



## US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee

### Advisory: Recommendations Regarding Use of the Lifesling at Night

US Sailing's Safety at Sea Committee tested a range of MOB recovery techniques at an MOB Symposium in June 2023 off Newport, RI.

One important technique reinforced at those sessions is to use the Lifesling for rescues, if possible, as that tool decreases chances of the boat running over the MOB. However, we also found the Lifesling, as sold, requires some simple improvements, especially in nighttime MOB rescues.

Due to the importance of these enhancements to safety, US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee is putting forward this **Advisory** to Race Organizers and yachtsmen planning on overnight offshore racing or cruising. There are two recommendations.

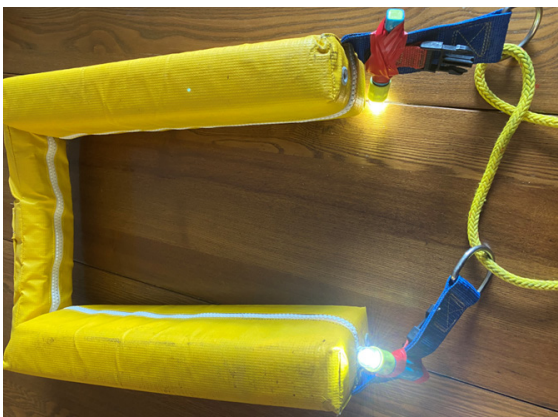
#### 1. Lights

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The US Sailing Safety Equipment Requirements specify boats attach a light to the Lifesling. But we found a light simply affixed to the back of the Lifesling facing away from the boat and the MOB is inadequate. Also, there is also a significant risk that a water-activated light can turn on in the storage bag and the batteries will be dead when needed.

We recommend that the Lifesling be equipped with two fixed (non strobe ), manually operated, waterproof white lights at the front end of the sling, facing the towing yacht. One light should point up and the other down since the Lifesling could float either side up. Manual switches must be turned on prior to streaming.

One recommended light is the "UST See-Me Steady-On PFD Light" costing \$12.95/unit and using 2 AAA batteries. They are easily taped onto the straps on the open end of the Lifesling. See photos below.



*One light up, one down*



*Suitable lights*

## 2. Reflective Line.

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At night it is very difficult for the yacht or the MOB to see the Lifesling rope. Since the rope almost always reaches the MOB before the Lifesling, it is critical that the MOB be able to identify and grab the rope then slide back to the Lifesling.

An easy improvement is to affix eight or so, two-inch wide bands of reflective tape on the rope at six-foot intervals, for a distance of fifty feet from the sling end of the Lifesling. You can wrap the tape around the line, or even sew it on for additional holding power.



*Close-up of tape on the line*



*reflects well!*



*SOLAS grade reflecting tape*

**Conclusion:** During the night test, the two fixed white lights lit up the Lifesling, and the reflected light highlighted the tapes sewn onto the Lifesling rope. Handheld lights from the yacht lit up the rope very well. As the yacht circled around the MOB in the water, both the yacht and MOB had an excellent view of the Lifesling and rope.

We give great thanks to Rich du Moulin, of US Sailing's Safety at Sea Committee, and the head of Storm Trysail Club's Seamanship Committee, who devised these lighting improvements to the Lifesling.

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or Rich du Moulin at [rdumoulin@gmail.com](mailto:rdumoulin@gmail.com)

Richard York, Chair, US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee

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<sup>i</sup> The Lifesling is an essential tool for MOB rescues except in the case of an unconscious or injured MOB who cannot get into the Lifesling.

<sup>ii</sup> Fixed lights are better than strobes when judging distances. Both the MOB and yacht can better judge distances to the Lifesling if fixed lights are used.

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