

Lifesling Customization & Rigging Guidelines



Buying a Lifesling and placing it on the stern of your boat doesn't make you any safer. Of primary importance is knowing exactly which rescue procedure works best on your boat. The standard 3:1 Lifesling Hoisting Tackle works well on most sailboats, but not all. Large boats (over 40 ft) may require more than 65 feet of line or you may want to have a 4:1 configuration for greater mechanical advantage.

In an overboard emergency it is likely that the boat owner may be the victim. By practicing and training your crew, the odds are maximized for any and all crew to be able to execute a successful rescue.

CUSTOMIZING THE HOISTING TACKLE:

Lifesling® Attachment to the Boat: Make sure the slings short line is secured to the boat. Attach the sling to the inside of the stern rail.

Identifying the Top & Bottom Blocks: The top block is an all purpose fiddle block. You may want to write on it "TOP", so any user can identify it. The bottom block has a 4" carabiner attached to it.

Using the Halyard: Make sure the halyard can be reached by a crew or provide another lifting line like a spare halyard or topping lift. Rig the tackle and mark place on the halyard with tape or a black magic marker, when the block is 10 ft. above the deck.

Length of the hoisting line: Rig the Block and Tackle. Clip the carabiner close to the cleat that will be used to tie off the MOB. This may be near the cockpit if there is no midships cleat. Lead the fall line back to a fairlead and put a few wraps on a winch. If the line is too short you will need to buy a line which is longer than the standard of 65 feet.

Thickness of the hoisting line: If the boat has self-tailing winches make sure the line fits the winch to provide a secure grip.

Fair leads: The fall line will usually be led back to the cockpit through a jib car, but each boat has its own requirement. You may want to use a dedicated fairlead, snap or swivel block. A normal lead to the winch will help prevent an override. With no self-tailing winches you can optionally install a jam cleat in the cockpit.

Storing the Block and Tackle Line: If you store the tackle in the Lifesling bag there is a chance it may go overboard with the sling. Wherever you store it TAPE A NOTE inside the cover of the sling so others can find it. Mark the tackle so it is easily identified and include it as a part of any new crew's orientation on your boat.

Packing the Block and tackle: Remember to "two-block" the tackle, to prevent tangling and twisting. Flake the line into the storage bag and put the blocks on top.

Yacht Name. The boat name should be marked on all portable safety equipment, including the LIFESLING.

For more information see: [Running a Clinic](http://www.ussailing.org/Safety/Studies/lifesling_clinic.asp) http://www.ussailing.org/safety/studies/2001_bc1.htm

CUSTOMIZING THE LIFESLING

Bowline: Check out the size of the bowline on the sling to determine if a rescuer would be able to easily reach it from the deck when attaching the carabiner. The victim's head & shoulders will be lifted out the water when tied off. So the bottom of the sling should just be touching the water. Retie the bowline, if necessary, and secure the ends of the knot with tape or whip stitches as polypropylene line may slip.

Length of Retrieval/Trailing Line. Standard length is 150 feet. This should be approximately three times the length of the boat. If a boat has a wide turning radius a longer length of line may be required. Boats with a tighter turning radius may have to use a shorter length of line to keep from turning into the line before it encircles the victim.

Overhand Knots. It is recommended that the owner tie overhand knots in the LIFESLING retrieval line starting at the end of the bowline at nine inch intervals for several feet to a point which is above the lifelines. This enables remaining crew to have grab points for manually pulling the victim up out of the water. It also serves as a warning to the victim that the bowline loop and LIFESLING are approaching as the trailing line is pulled past them.

Water Activated Light. The ACR Automatic HemiLight is recommended. It should be attached to the inside of the strap near the towing loops or D rings for the retrieval/trailing line on the front of non inflatable LIFESLINGs.

SOLAS Reflective Tape. It is recommended that reflective tape be wrapped completely around the front of the bollards/sides about 2 inches behind the D Rings or towing loops.

Thigh Strap. A LIFESLING can be modified with the addition of a thigh strap to allow for horizontal hoisting of unconscious victims. See additional instructions for using the Lifesling thigh strap.

Packing the Lifesling: Flake the retrieval line into the center pocket in the bag, then put the sling in. Especially remember to do this after purchasing the sling. Also, add a note in under the cover that describes where the hoisting tackle is stored.

CREW ORIENTATION: Review the procedure with the crew at the dock, before doing a rescue.

- The specifics of your hoisting mechanism. How to use it, where it is stored.
- Demonstrate what the sling looks like and emphasize that if a crew member goes overboard they should grab the Lifesling or its line, even if they are holding onto other floatation. They should put an arm thru the yoke until forward motion stops. Demonstrate how to put the sling on and that they may want to be towed backwards.
- Consider having a MOB bag in the storm locker which contains;
Extra PFD (non-automatic inflatable) , two tether lines. Include Instructions for:

○ Usage of the MOB button.	Usage of the VHF radio.
○ What to say when you call for help.	Description of the boat.
○ How to determine where you are.	Where the tackle is stowed and how to rig it.