

INNOVATIONS

Mustang to the Rescue

by Zuzana Prochazka

Here are two safety products from Mustang Survival that are good to consider as part of any boat outfitting because cruising isn't always lazy days and 15 knot beam reaches. One product is designed to keep crew connected to the boat and moving around comfortably, and the other gets help to crew overboard in a hurry.

AUTO HYDROSTATIC INFLATABLE PFD

If you've ever had your inflatable harness go off in the rain or when you take a good wave over the bow, then you know how inconvenient and unsafe that is. You have to get the harness off and secured and rearmed to be useful again. Carbon dioxide inflators with water activated bobbins are great but limited in this application. That's why Mustang Survival created a PFD with a hydrostatic inflator which automatically inflates due to pressure, only when submerged in four or more inches of water.

Hydrostatic inflation technology is used on life rafts and has been in PFDs in Europe for almost a decade, but it just recently received Coast Guard approval in the US. Besides a sleeker, lower profile and more comfortable

design, the advantage of this Mustang PFD is it will not open prematurely due to rain, humidity or spray.

The Auto Hydrostatic Inflatable PFD™ is constructed of heavy duty polyurethane coated nylon, but comes with a comfortable neoprene collar that won't chafe your neck. Instead of the usual Velcro, it features a patented SecureZip™ closure which was designed to keep life preservers of fighter jet pilots from opening prematurely. This means it stays closed during rigorous activity, but breaks out easily for inflation



**THERE IS NOTHING - ABSOLUTELY NOTHING -
HALF SO MUCH WORTH DOING
AS SIMPLY MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS.**

- Water Rat, Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*



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The Auto Hydrostatic Inflatable PFD is USCG approved for recreational use Type II or Type V depending on the model and provides 35 lbs of buoyancy. The inflator status and replacement date are visible through a clear inspection window and there's no need for maintenance except once every five years unless the PFD has been inflated. The CO2 cylinder is actually inside the bladder, which helps avoid corrosion.

The Mustang PFD comes in two versions, one with an integrated harness with D rings for sailors. It also has a place to attach a strobe light and comes with a whistle and SOLAS reflective tape on the bright yellow bladder. There's a backup oral inflation tube as well.

The Auto Hydrostatic Inflatable PFD comes with a one year warranty, retails for \$230 or \$260 for the harness version, and is available at most marine retail stores. The rearm kit sells for \$50 so it's good that it only needs replacement every five years. For more information visit www.mustangsurvival.com.



RESCUE STICK

Mustang Survival has also secured the exclusive licensing rights to market a new throwable rescue device called the Rescue Stick™. The Rescue Stick is a 14" baton that can be thrown to crew who has gone overboard. It inflates just a second or so after it hits the water into a horseshoe shaped collar that provides 24 pounds of buoyancy, which is plenty to keep a conscious adult afloat.

The Stick can be repacked and reused by inserting a new bobbin and replacing the CO2 cartridge which is located in the handle. It comes with a protective case and an optional mounting bracket. It's just shy of a pound so it has some heft for a good toss. The claim is that it can be thrown up to 150 feet, which is three times farther than a typical throw bag. It's more likely you'll toss it about 100 feet with a normal overhand throw, but that's still farther than most other devices and important when rescue time is critical.

The key to the Rescue Stick is practice. Since the Stick has no retrieval line, it is a one-time shot and your ability to throw far enough, and close enough to the person in the water is critical. We winged one into a pool under calm conditions and one off the deck into a harbor with a breeze. Both times, the toss was low and short, hence the need for practice. Also, keep the wind in mind because if the inflated collar catches a stiff breeze, you want it to travel to the target rather than away from it. The good news is that you can practice quite a bit on land until you get the hang of it.


The Rescue Stick retails for around \$160 and the rearm kit sells for \$25. For more information, visit www.mustangsurvival.com.

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