

Make sure you are properly equipped before going on the water.

For [Pleasure Vessels](#) of less than 13.7 metres in length there are no statutory requirements for safety equipment other than those required under SOLAS V.

However, it is essential that you properly equip your boat prior to going on the water and that you ensure that the craft is suitable for its intended use. All equipment should be checked regularly for wear and tear or damage.

You will require different equipment for day boats and boats with eating and sleeping facilities. It is essential that you take the time to learn how each item is used.

Some equipment is [mandatory for Pleasure Vessels of 13.7m in length and over which are classified in the Merchant Shipping Regulations as Class XII vessels](#).

Owners have a choice whether to:

1. comply with the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Small Craft) Regulations 1998 and the Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances For Ships Other Than Ships Of Class III To VI (A)) Regulations 1999; or
2. comply with the exemptions to those regulations as published in [MGN 538](#).

As compliance with the exemptions is the more practical option, it is this option that the table below is based on. However, the table only provides an overview and should not be used as a basis for compliance with the exemptions.

N.B. Vessels which are not being used within the definition of a pleasure vessel must comply with the relevant codes of practice.

The following list is not exhaustive, but together with the information on the website should provide a basis for equipping your boat.

The table uses the following key:

M = Mandatory

R = Recommended

D = at your Discretion

O = Read information page for alternative options

* = Varies with area of operation

^ = Varies with type of boat ^ = Varies with type of boat

Key: M = Mandatory R = Recommended D = at your Discretion O = Read information page for alternative options * = Varies with area of operation ^ = Varies with type of boat	Pleasure vessels up to 13.7m in length	Pleasure vessels 13.7m in length and over
Radar reflector	<u>M*</u>	<u>M*</u>
Lifesaving Signals	<u>M*</u>	<u>M*</u>
Navigation lights, day shapes & sound signalling equipment	<u>M^</u>	<u>M</u>
A lifejacket (or buoyancy aid^) for everyone on board	<u>R</u>	<u>M*</u>
Safety lines	R^	R
Kill cord & spare	<u>R^</u>	<u>R^</u>
Information & communications:		
Maritime Radio (e.g.VHF)	<u>R*</u>	<u>M*</u>
MF / HF radio	R*	<u>M*</u>
SSB radio and / or Satellite telephone	R*	D*
LW Radio (to receive BBC Radio 4 shipping forecast)	R*	R*
Navigation and collision avoidance:		
Chart(s), Almanac, Pilot Book	R^*	R*
Hand Bearing Compass	R^*	R^*
Fixed steering compass (lit for boating at night)	R^*	R^*
Drawing instruments for navigation (e.g. plotter & dividers)	R^*	R^*
Binoculars	R^*	R^*
Echo sounder	R^*	R^*
Log (for monitoring distance travelled)	R^*	R^*
GPS / Chart Plotter	R^*	R^*
NAVTEX	R^*	R^*
Automatic Identification System (AIS)	D	D
Radar	D	D
A powerful torch (for collision avoidance) or handheld white flares	R	R
Emergencies:		
Fire fighting equipment	<u>M*</u>	<u>M</u>
Distress flares	<u>O</u>	<u>M*</u>
Liferaft and grab bag	R^*	<u>M*</u>
Equipment to deal with a man overboard (life ring, dan buoy etc.)	R^	<u>M</u>
Bucket (strong with lanyard) folding buckets are not recommended	R	<u>M*</u>
406 MHz EPIRB / PLB	<u>R^*</u>	<u>R*</u>
First aid kit	<u>R</u>	R
SART / AIS SART	D*	D*
Emergency tiller (for wheel steered boats)	R^	R^

Equipment to deal with water ingress (Bailer, Bilge Pump, Bungs)	R	R
Emergency VHF aerial for fixed VHF	R^	R^
Other important equipment:		
Boarding ladder	R^	M
Barometer	R*^	R*^
Anchor & cable / warp	R	R
Winch / anchor windlass handle	D*	D*
Lock windlass / bridge key	D*	D*
Propeller guards and rope cutters	D	D
Storm sails (for sailing yachts)	R*^	R*^
Tools and spares (engine, electrics, rig, sails etc)	R^	R^
Bosun's chair or equivalent (for sailing yachts)	R^	R^
Tender	R^	R
Spare fuel (in appropriate storage)	R	R
Waterproof torch(es)	R*^	R*^
Mooring line(s)	R	R
Fenders	R*^	R*^
Mooring pins and mallet	R*^	R*^
Tow rope	R	R
Knife	R	R
Boat hook	R	R
Sea anchor & / drogue	D*	D*
Pump & puncture repair kit (for inflatable boats)	R	R
Alternative means of propulsion (oars, outboard engine etc.)	R	R
Ship's Log Book	R*	R*
Accurate clock or watch	R	R