Lesson Plan – 4.3-2 Veering down	Date: 14/2/18 Mark Harker Cowes LTA / Helm

AIM:

To give crew an understanding of the RNLI's policy on veering down; when it is deemed to be the preferred option to get to a casualty; safety considerations and hazards.

Training Afloat –

- Briefing of crew once the anchor is secured to the sea bed
- Clear communication of roles and responsibilities of crew
- Preparing to veer down (raising engine; dipping pole, communications and safety)
- Carry out veering down in a controlled and low risk environment
- Recovery of casualty and commence recovery of anchor line
- Refer to anchor lesson plan for final stages

Training Shoreside –

- How veering down impacts the procedure for anchoring
- Considerations of why to veer and hazards
- When recovering line , what are the dangers
- How to recover through waves by recovering & hold, recovering & hold

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Safety

Importance of visors being down whilst lines under load; not wearing ring; communications; not putting lines underload until hands completely clear. Communication!!

Preparing to Veer down

The decision to veer down should only be made when it is seen as the most appropriate and safest method to reach the casualty. In many instances it may be much easier to take the boat in forwards, however if the casualty is on rocks or a beach with waves pushing on to them, then taking a lifeboat in forwards is dangerous and the helm will not have full control of the vessel. By veering down, the lifeboat remains head to sea, the anchor line acts to stabilise the vessel and stop it from pushed onto the hazards. The lifeboat can then be moved towards the casualty in a controlled manner astern.

In these situations the waves and sea state may well be unclear as waves approach from various angles making it hard to read the sea. In these situations there are hazards of the boat becoming beam on the the wave, being pushed on to hazards and crew thrown overboard. The veering down method seeks to minimise this risk. The crew will be working with lines that are under huge amounts of tension throughout.

Veering down

In accordance with the SOP , crew will directed by the helm to one of a number of roles.

1. At the bow, responsible for the deployment of the anchor line
2. at the stern, using the dipping stick to keep a check on the depth. note that due to cavitation from the props, this may give false readings on the depth sounder.
3. On VHF relaying updates to the coastguard or other assets.
4. The helm will be responsible for overall coordination and driving the boat throughout

All crew have a responsibility to keep a visual lookout for hazards and other crew welfare.

Recovery

Unlike with normal anchor recovery, the helm cannot simply remove all power from the engines to allow the line to be recovered. In confused seas , this would render the lifeboat at risk of capsize or hitting hazards.

While the engines are astern the line is under pressure and stretched to its max length of an additional 25%. The helm will announce he is preparing to temporarily reduce power; once this happens the lifeboat will spring forwards as the line shortens, allowing the crew member in the bow to recover 1 to 2 metres and make off (shouting made off once secure and hands free). the helm will then put the power back on stabilising the lifeboat and stretching the line. The idea is to repeat this from the moment the lifeboat comes to the crest of a wave and powering up just before the next wave hits.

NB - This process is time consuming and tiring for crew members which presents its own risk. If necessary, and while the boat is made off the crew member can be swapped round.

If the recovery becomes too hazardous or if the condition of the casualty is such that an urgent evac is necessary, then the line will be cut allow the lifeboat to leave quickly. In this situation once the line is cut it will spring forwards and then be naturally taken with the tide (ie to the left). The lifeboat should exit the location to the right, reducing the chances of the props getting fouled in the line.

Reference Material:

SOP - Veering Down 85

Video Clips -

Horizon Guidance -