

Lesson Plan – 4.6-1 Towing	Date: 30/1/18 Mark Harker Cowes LAT / Helm

AIM:

To give crew an understanding of the RNLI's policy on towing and to discuss the factors which determine decisions to tow.

Training Afloat –

- Pre two briefing
- Arriving on scene - considerations
- Briefing Crew
- Putting crew on the casualty vessel (inc equipment to be taken & considerations)
- Setting up for a tow
- Passing the line across
- Rigging an astern tow (on ILB and Casualty Vessel)
- Importance of communications throughout
- Positioning of crew & comms to coastguard
- Monitoring line and adjustments
- Preparing for alongside tow
- transferring to alongside tow
- entering river and marinas
- preparing for mooring & communications
- Derigging a tow

Training Shoreside –

- Discuss how a briefing should take place and what needs to be communicated
- How to prepare for a tow
- Lines , locking off , bollard , sequence

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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.

Types of tow: Astern and Alongside

Astern: Performed generally in open sea although can be used in long wide channels, but you may need to shorten the tow. This is safer as the casualty is placed at a distance from the lifeboat.

Alongside: Approaching/entering a narrow channel or marina. Offers more manoeuvrability & control.

Astern Towing

Arriving on scene

Advise the coastguard that you are on scene and will notify them of your intentions

Once an initial assessment has been made it may be decided to place a crewmember on the casualty vessel to make further assessments; deal with medical emergencies or to assist in setting up the tow. Any crew member leaving the ILB should take a handheld radio, (Callsign Cowes Alpha) the first aid bag, first aid check cards (Present in each ILB Life Jacket) and a knife. Once the crew member is aboard the vessel the lifeboat is removed from alongside the vessel.

If a tow is required, an assessment must be made on the way the casualty is laying in the water. Consideration must be taken if the boat is laying beam on with a loss of power and no sea/ground anchor or head to sea with sea/ground anchor deployed. This will affect the way you approach the casualty.

1. The helm advises the crew to which side the tow is to be rigged and passed to the casualty.
2. The helm approaches the casualty and the crew passes the tow line (by hand / thrown/ throwline).
3. The crewman on board receives the line and passes it under the stanchions, through the fairlead of the vessel and secured to the vessel. Important to fix to a strong point, and to agree with the vessel owner as they will take responsibility for any damage)
4. Once the line is fixed and safe to do so, the helm then positions the Lifeboat forward and slowly takes up the tow, the line must be secure on the bollard. Once under tension the lifeboat proceeds at the hull speed of the casualty vessel. If paying out the line the crew member should advise the helm of the last 5 metres counting down prior to tension. If the line goes in the water then crew should call this out and state where the line is.

When approaching the harbour, the helm may wish to shorten the tow rather than place in an alongside tow. When nearing the berth, the vessel can then be placed into the alongside position.

Alongside Towing

Contact the harbourmaster to advise that the lifeboat is bringing a vessel under tow, advise of intentions of where to moor the casualty vessel up. If necessary seek permission of the harbourmaster as to where to place the vessel if no mooring. Where the vessel is compromised it is a must to advise the Harbour master in advance and obtain permission before entering the river.

1. Determine which side to place the vessel in an alongside tow, by assessment of the berth they are to be placed.
2. The lifeboat is angled to allow the crew to retrieve the tow line from the back of the 'A' frame, ensuring they are secure when kneeling on the sponson. Use a second crew member to assist if manning levels allow.
3. Once they have the line, it is walked forwards to the bow of the lifeboat, ensuring to coil the **excess line** so it is **not on the deck** whilst the helm slowly positions the boat alongside the casualty vessel.
4. Once forward the line is passed through the bow fairlead ensuring there is some slack to allow the stern line to be attached.
5. The line from the fairlead is then attached to the opposite cleat (to the casualty vessel) in the bow, ensuring it is secured using the lazy end of the line.
6. The line is then secured to the nearside cleat ensuring a few meters of slack is left in between and the lazy end of the rope is used to secure the turns. This ensures that both sides of the lines can be adjusted as they are not under load.
7. The line from the second cleat in the bow is passed back to the casualty vessel secured abroad and then passed back to the lifeboat ready to be secured on the bollard. At this point the crew member then notifies the helm who engages the engines forward and turns slightly away from the casualty vessel to bring the sterns together. The stern of the casualty vessel should be level with the lifeboat bollard giving the engines clearance for manoeuvrability. At this point the line can be secured on the bollard.
8. All other lines can now be tightened.
9. A GP line is then attached to the casualty vessel midships and secured at the stern lifting eye with a Round turn and 2 half hitches on the bight.

At any point from 5 onwards the helm can commence the tow to avoid a dangerous situation. example being that of shipping lanes, hitting buoyage or going aground.

Preparing to moor

On approach to the mooring, casualty vessel mooring lines should be made ready and fenders put out. As the helm is unable to see the other side of the casualty vessel as it comes alongside the pontoon, a crew member should countdown the final few feet.

As the bow touches the pontoon the forward crew member should step off and make secure; once hands are clear they communicate loud and clear that its secure. The helm will then put the lifeboat engines astern to push the casualty vessel stern into the pontoon, allowing it to be made fully secure.

Lastly, once all kit has been transferred back to the lifeboat with crew and the helm has given the instruction, the tow can be derigged. This is done in reverse of how it was set up. Lines are then stowed back on the reel and in the GP pouch, tow bar fixed up.

Reference Material:

SOP -4-6-01

Video Clips -

Horizon Guidance -