



Always be prepared if trouble arrives

Even with the best of precautions, difficult circumstances may arise while at sea. Do not hesitate to ask for help through:

- Contacting Coast Guard Marine Communications and Traffic Services Radio Station by using your marine radio or *16 on your cell phone; or
- Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre (MRSC) St. John's direct at 1-800-563-2444.

You should always be prepared for a delayed return, especially if you are in an open boat. On many occasions, small boats have been forced to stay at sea all night exposed to the elements. Always carry extra clothing, preferably survival suits, as well as extra food, water, matches, flashlights, flares, reflective clothing markers and an adequate first aid kit. Individuals requiring daily medication should always carry an extra supply.

Carry the required safety/survival equipment

Ensure that your vessel is in good working order. For small vessels operating with an outboard motor, you are encouraged to carry a back up engine along with extra fuel. Be sure to familiarize yourself with your vessel and practice your emergency drills. For specific regulatory requirements, check the regulations that apply to your vessel by visiting a Transport Canada Marine Safety office, going online at www.tc.gc.ca/MarineSafety or by calling 1-800-387-4999. It is also important to know your vessel's limitation and do not overload. A loaded vessel in ice may look safe, but it can be very unstable in rough seas or with slight icing.



Extreme weather and emergency response delays

While medical assistance during emergencies is available, you must be prepared in case an extreme weather condition delays a search and rescue response.



SAFETY TIPS for Sealers



Fishing can be a dangerous activity and can carry with it a high level of risk. Everyone engaged in the fishery is encouraged to keep safety in mind every time they depart port. Sealing presents additional risks due to the nature of the harvest and the severe environmental working conditions. The following suggestions are intended to reduce the risks and should be added to your safety regime.

Ensure your radio is working properly

Communication is a tool for search and rescue. No vessel should ever leave port without an effective and reliable means of communication; a way to call for help. The best option is an approved marine radio. At a minimum, sealers should have a VHF radio and/or one or more cell phones with extra batteries if operating in an area with cellular coverage.

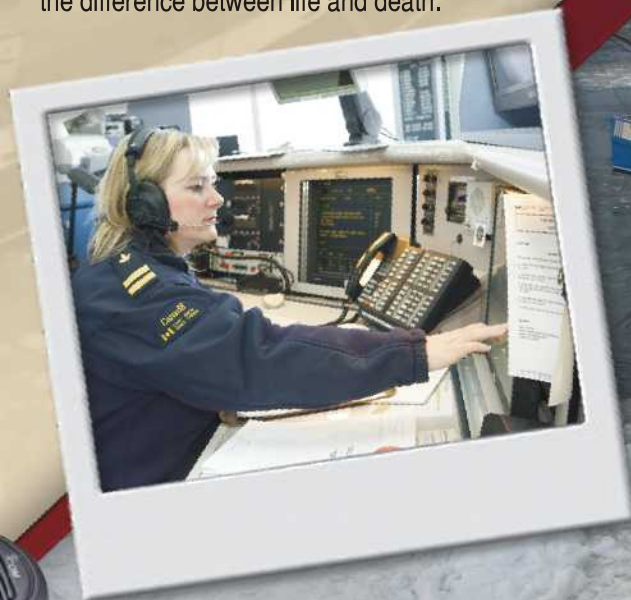


File a sail plan

File a sail plan with a responsible individual, and instruct them to call the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre if your vessel is overdue. Ensure that a family member or friend has knowledge of your vessel including the crew members, supplies on board, vessel characteristics (length, colour and construction material), departure time, destinations, routes and intended return time. Always advise this person of any changes, especially regarding return time. Failing to report changes in plans or delays can unnecessarily activate the search and rescue system possibly causing a search at the expense of other emergencies. Always maintain regular contact with people ashore and other vessels operating in the area. If you cannot advise someone of a delayed return, then return home as originally planned.

Develop a buddy system

This is one of the most effective safety measures you can make. In the cold north Atlantic, it can be the difference between life and death.



Know your position

Always be aware of your position by carrying navigation equipment such as a GPS, compass and radar.



Check the weather and ice conditions

You must always monitor and respect the weather, always checking it before each departure. While at sea, weather conditions can change quickly resulting in reduced visibility, rough seas, icing, extreme ice pressure and pounding. Also, shifting winds can cause ice movement, which can block your path back to port. Open boats should immediately return to port at the earliest sign of deteriorating weather conditions. If in doubt, don't go out.

