

SAILBOATS HAVE TWO MAJOR RISKS OFFSHORE - SINKING OR CAPSIZE

There's not much one can do after a sinking - it's purgatory in a liferaft or nothing.

But one can be relatively safe and comfortable after a capsize, providing the boat **has been prepared**

Catamarans are very safe craft due to their stability and unsinkability, their only weak point being the remote possibility of capsize. This can be caused by over sailing the boat, rogue wave action, or there can be a danger if one hull becomes fully flooded.

Over sailing is easy to avoid by any prudent skipper, while rogue waves large enough to threaten a large catamaran are very rare. Flooding a hull is always a possibility, and to avoid any problems in this regard each hull should always be setup with at least three major separate watertight compartments, that are permanent, or can quickly be closed off.

Three such compartments are provided in the F-41 by the Aft Cabin Bunk Bulkhead and Forward Bulkhead. The mast bulkhead is another possibility and serious ocean cruisers would be wise to provide some way of quickly closing off the passage way through this bulkhead, or at least the lower half.

Should a capsize occur, then provided the boat is properly setup for inverted living, it is unlikely to threaten the crew's physical safety. The main steps that should be taken are as follows:

1. Ensure the boat will float as high as possible, and this is achievable by preventing easy water entry into the bow and stern compartments, by using hatch wells or vent tubes, which can be removable for when not needed.

2. Provide an easy and safe way for crew to enter or leave the boat interior from bridgedeck. The standard emergency access hatches provide such access on the F-41. Bridgedeck should have a non-skid finish, and be provided with lashing eyes.

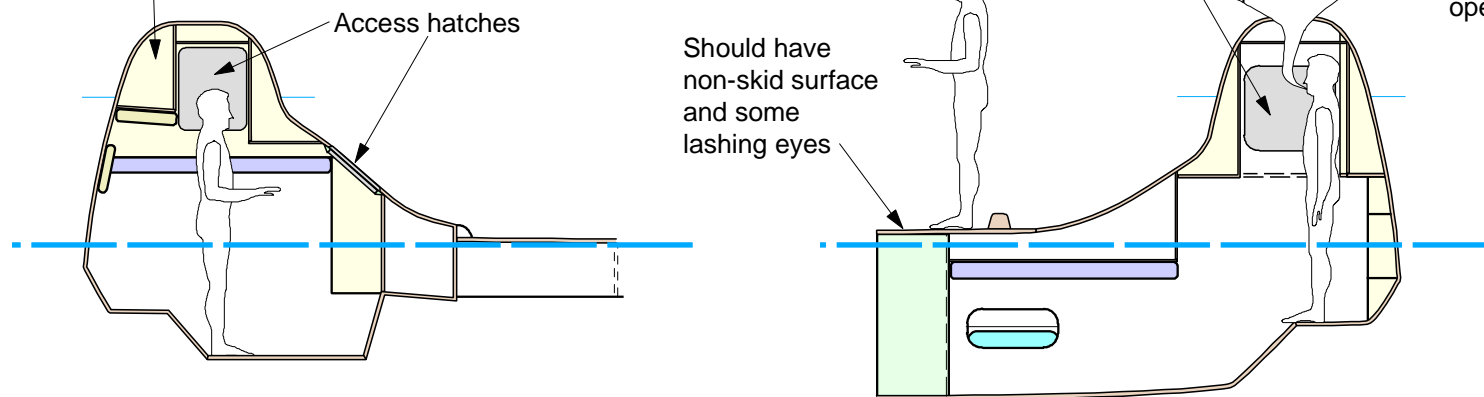
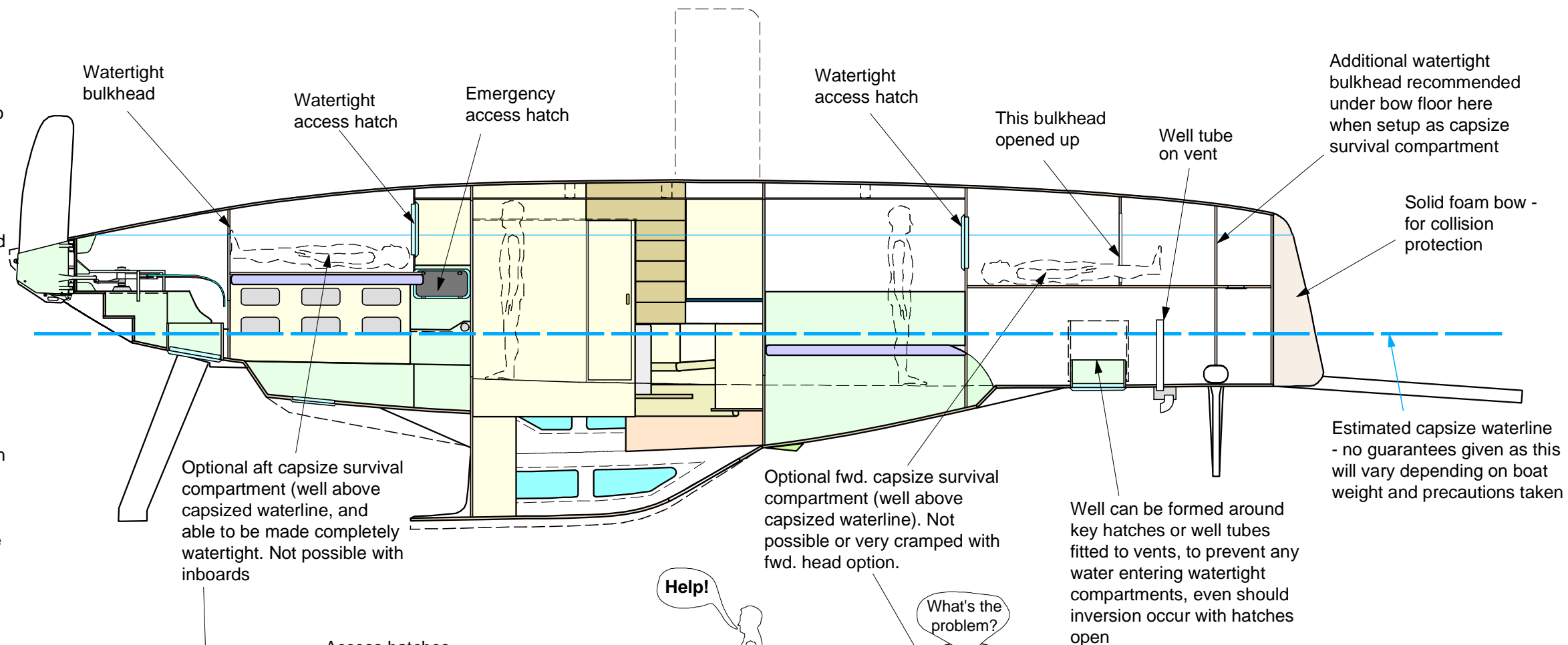
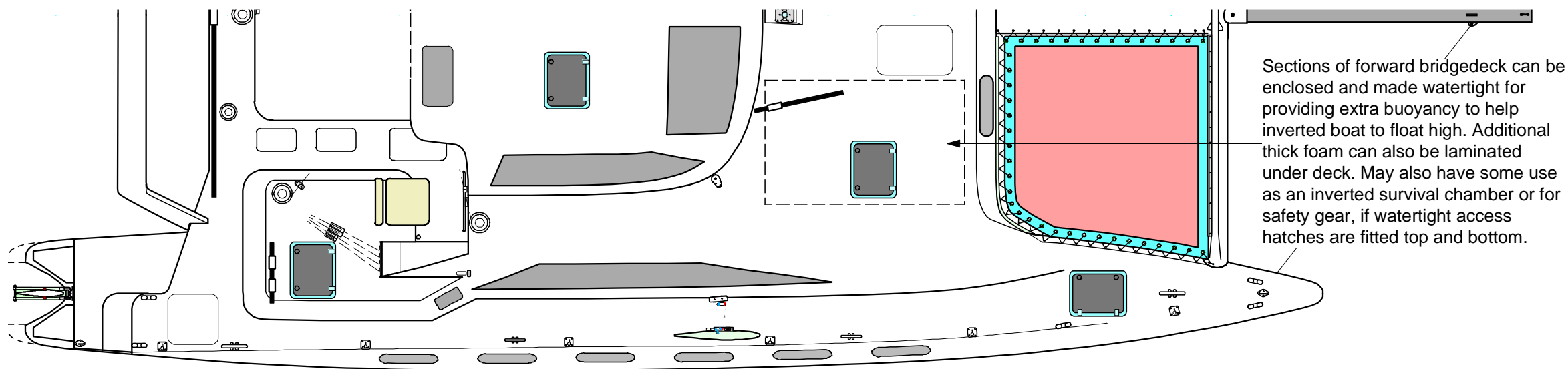
3. Provide suitable watertight shelter areas for all crew inside the boat that will be high and dry in a capsize situation. Suitable areas in the F-41 include under the aft bunk, or in the bow. These areas should be equipped accordingly, with supplies and cutting tools for providing ventilation. Hammocks with suitable eyebolts installed are another option in hull center areas for large crews.

4. Ensure many stores/supplies/tools/safety gear are stored low down in the hull, above capsized waterline, and well secured to prevent loss. There can be considerable surge inside the boat, and providing internal 'screw on' cover boards for all hatches may be worth considering.

5. Watertanks should not be able to drain out if inverted, to preserve water. Similarly fuel or engine oil should not be allowed to drain into cabin areas to avoid pollution, and/or contamination of stores.

6. Batteries must be of the sealed type to prevent any formation of chlorine gas from acid spillage. Best located low and above capsized waterline.

7. Storage compartment, for important safety gear and tools, accessible from both sides, strongly recommended in bridgedeck.



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SAFETY OPTIONS

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