

Commonwealth of Dominica**Office of the Maritime Administrator**

TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, MOBILE OFFSHORE DRILLING UNITS AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS

SUBJECT: Lifesaving Equipment

REFERENCE:

- (a) Commonwealth of Dominica International Maritime Act, 2000, Chapter 1, Part III – Vessel Inspection
- (b) SOLAS '74, as amended, Chapter III
- (c) SOLAS Consolidated Edition 1997, Chapter III
- (d) IMO Resolution A.689 (17) dated 6 November 1991
- (e) IMO Resolution A.761 (18) dated 17 November 1993

PURPOSE: This Circular clarifies a number of issues and requests involving Lifesaving Appliances and Survival Craft aboard vessels under the Dominica International registry.

APPLICABILITY: This Circular applies to Owners, Masters, Ship Officers and Classification Societies and it addresses several SOLAS requirements that have been established by the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator.

REQUIREMENTS:**1.0 Certification**

- 1.1 All lifesaving appliances and Survival Craft must comply with the appropriate SOLAS regulation and be acceptable to the Classification Society of the vessel at the time of installation. Their condition must be verified at all subsequent safety equipment surveys. Any substandard or unapproved appliances or equipment are to be replaced. All survival craft are to be equipped as prescribed in SOLAS, Chapter III.
- 1.2 Safety equipment and other materials or equipment approved under an accepted IMO standard by a major maritime authority, such as the USCG, U.K. DOT, and the Ministries

of Transport or Maritime Directorates of Japan, France, Italy, Germany, Norway, Korea, China, Russian Federation, Canada, Australia, or by an IACS member on behalf of a national maritime authority are acceptable for vessels registered with the Commonwealth of Dominica.

- 1.3 Manufacturers of lifesaving appliances are responsible for ensuring that testing is performed in accordance with IMO Resolution A.689 (17) of 6 November 1991 and for providing documentation of successful testing performed.

2.0 Servicing

Servicing safety equipment is part of the Safety Equipment survey and Owners and Agents should consult closely with their Classification Society when selecting a service station to ensure that it meets the requirements of IMO Resolution A.761 (18).

- 2.1 Inflatable liferafts and life jackets are to be serviced annually immediately prior to, or at the time of, the Periodic and Intermediate Safety Equipment surveys carried out by a Classification Society recognized by the Administration.
- 2.2 Inflatable rescue boats are to be serviced in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions that may vary according to make or type.
- 2.3 Servicing is to be carried out at service stations approved by the appliance manufacturer to ensure that the latest guidance, adequate and compatible equipment, and servicing facilities are used.
- 2.4 The Classification Society surveyors must be satisfied that the servicing has been completed satisfactorily prior to endorsing or issuing the Safety Equipment Certificate. Attendance of the surveyor during actual servicing of the liferaft is not mandatory.
- 2.5 If suitable service stations are not available at the port of survey, extension of the applicable statutory Certificate may be authorized by the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator upon reasonable request to allow up to 17 months from the last date of service for the required service to be completed.
- 2.6.1 The Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator recognizes that annual servicing of the large numbers of liferafts required for passenger ships under their unique voyage conditions may impose unnecessary difficulties. The Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator, therefore, may approve the servicing of liferafts in smaller more manageable groups throughout the certification year. Each liferaft, however, must be serviced by its servicing due date so that no unit will be beyond the 12 month servicing interval at the time of renewal of the Passenger Ship Safety Certificate.

3.0 Liferafts

- 3.1 Liferafts provided in compliance with SOLAS Regulation III/26.1.4 are to be transportable and launchable by one person. They may be stowed in protected positions provided they are readily available at all times. Particular care should be given to their accessibility when deck cargoes are carried. Where appropriate, portable guardrails or bulwarks should be provided to facilitate launching.
- 3.2 On occasion, it may be necessary to temporarily carry persons on board in excess of the number currently authorized by the Safety Equipment Certificate. When physically possible, the installed lifeboats should be re-certified to provide the necessary capacity. If the existing lifeboats are already certified to their maximum capacity, the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator may allow, for legitimate verifiable reasons, the substitution of inflatable liferaft capacity appropriately installed in accordance with regulatory requirements to augment the required lifeboat complement as a temporary measure of equivalency.
- 3.3 Temporary measures (as described in 3.2 above) will be limited to the minimum period of time required for the additional persons to be on board and, in general, will not exceed two (2) months. This accommodation will only be allowed with the specific approval of the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator, provided the additional persons are limited to a reasonable number, the minimum survival craft capacity prescribed by SOLAS Chapter III is maintained, the necessary additional personal life-saving appliances are provided and the appropriate provisions of the ILO Convention are adhered to reasonably.

4.0 Lifeboat Damage

- 4.1 When any lifeboat is damaged and declared unseaworthy or is found in need of repair and no replacement boat is readily available, liferaft(s) with capacity for all the persons on board may be substituted, as a temporary measure, but only with specific approval of the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator, provided the minimum survival craft capacity prescribed by SOLAS Chapter III is maintained.
- 4.2 Where the defective boat is a motorboat and there is no other motor lifeboat on board, the total survival craft capacity provided is to include a powered rescue boat meeting the requirements of Regulation III/47 of the '83 amendments to SOLAS.
- 4.3 These temporary measures will be limited to the minimum period of time required for replacement and, in general, will not exceed three (3) months.

5.0 Immersion Suits and Thermal Protective Aids

- 5.1 For purposes of SOLAS Chapter III, Regulation 27.3.2.3 and 27.3.3.3, the Administration defines warm climates as being that between 32° North and 32° South latitudes. For vessels operating exclusively within this trading zone, immersion suits and thermal protective aids will not be required. The immersion suits required by SOLAS Chapter III, Regulation 38.5.1.24, 41.8.31 and 47.2.2.13, however, are an integral part of survival craft and rescue boat equipment that must be provided regardless of vessel route.
- 5.2 The Administration defines cold climates as the areas of operation above 50° N and 50° S latitudes. For the prolonged operation of vessels with open lifeboats in cold climates, the Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator requires that immersion suits constructed in accordance with SOLAS, Chapter III, Regulation 33 be provided for all persons on board.
- 5.3.1 Immersion suits and thermal protective aids are to be assigned by the Master. It is recommended that they should be kept in staterooms along with life jackets.
- 5.4 The three (3) immersion suits per lifeboat required by SOLAS, Chapter III, Regulation 27.3.2 are intended for use by the designated and/or certified persons in charge of the lifeboat. They may be kept in the staterooms of the assigned personnel.
- 5.5 For cargo vessels less than 85 meters in length operating above 32° North and 32° South latitudes where only liferafts are carried in accordance with SOLAS, Chapter III, Regulation 26.1.3, all persons are to be provided with immersion suits.
- 5.6 All persons in the crew of a rescue boat are to be provided with immersion suits, if different from the persons in charge of the lifeboat noted in 5.4 above.

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