

## PREPARATION FOR SAILING IN HEAVY WEATHER

This may mean a Force 5 for a small family cruiser with inexperienced crew or a Force 8 for a well found large yacht and a strong experienced crew.

1. Obtain full weather forecast and be aware of weather changes pending and possibility of crossed seas from large wind shifts.
2. Plan passage so that ports of refuge are not on lee shores and away from tidal races, wind over tide situations and areas near shoals where the waves are refracted.
3. Issue sea sickness pills.
4. Charge batteries.
5. Remove mainsail, and stow in bag below decks, secure boom to deck, set up forestay for storm jib, if appropriate. Rig trysail.
6. Remove dodgers, fold or remove sprayhood.
7. Check all portlights, scuttles are fully closed. Fit or have ready ventilator covers. Attach hatchway and window storm screens. Fit dorade blank covers. Block hawsepipe with cork or plasticine.
8. Prepare in position any drag devices (sea anchor or warps) and associated gear as it may be difficult and dangerous to open cockpit lockers during storm.
9. Close all seacocks, pump heads through. Place a sign by engine starter button to say that engine inlet seacock is closed.
10. Plot position and, if a survival situation is anticipated, report position and intentions to Coastguard if within range. Keep a towel by the chart table to help keep charts dry. Continue to log the barometer reading regularly.
11. Check security of all gear below, particularly heavy items such as tool kits and batteries.
12. Put on appropriate heavy weather clothing.
13. Check grab bag is ready. Pack spare clothing, bedding, matches, lavatory paper, food, water, hand held VHF, spare flares, 1st Aid kit, TPAs and any other important items in heavy duty polythene bags if not already in grab bag.
14. Pump bilges. Check handles are secured close to pump with a lanyard.
15. Put washboards into position, check security lanyards. Consider rigging a rope lattice within cockpit.
16. Check security of all lockers and drawers down below. Tape up all lockers without positive locking arrangements. Rig lee cloths in saloon berths.
17. Check cockpit and anchor well drains are free. Use, if necessary, dinghy pump to blow debris clear.
18. Check all deck gear is secure, particularly: anchor, spinnaker pole, liferaft, winch handles, man overboard recovery gear. Check floating lights work.
19. Check halyards are free and well secured. Frap or secure all spare halyards.
20. Check navigation lights, hoist radar reflector if not permanently fixed. Check VHF, jackstays.
21. Stow inflatable dinghy below.
22. Consider changing gas cylinder and changing torch batteries where necessary.
23. Make up sandwiches and thermos of hot drinks.
24. Give everyone a good meal.
25. Secure all loose items below.
26. Position bagged sails to provide soft landing for crew.
27. All to know where grab bags, sharp knife are located, remind of need for good look out and knowledge of MAYDAY procedures.
28. Check location of rigging cutters, check lanyard is secure.
29. Establish watch system, if not already operating. No more than 2 hours on watch, depending on weather. Of duty watch to get as much rest as possible, warm waterproof clothing close to hand.
30. Check linkage on wheel steering, if wheel fitted.
31. Complete engine check.
32. Brief everyone

IF IN DOUBT DO NOT PUT TO SEA

**By Sticky Stapylton:** [instructor@sail-help.co.uk](mailto:instructor@sail-help.co.uk) - [www.sail-help.co.uk](http://www.sail-help.co.uk)

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