

# Lifeboat Launch and Recovery Checklist

This checklist is not exhaustive and should be used in conjunction with the manufacturers' recommendations and the ship's onboard company procedures. It is based on an analysis of common faults in accidents and from multiple guidance sources within the industry.

**Note: It is strongly recommended that a support craft, such as the vessel's rescue boat, is standing by during a lifeboat drill. The launching and recovery procedures for a rescue boat are similar to those of a lifeboat and, therefore, the hazards are common to both.**

Great care should be taken to ensure that the lifeboat and the rescue boat are launched correctly.

The release mechanism should only be activated when the craft is safely waterborne.

Item	Checked
<b>Section 1: Planning before equipment checks are carried out</b>	
Are all certificates available, correctly issued and dated? <i>(certificates of approval must be available for each appliance and individual piece of equipment)</i>	
Have manufacturers' manuals been consulted regarding the safe use of equipment?	
Are the shipboard maintenance and training records up to date?	
Has a risk assessment and/or permit to work been created for the drill? <i>(consider when the risk assessment was last reviewed)</i>	
Confirm that the operation will not conflict with any other critical activity such as bunkering, enclosed space entry or diving operations.	
Are sufficient personnel available to carry out the tasks safely?	
Have all personnel involved in the operation been briefed on the correct procedures and how to use the equipment safely?	
Can the operation be conducted safely in the prevailing environmental conditions? <i>(launching and recovery should only take place in daylight)</i>	
Have the local authorities been notified prior to the operation?	
<b>Section 2: Equipment checks</b>	
<i>Prior to the operation, a full inspection of all equipment should be conducted. The lifeboat release and retrieval system (LRRS) should be thoroughly inspected by a competent person. Any damage discovered during such checks should be reported to the Master and remedied immediately.</i>	
<i>Prior to entering the lifeboat to conduct checks, personnel should ensure that the lifeboat is properly stowed and secured with all equipment correctly set, such that there is no risk of accidental release while inspecting the lifeboat.</i>	
Is the muster point and embarkation area safe for use? <i>(specifically: adequate lighting, signage and free from any obstructions)</i>	
Is appropriate PPE available for any personnel working at height or near the outboard part of the vessel?	
Has the davit or other launching structures been inspected? <i>(in particular, check for corrosion, misalignment, deformation and excessive free play)</i>	
Are the wires and sheaves free from damage, such as kinks, cracks and corrosion?	
Confirm visually that the hook system, including the mounting arrangement and/or falls, is free from damage, such as corrosion or cracks.	
When systems include tricing pennants, manropes or bowing tackles, are they correctly maintained and ready for use?	
Is a power supply available? Are any stored power and/or hydraulic systems working correctly?	
Are limit or cut-out switches functioning correctly?	
Are all embarkation arrangements, including ladders, guy ropes and access platforms, satisfactorily maintained and in good condition?	



Is the external structure of the survival craft in good condition? <i>(ie free from visible damage and corrosion)</i>	
Are the hooks correctly fitted and the release gear correctly set as per the manufacturer's requirements?	
<b>Section 3, 1st Stage: Operational Checks</b>	
Are the operations being supervised by a competent person? <i>(as defined in SOLAS)</i>	
Do all personnel involved in the operation understand their duties and know who is the competent person in charge?	
Confirm that all personnel in the embarkation area are clear of the lifeboat, davit and falls before operating the equipment.	
Is the ship's side and launch area clear of other craft and free from obstructions?	
<i>The winches and brakes of the system should be tested by lowering the unmanned lifeboat to the water and then returning it to the embarkation level. It is essential to conduct this first test of an unmanned lifeboat to confirm that the entire system is in good working order.</i>	
<i>Throughout the operation, personnel must remain clear of winch machinery and fall wires. Any defects detected during this test should be remedied before any personnel enter the lifeboat.</i>	
<b>Section 4, 2nd Stage: Operational Checks</b>	
Has the lifeboat, including the lifeboat release and retrieval system (LRRS) and the hooks, been confirmed to be in good working order following the test and is all equipment correctly reset again ready for lowering? <i>(check all visual indicators to confirm that the system is correctly set before proceeding)</i>	
Commence embarkation following the correct procedure. <i>(only the minimum number of persons to carry out the operation safely should board)</i>	
Are all personnel correctly seated and wearing correct PPE? <i>(including safety helmets where required)</i>	
Have communications been tested between the lifeboat, bridge and boat deck?	
The lifeboat should be lowered to the waterline in accordance with the procedure laid down in the manufacturer's requirements and the ship's operation procedures.	
<b>Under no circumstances during a drill should the lifeboat be released until it is afloat.</b>	
<b>The utmost care should be taken to ensure that the release mechanism is not accidentally operated.</b>	
Has the lifeboat engine been tested ahead and astern and confirmed as being fully operational?	
<i>When the lifeboat is confirmed as afloat with the engine running, the lifeboat release mechanism may be operated on the order of the competent person in charge.</i>	
<i>Personnel are at risk of contact with the falls and hook arrangements at this stage and extreme caution should be exercised.</i>	
<b>Section 5: Recovery</b>	
Manoeuvre the lifeboat to the falls and confirm that the falls have been reattached correctly.	
Has the competent person in charge confirmed that the lifeboat hooks and the on-load release system are correctly reset?	
Check all persons are seated, secured and wearing their full PPE before the lifeboat is retrieved.	
<i>Once it is confirmed that the hooks are correctly secured, the lifeboat can be retrieved to the embarkation deck. Personnel should take great care when disembarking the lifeboat.</i>	
<i>The lifeboat should then be stowed securely and prepared for immediate use as per the manufacturer's and company operational procedures.</i>	
<i>It should be confirmed that the lifeboat release mechanism remains correctly set. This concludes the drill.</i>	