

# Risks, Rights & Safety at Sea

**Morocco - Spain**

These informations are for people who are considering to cross the sea between Morocco and Spain. They aim neither at deterring people from, nor at encouraging people to attempt the crossing, but rather at providing objective informations and sharing experiences about risks, rights, and vital safety measures to take at sea.

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## **Emergency Contacts**

Salvamento Marítimo (Spain), (spanish and english):

**(+34) 900 202 202, (+34) 917 55 9 133, (+34) 956 684 740**

Morocco Marine Rescue Organization (arab, french & english):

**(+ 212) 537 625 877**

# WHEN YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE, READ THIS:

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Many boats sink right after departure because they are cheap and in a poor condition. Some capsize because of overload, bad weather or panic on board. Others get lost or run out of fuel and drift away for days or weeks, with passengers on board slowly dying of hunger or thirst. Sometimes rescue services, despite having been called for help, fail in finding the boats because of a lack of clarity in communication. Often other boats at sea do not come to the rescue of migrants in distress even after spotting them. The following information will not make the crossing safe. You might also find yourself in situations in which you can't follow these suggestions. In any case, this flyer gives you ideas about what to expect and how to prepare. When you organize in groups and prepare for the crossing, your influence on decisions can get bigger. This information might save your life.

## **Buy a life vest and supplies**

- Make sure that there are enough life vests on board for everybody! Make sure that it is a life vest of good quality, or at least a „vessie“; your life is worth it! Put them on as soon as your boat is leaving and wear them all the time.
- Take a backpack with you, fill it with a maximum of water and food (such as crackers, tinned food, dates and chocolate marruja). Wrap it all up in waterproof plastic bags. Take it as well for the short route to Tarifa, since you might be not found immediately by the spanish coastguard!
- Wear several layers of clothes fitted for the season, but do not forget to pack warm clothes and a waterproof jacket. Always wear a hat and sunglasses to avoid dehydration.
- Buy something against seasickness from the pharmacy
- You might have very little time to prepare before you get the starting signal, so try to have your equipment ready as complete as possible all the time (one small backpack with everything you need)

## **Make sure that the emergency equipment on the boat is functioning**

- Bring several buckets, or, for bigger boats, a pump in case of water inlet.
- Make sure that there are emergency and warning signals on board! The navigation code imposes orange and red signals. For lack of better, anything likely to attract other peoples' attention can be useful: whistles, plastic bags, mobile phones or camera flashes, etc.

## **Check the navigation and communication equipment**

- The most reliable way you can be found and saved is by GPS. Between Tanger and Tarifa you can use a smartphone with a GPS-application with which you can also call for help, between Nador and Almería you will need a satellite telephone. The batteries should be fully charged and bring spare ones as well. Make sure that someone on board knows how to use them (or learn how to use them yourself), and how to figure out your location with the satellite phone as explained further. A compass can be useful, too, to keep direction.
- Avoid to use your phone as long as you don't really need it!
- When you go with a boat organized by a captain, he might try to take your telephones. Try to negotiate with him so that you can keep them but you will take out the batteries.
- When you travel in a very small boat (very probable if you choose the short route from Tanger to Tarifa), you must protect your telephone against the seawater, by switching it off and wrapping it in waterproof plastic. But make sure you nevertheless can use it during the trip!
- Your mobile phone must be fully charged, and your credit high enough to allow several calls overseas. Use sim-cards of Maroc Telecom or Vodafone Spain, because they will work better on the sea. Between Nador and Almería there is no mobile phone network coverage, you will need satellite telephone.
- **Write down or bring the emergency numbers from this leaflet!**
- Take along numbers of relatives and acquaintances based in Morocco and/or in Europe, and let them know about your trip prior to departure, so that they can call rescue services if they do not hear from you in due time.

## **Check the weather forecast at departure and destination**

- **Check that the weather is good for the next three days** at departure and destination points. Check on internet ([WWW.METEOCONSULT.COM](http://WWW.METEOCONSULT.COM) >> METEO CONSULT MARINE), or by downloading the METEO CONSULT MARINE application on your smartphone. **Take time to make yourself familiar with it!**

## **Do not get on board an overloaded or damaged boat**

- Ask to see the boat before traveling! Try/test it!
- Bring a pump to inflate the boat
- The hull/rubber skin of your boat must be in good condition: No holes, torn or deflated parts! If you carry it to the shore, beware of thorns: use a blanket to protect the rubber skin against them! If the boat is in a poor condition, your life is at immediate risk!
- Check for how many persons the boat you use is made. An overloaded boat is exposed to sinking!
- Make sure there is enough fuel for the double length of the planned trip! Make sure that there are enough paddles, that they are in good condition, and that the people who hold the paddles have a good experience and are strong.
- Do not consume alcohol or any kind of drug!

# AT SEA

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## Precautions during the trip

- Try to document everything that happens, including time and GPS coordinates of any event: can take pictures/film events, or write, if possible. It can help you orientate your boat. Watch out around you for potential collisions!
- Always wear a hat, protect yourself from the cold, and try to keep your clothes as dry as possible.
- Do not eat too much, just enough not to be hungry. Drink little water, regularly. Don't ever drink sea water!
- In case of bad weather, hold on to ropes or any other fix parts of the boat.
- Do everything to keep the balance! Keep a positive and calm attitude. Avoid conflicts at any cost! Any abrupt reaction or any gesture of panic can put yourself at risk: people can fall off the boat, and the boat can capsize.

## In case of danger, call for help

If you are in immediate danger (for example if the sea is too rough, if you broke down or got lost, if someone fell off the boat), call all emergency numbers that you have immediately. Whatever your nationality or legal situation, rescuing people in distress at sea is an unconditional obligation for all captains of all boats around, as well as for coastal states.

If you spot other boats or planes around, ask them for help with all means: through VHF-radio if you have one (make a >>>mayday<<< distress call and also specify your GPS location on channel 16), by launching a distress rocket, by waving clothes, by shouting, whistling, by flashing your mobile phones or any other electronic device.

## Emergency Contacts

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**Red Cross (Spain):**

(+34) 901 222 222

Try to find someone on board who can speak their language or English. Keep calm. Specify to them that: you are in distress, your GPS location, the number of people on board, the nationalities and health conditions of all the passengers, the number of men, women and children, as well as the size, the type and the condition of the boat (any water leaking? Is the engine running properly?). To have access to your position with a Thura-ya satellite phone, proceed as follows: MENU > GPS MANAGER > CURRENT POSITION.

If your batteries and credit allow it, get in touch with your relatives/ acquaintances in Europe or Morocco.

## During rescue: keep calm!

When being rescued by another boat, remain seated and do not make any sudden movement in the boat, this could make it capsize. If you wish to ask for asylum, say it clearly. The captain rescuing you must make sure that you have access to an asylum request procedure if you ask for it, and to take you to a harbour in a safe country where you will not be threatened. When you are intercepted, don't apply resistance, even if it is the Marine Royal of Morocco.

## Someone overboard or sinking

- If somebody falls into the water, stop the boat immediately. Do not lose sight of this person until she has been rescued! Throw a life buoy, life vest or any other floating object next to this person as soon as possible. Do what you can without risking your own live.

- A lonely person in the water with a life vest must float on her/his back. Several people in the water with life vests must tie themselves to each other to balance themselves, and heat each other up, or float on their backs all tied to each other if without life vests.
- When the person is back on board, take his/her clothes off, dry him/her and wrap him/her around in a blanket. If there is no sign of breathing, blow in his/her nose and apply cardiac massage.
- If the entire boat has capsized, try to hang on to it, or to any floating parts.

## ONCE ON THE MAINLAND

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### Asking for asylum

You have crossed a border illegally and are in an illegal situation. But the 1951 Geneva Convention says that you have the right to asylum when you are persecuted for your race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. You can also try to ask for asylum even when you don't belong to one of those categories.

To apply for asylum („asilo“) in Spain you have to go to any police-station or to the immigration-office (oficina de extranjería), and insist on your right to asylum.

You can also get in touch with relevant organisations to seek help and advice:

**CEAR** (Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado)

supports asylum-seekers in the procedure:

(+34) 91 598 05 35 (Madrid), Tel: (+34) 952 601 321 (Málaga/Andalucía)

**UNHCR Spain:** (+34) 91 556 35 03

**For a detailed list of organisations in Europe and information about asylum procedures, visit the following web pages:**

**www.w2eu.info** | <http://w2eu.info/pritings.en.html>

For more information you can contact: [udesmigrants@gmail.com](mailto:udesmigrants@gmail.com) |

facebook: [voix des migrants](https://www.facebook.com/voixdesmigrants) | **www.voixdesmigrants.com**

# ALARM PHONE HOTLINE

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**Alarm Phone Nr.: + 334 86 51 71 61**

THIS NUMBER IS NOT A RESCUE NUMBER!

But an ALARM NUMBER to support rescue operations!

What to do if you are in distress at sea or getting pushed back:

1. Call first the coast guards and tell them about your situation of distress
2. Then call the Alarm Phone
3. Note that we cannot rescue, we do not have boats or helicopters
4. We will make sure that your distress call is noted and acted upon
5. If you are not promptly rescued by the coast guards we will inform the public media and politicians to put pressure on the rescue services.

We know coastguards act quite differently. There are areas where they do their job well and rescue promptly. But refugees also report that they get pushed back by coast guards or are treated violently. When a distress call is received, we will call the coast guards ourselves, and follow up on their response, making known to them that we are informed and 'watching' them. We want to support you in protecting your lives and your right of freedom of movement.

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## Report any death or violation of your rights

If people died on your boat, or if you were in distress and a boat failed in it's duty to rescue you while aware of your situation, you can get in touch with a local organisation defending migrants and demand that your testimony will be heard, or you can **write to [info@watchmed.net](mailto:info@watchmed.net)**

Watch the Med (WTM – [www.watchthemed.net](http://www.watchthemed.net)) wishes to collect your testimony and condemn those facts so that they do not happen again. Try to give as much details as you can, and send any picture or video of the crossing. Your identity will not be revealed, and your testimony will be kept anonymous.

