

ABANDON SHIP!

All crew members should be familiar with the abandon-ship plan, which should be rehearsed prior to any extended, off-shore voyaging. The odds of survival greatly increase if you can make it through the first few minutes of the emergency evacuation. Here is a basic rundown of the sequence of actions to take:

- Fire flare(s).
- Turn on EPIRB(s).
- Call Mayday (on VHF, SSB, Satphone).
- Gather gear (ditch bag, other usable gear).
- Check/secure life raft painter.
- Launch life raft.
- Short-scope painter and inflate the life raft.
- Tie raft alongside vessel (provided this is safe).
- Transfer crew from boat to life raft.
- Cut painter and paddle clear of distressed vessel.
- Check crew and deal with any medical issues.
- Skipper should calm crew and set up structure.
- Review raft instructions.
- Bail water taken on—keep watch—inflate raft as needed—inventory gear—catch/make water
- Begin signalling for help.

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All the rafts we tested, like this Elliot SOLAS model, have lines or webbing to assist one person in righting a capsized raft.

