

CATCH AND LIFT

Catch and Lift, a unique man overboard solution

Anyone aiming to add a product to the large offering of man overboard solutions available today will have to have a solid reputation in this field. Nevertheless, our attention was immediately drawn to a stand at Boot Düsseldorf. What we noticed was that, where other solutions tend to focus primarily on getting the man overboard alongside the vessel, the Catch and Lift also claims to haul this person onto the deck in one and the same action. Although the video images looked extremely convincing, we still remained a little sceptical. We recognised the problem, but could the solution really be that simple? What better way to find out than in a practical test at sea?







It is only inherent to sailing that things do not always go as planned. This also applied to the day on which the test was performed. Halfway through February, the Port of Scheveningen was enveloped in a thick fog. The Control Tower discouraged us from embarking on unpredictable manoeuvres close to the mouth of the harbour, and safety was the number one priority for the crew of the accompanying boat of the Royal Dutch Rescue Association (KNRM). As a result, we were only able to perform our test within the confines of the piers.

BASIC PRINCIPLE

The basic principle behind the *Catch and Lift* is as ingenious as it is simple. It starts with an action that is familiar to all of us. You throw a flotation device (a sling) with a line attached overboard and encircle the drowning victim in such a way that he is enclosed by the line. Next, the MOB (man overboard) hooks himself to the flotation device and is pulled towards the boat by the crew. However, with the *Catch and Lift* no physical exertion is required to tow the victim towards the boat. Instead, the line is doubled onto itself and is attached to the jib or a side stay by means of a pulley system.





Next, a small sea anchor is thrown overboard which is attached to the other side of the rescue line. While the boat moves forward at a crawl, the parachute of the sea anchor opens and pulls the MOB towards the vessel.

From the moment that the MOB is alongside the vessel, the greatest advantage offered by the *Catch and Lift* becomes apparent. No other procedures or tools are needed to pull the man or woman overboard onto the deck. Nobody - neither the MOB nor the crew - needs to do anything. In one and the same motion, the sea anchor pulls the MOB up towards the position where the pulley is attached to the jib. Merely increasing a little tension on the mainsheet is sufficient to enable the MOB to be comfortably hoisted onto the deck.

As soon as the *Catch and Lift* is taken out of its water-tight case, the numbered parts clearly show the sequence in which they should be used. Provided that you have been informed in advance of the principle behind the *Catch and Lift*, the procedure is completely self-evident, even in a high-pressure situation. It is, however, important that the rescuers



understand that the speed of the boat (not more than 1 or 2 knots) plays a crucial part in determining the pulling power of the sea anchor.

Our warmly dressed model MOB is sent overboard several times - and every time we pull him onto the deck without any effort at all. Just as the German manufacturer claims. Even the only woman aboard is able to get back into the boat, without any assistance whatsoever. Never was any form of physical exertion required during our test.

MAN-ON-BOARD

Although we would have preferred testing the *Catch and Lift* under more difficult circumstances, we were nevertheless impressed by the well-thought-out system. The inventors based their idea on the fact that their solution would have to work just as easily in a stressful as a calm situation. They succeeded wonderfully well in this. The simplicity of the system significantly increases the MOB's chances of a successful rescue. Not in the least because being pulled aboard using the *Catch and Lift* is so easy, but above all because this can be done without any physical exertion being required from the crew.

We are convinced that this method can be applied successfully even under weather conditions with more wind and waves. The only difference would be that the MOB will not be as comfortable when being pulled towards the vessel. The *Catch and Lift* does not differ from any other solutions in that the success of the rescue operation depends on the entire crew being familiar with the procedure and preferably already having practised using it.

However, the *Catch and Lift* is not simply identical to the numerous other products for man over board situations, because it adds to this - in one and the same action - the crucial element of Man-On-Board. It is obvious that such a simple MOB solution will appeal not only to male as well as female crew members, but also to an even wider audience.

Photo: © Zilt



Video



With thanks to the Zeezeilschool Scheveningen sailing academy and the Royal Dutch Rescue Association (KNRM) Station in Scheveningen.

The distributor in the Netherlands of the Catch and Lift is [Bomarine](#).