

	TIME PERMITTING – ACTION TO BE TAKEN (NOT NECESSARILY IN ORDER)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sound the Abandon Ship alarm signal.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Muster crew and passengers and determine all accounted for and dressed in warm clothing/immersion suits, and life jackets donned correctly. NB: Lifejackets not to be donned if preparing for abandonment by freefall boat!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Broadcast DISTRESS MESSAGE. Establish contact with relevant MRCC, and shipping in the vicinity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare lifeboat(s) and life rafts for launching. Collect SART's, EPIRB's, emergency VHF sets and batteries, extra rations and blankets.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjust vessels course to provide the safest lee for launching of lifesaving craft. Clear of breaking waves, burning oil, smoke or toxic vapours etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stop engines. Switch on deck lights at night.
<input type="checkbox"/>	EVALUATE THE NEED TO ABANDON SHIP. Abandonment should only take place as a last resort!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish the best time, manner and means of abandoning ship.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Order Abandon Ship.

	CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR ABANDONING SHIP
1.	The decision to abandon ship is the responsibility of the Master . The order to abandon ship may only be given by the Master . Should the Master be incapacitated and unable to command the ship, then his/her deputy shall assume command and issue the order.
	ABANDON SHIP ONLY WHEN TOLD TO DO SO BY THE MASTER
2.	The most common cause of death after shipwreck is hypothermia from exposure. Cold is the killer and water robs the body heat much faster than air of the same temperature, so that exposure to cold water can quickly disable someone who lacks adequate shelter. The hazard of hypothermia exists even in tropical waters because the water temperature is below the minimum body core temperature of 32°C necessary to sustain life.
3.	The ship provides the best shelter as long as it is safe to remain on board. Vessels often remain afloat long after their crews have been killed or injured while abandoning ship or died from exposure in the boats. Only when all efforts to save the ship are obviously futile should an organised, calm abandonment take place. If at all possible, the vessel should not be abandoned until positive means of rescue is at hand but be warned that waiting too long to abandon ship is also a mistake that has cost many lives.
	THE NEED TO ABANDON SHIP MUST BE CAREFULLY EVALUATED.
4.	<p>The timing and means of abandoning ship must also be carefully evaluated and a plan of action established that will best safeguard life. Consideration should be given but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability of the vessel/Threat of sinking/Rate of sinking/Threat of capsize or severe listing. • Hazardous cargo/Threat of fire or explosion/Spread of fire/Threat of toxic vapour or smoke • Rate of drift/Threat of grounding in the surf line • Prevailing and forecast weather conditions - daylight or nighttime conditions. • Availability of rescue services (helicopters/lifeboat services/shipping) • Most suitable means of abandoning ship (helicopter/lifeboat(s)/life rafts) • Most suitable time to abandon ship (wait for daylight and/or assistance if safe to do so)
5.	Calls to the vessel's mobile and satellite telephones during the emergency may provide a major distraction to the Master, and consideration should be given to have a dedicated officer on the bridge to handle and filter all communications.
6.	Reference should be made to IAMSAR Manual volume III, Section 4 – Onboard Emergencies.