



Maritime SAR APPLICATION NOTES

Subject: Signalling and Location Marking from a Capsized Vessel.
Visual

Introduction:

In the rescue of competitors from the Vendee Globe Challenge where yachts had been capsized and in one case the interior of the upturned hull afforded the only shelter for the yachtsman; two problems arise:

- signalling the location
- communicating with Rescue Aircraft and Vessels

Experience has shown that positive visual location is an important factor in the rescue effort. Once the position of the vessel has been established continuing identification is critical particularly in extremely heavy and broken seas. If the survivor has to remain inside then it becomes very difficult to deploy a strobe marker and not have it foul on equipment or rigging to reach the outside.

Equally difficult is to alert the rescue craft of the presence of a survivor inside, fixed radio equipment would have been disabled, portable VHF would work depending on the hull construction. [Steel hulls and metal mesh would severely attenuate the signal.]

Principle:

The SEE - BLITZ strobe marker has a lens system designed to create a large diffused patch of light when immersed in the sea. Both the float collar and the buoyancy sleeve ensure that the flange of the lens is in contact with water even on the surface to achieve this effect. Divers use the SEE - BLITZ specifically for this "halo" effect, where at a depth of 30 meters (visibility 20 meters horizontal) an area of 50 meters is lit up on the surface.

The same effect can be used to generate a flashing light pattern around the stricken hull enabling observers to differentiate it from the background swell. The aim is to attach a line to the SEE - BLITZ and let it sink below the hull.

Implementation:

Remove buoyancy collar or sleeve from the unit and attach sufficient line to clear hull to a depth of approximately 15 meters.

Once the SEE - BLITZ is in the water it will not matter if the hull is directly above the light the whole area will be illuminate in a pool of light.

Summary:

As the SEE - BLITZ can be carried on the person and therefore not likely to be lost in the wash it can serve as a last resort location marker whilst signalling the presence of a survivor.

The SEE - BLITZ is standard equipment in all ASRK packs dropped to survivors.