

WE SHIPWRECKED! NOW WHAT...

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The Greek Life Saving Academy - E. N. AK ® present in shipwrecks feels responsible to give some information to the public, regarding the steps a passenger should take if caught to the hazardous situation of a shipwreck.

The chapter «SHIP RESCUE » is too long and it is impossible to fill in an article, nevertheless can some vital steps can be described that might prove critical for the rescue of one's life.

Steps are divided in two major categories:

1. what we do onboard the ship while the incident occurs and what when we abandon it...
2. What we do when in sea (after the shipwreck)

ON BOARD

A wreck can occur because of many different reasons. The duration needed for a ship to be sunk ultimately depends on them.

In a modern ship there is an evacuation plan, where passengers with the guidance of the crew and the indications given in specific parts are led away quickly and safely from the sinking ship.

If the above plan of gathering, leading away and rescuing the passengers works, then there are positive results and probably no casualties.

However, the problem starts when: emergency procedures are not activated or delayed, there is no trained crew to implement a concrete plan of abandonment and finally all or part of the means of rescue of the ship are not operational because of maintenance,

some or all of the above can conclude to panic with the unfortunate results we watch on TV.

First victims of this intensity are the older people, mothers with young children, and people with difficulty to move especially people with disabilities – a category of citizens that mainly are being neglected.

IN A WRAP BE CAREFUL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- If the abandonment of the ship is given, try to wear something warm (woollen clothes, etc.) even if the water is not cold.

The human body in the water, even in non-cold water, suffers loss of temperature. It is suggested that you wear many layers of clothes than thick garments, because of the insulation created due to multiple levels.

- Do not move violently, do not push one another, do not yell and generally do not create panic since the situation is already tensed. Those of you who can remain calm try to keep the spirit of others who can not high.

Keep in mind that in such situations, there are people who lose the connection with reality completely, can not take any initiative and stare at the void. It is best to locate them.

On the other hand, some people get extremely frustrated endangering other people and themselves. If you would anything your intervention must be dynamic.

- Usually beneath your seat or in some nearby closets, or boxes, with special markings from the outside, there are lifejackets. There are of orange colour and are put on over the head, around the neck. Put them on immediately, over your the clothes and tighten the straps.

Check if there is a special night light on them along with a whistle. If the life jackets are equipped with these two parts on them, it will easier for the rescuers to locate you during the night.

- Once you enter the lifebuoy, go to the assembly points, as shown by the tables on board and jump on the boats with calm and order, following to the instructions of the crew.

- If there are no boats and crew to help you and you can not find any lifebuoy before you jump to the sea, find something that can float capable to keep you on the sea surface, because swimming will exhaust you.

- Ultimately if must jump overboard select carefully the point of abandonment. Decks are usually high and a fall from this level can kill you instantly. Check the area under the jumping point and make sure it is clear. Never jump on inflatable rescue boat, because it will be probably tore apart and turn upside down.

AT SEA

When at sea you may find yourself, on a life-saving rescue boat or in a life raft (inflatable rescue boat) or at worst, swimming, probably in a wavy sea, having a lifebuoy with you at best. It is of great importance the temperatures prevailing in the region e.g. hot water, cold water.

Nonetheless, whatever the water temperature is, the first and most important you must bare in mind is to move as far as possible from the sinking ship since there danger of sunk down along with it.

Now the hard part!

- If the water is cold, there is a small chance that you will survive. In order to increase that chance roll your legs close to your body making yourself look like a ball. The lifebuoy helps your head to keep out of the water. Do not try to swim to the nearest shore, unless it is extremely close. It's easy to miscalculate distances.

- If you try to swim the only thing you manage to do is to freeze much more quickly even if the best swimmer ever born. Chances are you will never make to shore.

If you stay still, you will increase the duration of staying alive hence increasing the probability to be found by the rescuers.

- Stay away from oil spots if any.

- Be careful of the tides because can throw you on to rocks. If you can not avoid them use your feet as springs towards them. Statistics show that dozens of victims that survived a shipwreck, eventually died on rocks from the frenzy of waves of the sea.

- If you are at sea without anything to hold on, do the following.

Use self rescue methods: In this case create a lifebuoy only with the help of your trousers. Simply remove it, tie the lower parts and pull up the zipper. Bring them behind your head and hold open to the waist opening. Pull them down fiercely to the water hence holding air inside them. Then tighten the waist which is under the water now and hold on tight. Repeat the procedure when necessary. Be caution of losses in temperature.

- If there are around boats, swim closer and board on them. Ask if there is free space on them, knowing of course the panic and intensity of the moment. A boat can be easily overturned, with bad results eventually for everyone. If there are is not any space left on the raft hold on the sides.

- If you do not have a rescue boat near you, gather around with others hold hands and bring your bodies as together as much as possible creating cyclical groups. This action will maintain the temperature of all bodies high enough and for longer period

- If you are on a boat and hit someone who can not climb up on the raft, help them as follows:

Two of you put your hand under their armpits and pull them out of the water. Be careful to maintain balance on the raft and not to have people moving on one side only because the raft will turn over.