seafarers who are held hostage.

B. Read the report (below) and the list of possible actions.

Complete the advantages and disadvantages of each possible action.

Report

Last night twenty pirates hijacked a cargo ship. The pirates say they will kill the crew and set fire to the ship if they don't get \$5 million from the owners. This morning an American warship caught the pirates' mother ship and arrested seven men on board. The US warship is now standing off from the hijacked cargo ship. The navy is ready to attack.

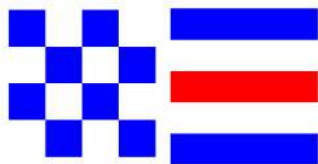
POSSIBLE ACTIONS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Pay the ransom money.	Will get quick release of vessel & crew.	May encourage more piracy.
Do not pay the ransom.		
Offer less money.		
Wait and do nothing		
Sink the cargo ship.		
Attack the pirates.		
Punish the arrested men.		
Offer to exchange the arrested men for the ship.		

C. What do you think is the best thing to do? Explain your decision.

Sea Jargon

Signalling for help

A. Here are some ways you can request help. Explain them and give other ways you can signal distress.



THE INTERNATIONAL CODE OF SIGNALS (INTERCO)

This is a system of signals.

The signals mean the same in all languages. The signals can be in letters or in flags. They are single letters or in twos or threes.

You decode the signals from a list in a book.

You can use the NATO phonetic alphabet and transmit Interco messages by radio.

You show that you are going to use the International Code of Signals by saying the word *Interco* first.

B. Listen to the Interco transmissions 1-5 and write the code letters that you hear.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

C. Now work out which transmission is:

- a. an initial call _
- b. a request for help _
- c. a question _
- d. a response _
- e. a course and speed _

D. Use the Interco table (right) to decode the transmissions.

Match each transmission with a standard version a-e.

- a. Question: Is there a danger of explosion? ____
- b. The vessel coming to your rescue is on course 140° at 19 knots. ____
- c. Calling all stations. This is Hai Peng on channel 16. If you respond, use the International Code of Signals. ____
- d. I acknowledge Hai Peng. This is Scorpions on channel 16. Over. ____
- e. I am on fire and sinking. I request urgent assistance. ____

E. Work with a partner.

Design an all-stations May-day or Pan-pan call using Interco.

Use a call sign, give your position and state the emergency.

When it's ready, transmit the message to your partner.

When you receive the message from your partner, write it down and respond using Interco.

Interco table of codes

AE:	I must abandon vessel
AR:	End of transmission
C:	Course
CB:	Require immediate assistance
CB6:	...and I am on fire.
CQ:	Calling all stations
CP:	I am proceeding to your assistance.
DE:	This is
DX:	I am sinking
ED:	Your distress signals are understood
EL:	Repeat the distress position
GR:	The vessel coming to your rescue
HW:	I have collided with another vessel.
IT:	I am on fire
JC1:	Is there danger of explosion?
JD:	Explosion
O:	Man overboard
R:	I acknowledge
RQ:	Question
S:	Speed (in knots)