



Safety Thursday Series Issue 4

June 7, 2012

Life Rafts (Life Rafts vs. EPIRB)

Last year a boat could have raced with a Life Raft or an EPIRB/PLB and been in compliance with the MSR. This year the MSR requires a boat to race with an EPIRB/PLB, and Life Rafts are strongly recommended but not required.

Why Life Rafts are strongly recommended:

- July Lake Michigan water temperatures can be as low as 50 degrees!
- In the event of an emergency on your boat that requires assistance from a shore based rescue unit, the further offshore your boat is, the greater the response time!
- During the race and depending on your position in with the fleet, other boats may not be nearby and able to lend emergency assistance.
- While delivering your boat to the start or home after the finish of the race, chances are greater that there won't be boats nearby to lend assistance in an emergency.

If you decide to sail with a life raft, here is a partial list of key points to consider and questions have answered by you and your life raft supplier:

- Life raft rated capacity should accommodate your entire crew.
- Overall size and weight of the raft and the ability to maneuver it in an emergency. (if you have a large number of crew, you might consider having two smaller rafts instead of one large one)
- Do you want the raft to have a canopy?
- What items to store in raft's emergency grab bag?
- Where to stow the raft so it can be quickly deployed yet not impede the safe operation of your boat?
- Is it better to purchase or rent a raft?
- When was the last time the raft was recertified? (Most manufacturers recommend that this be done annually by a trained professional)

A life raft and an EPIRB are not substitutes for each other and each product serves a distinct purpose. In the event of a marine emergency, an EPIRB helps increase the chances of a successful Coast Guard rescue. If your boat sinks, a Life Raft increases your chances of survival in the harsh marine environment.

The Race of the Season, The Adventure of a Lifetime, A Destination Like No Other!



Good resources to learn more about Life Rafts:

<http://www.boatus.com/boattech/articles/life-rafts.asp>

Note: The purpose of this article is to highlight some of the Mac Safety Regulations and how your crew can race the Mac as safely as possible. As always, ultimate responsibility for the safety of the crew and the decision whether to race or to stop racing is that of the skipper (RRS4, MSR2). This email is meant as a courtesy only and you should always refer to the Race Documents section of the website for the Notice of Race, Sailing Instructions and Mac Safety Regulations, which govern the race.