

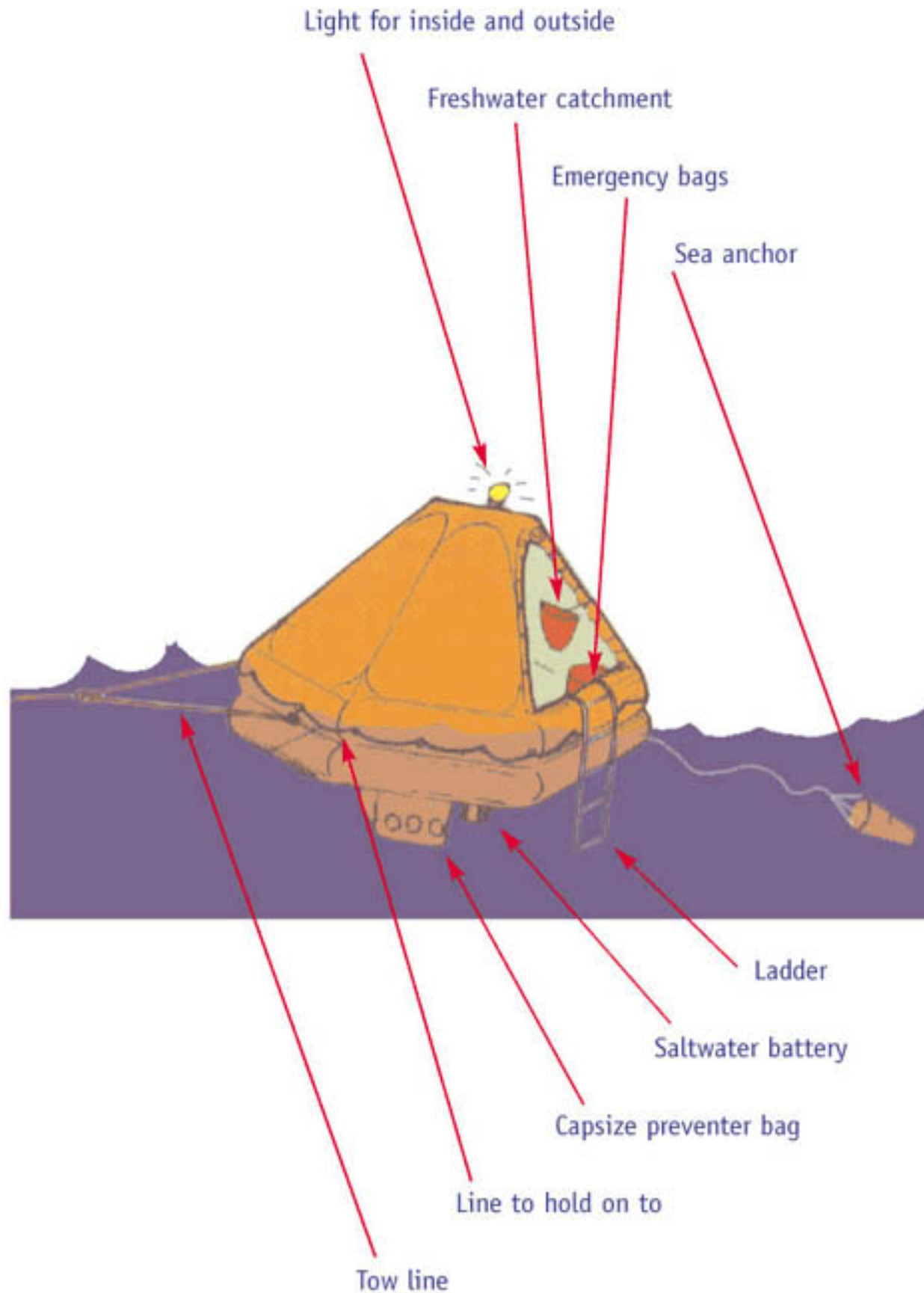


Intro to Our Life Raft
—for the Pegasus Crew and Guests—

i.p., june 2001

Life Rafts in General

Independent from make, brand name or number of persons it holds, every life raft has standard features that are the same. This makes sense because you don't know on what boat with what kind of life raft you will be in the case that you will need to use it.



The Life raft on the Pegasus is a French brand, a Zodiac. It is designed to take 8 adults inside or 16 outside (holding on to the line). In the case that one of the tubes breaks it will still hold half.

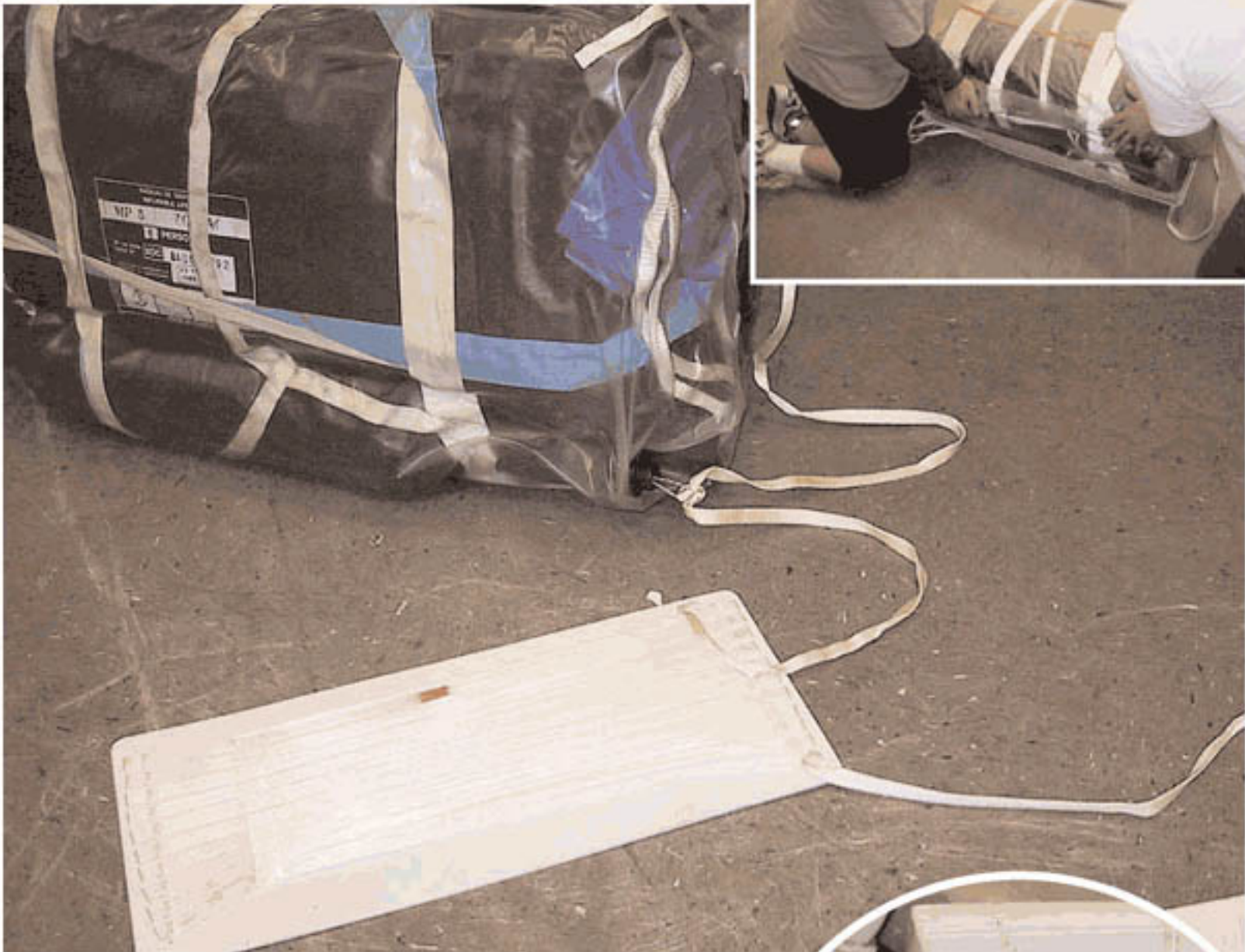


All Packed Up

This is the form of our life raft as we are used to seeing when it is tied on deck.

Two hard plastic shells are tied together with big plastic tape that you would need to cut to open it.

Inside, folded up neatly and packed in a big plastic bag is the actual raft.



How Does it Inflate?

Attached to the raft is a long line (usually 20 ft). The other end should be attached to the boat. Inside the plastic shell there is the biggest part of the line, neatly taped to a piece of cardboard so it will never entangle. When the end of the line is reached, it pulls on the inflator that prompts this big gas bottle (right) to empty itself into the raft and inflate it.

It is so strong that it will burst the tape that holds the shells together, and the plastic bag, and unfold itself.

If you know that you want the raft to inflate close to your vessel, you can shorten the end that is tied to the boat so it doesn't have to go away for 20 ft first.



The Raft has Inflated and We're Hopefully in It

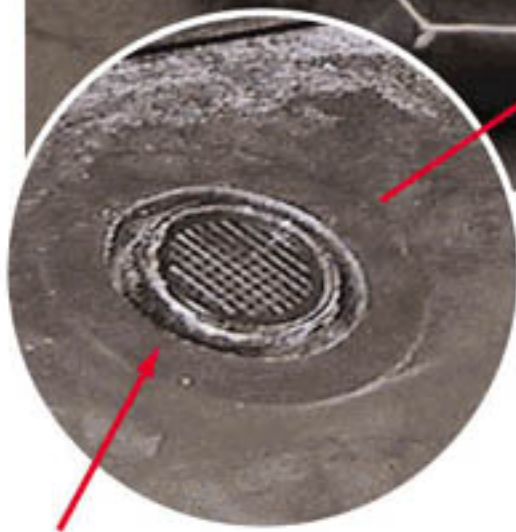
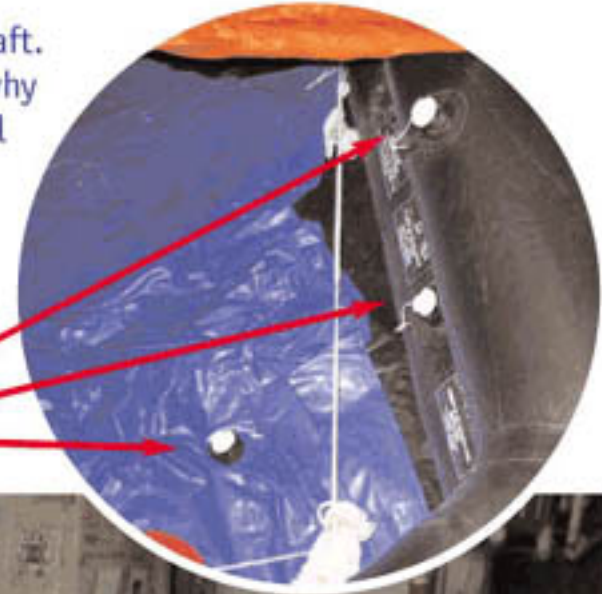
Right after the inflation one might hear a sound of air/gas coming out of the raft. Do not panic, this doesn't mean that there is a leak, usually after all that mighty gas blew in there it is too full and lets out some of it through little overflow valves on the side of the raft (below left).

A good thing to do right away is to blow up the bottom of the raft. This does not happen automatically and it's one of the reasons why there is a pump in one of the bags. Putting air into the floor will insulate the inside of the raft against cold and also sturdy the raft further.

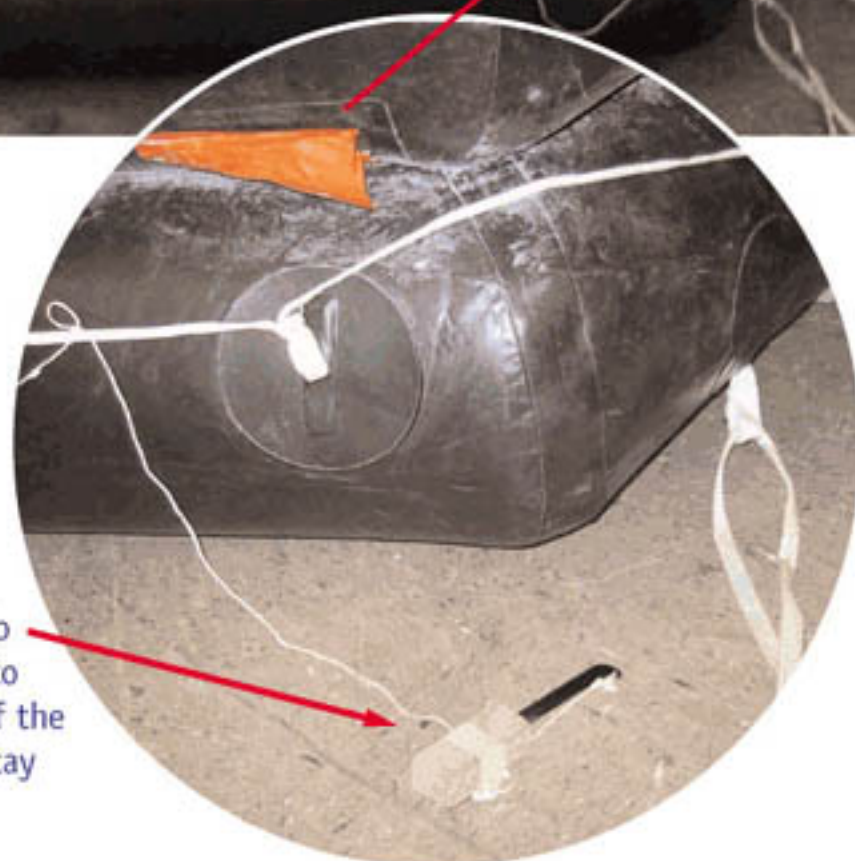
Gas and air shrink and expand with temperature, so when it is cold at night, the raft might need more pumping.

lamp

floor and side valves for pumping



overflow valve



Every life raft has a little knife attached to its outside near the line that connects it to the boat. Only cut this line if necessary. If the boat is not sinking it might be smart to stay close, to be easier spotted from above.

Things on Board the Raft

Inside the raft are certain items that are standard to any raft. They might look different, but they have to be there.

Water rations in several bags (below).

The two nylon bags contain:

1. a pump, a flashlight with battery, hand flares, parachute flares, a patch kit, a whistle
2. a survival at sea book, superdense emergency food, first aid kit, fishing utensils, a log book, and more!



Things Not on the Raft

There is usually no radio or EPIRB in the raft, so those two items should be brought from the vessel if possible.



What's All That Stuff?

Outside attached to the raft is a sea anchor that will slow down drifting and steady the course in a wild sea.

Inside we also have a little ring to throw to someone who hasn't quite made it to the raft yet. There are folding paddles to be able to maneuver around.

Besides the ladder at the entrance there is another set of lines that lead all the way across the floor of the raft from the outside to its back (not shown here). In case the raft inflates upside down, one person can stand on the entrance part of the raft bottom and pull back on those lines to right the raft.



Water Collector

On the outside cover is a little pocket that will collect rain. Its bottom has a little tube attached with a clip to close it. Here you can get the water from the inside.



Attaching (and Detaching) a Raft to (and from) the Vessel

The raft of the Pegasus is attached to the vessel with two safety belt type things. The end of the inflater line is attached to the vessel by a bow line.

Here are three other common ways of securing a raft on deck.

1/
Similar to the Pegasus setup. The raft needs to be manually released. If not it will sink with the boat when the boat sinks.

2/
Here we have a little wire loop attached between the inflater line and the vessel. The raft still needs to be manually released. But in the case that the boat sinks the wire would break once the raft is inflated because it can only hold a certain amount of weight.

3/
Version 3 is the fanciest with a little spring-loaded knife hidden in that black drum that looks like an ice hockey puck. The attachment to the vessel as well as the inflater line are attached to it, and in the event that the boat sinks it will pressure-activate the knife at 2 meters depth (ca. 6 ft) and cut the raft from the boat.

