

Person overboard (POB) recovery systems

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What is a POB recovery system?

- A system which allows a POB to be retrieved from the water.
- Some systems use a net which is lifted horizontally while the vessel is moving, others are a full recovery system comprising a scoop, scrambling net, basket, rescue frame and rescue dummy while others comprise a compact inflatable life ring stowed in a capsule.
- These systems are suited to sailing vessels, powered vessels and inflatables.
- A recent award winning Australian invention comprises a life ring and flare launching system but it is conceptual at this point and not yet in production. It can launch a life ring up to 150m into the water.

What are the advantages of POB recovery systems?

- Some items available on the market provide a full recovery system suitable for a variety of POB situations, complete with rescue dummy for practice drills.
- Some items maintain the POB in the horizontal position, are portable and have a number of variations available.
- The compact, easy-to-stow and relatively inexpensive life ring style system is heavy enough to throw accurately to the POB but not so heavy as to cause serious injury to the POB.

What are the disadvantages of POB recovery systems?

- Some recovery system are relatively expensive and/or require training for practical application. As such these are more suited to commercial vessels greater than 10m in length.
- Some variations require an on-board powered winch/davit with which to effect a recovery.
- Some systems may be difficult to deploy without sufficient crew to assist.
- Heavy rolling and pitching of a vessel can increase the difficulty of rescue operations even when using these systems.

Indicative costs

- Range from approximately \$75 for the inflatable life ring style to several thousand dollars for the recovery systems.

What is the regulatory status of this technology?

- POB recovery systems are not mandatory for vessels being operated on NSW navigable waters.