



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Marine Notice

**BUREAU OF
MARITIME AFFAIRS**

**SAF-001
Rev. 04/05**

**TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF
MERCHANT SHIPS, AGENTS AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

SUBJECT: Lifesaving Equipment.

**Reference: (a) Maritime Regulation 2.35
(b) SOLAS Consolidated Edition 2004, Chapter III
(c) International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code
(d) MSC Resolution 152(78)
(e) MSC Circular 1114**

Supersedes: Marine Notice SAF-001 issued 11/02.

PURPOSE:

This Notice addresses a number of recent issues and requests involving Lifesaving Appliances and Survival Craft aboard Liberian Flag vessels which have been presented to the Office of the Deputy Commissioner for interpretation and clarification of its policy.

APPLICABILITY:

This Notice applies to Owners, Masters, Ship Officers and Classification Societies and it addresses several SOLAS requirements which have been established by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner.

REQUIREMENTS:

1.0 Certification

- 1.1 All lifesaving appliances and Survival Craft are to be reviewed for compliance with the appropriate SOLAS regulation and acceptability by the Classification Society of the vessel at the time of installation and their condition 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 the International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code.
- 1.2 Safety equipment and other materials or equipment approved 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 Republic of Liberia. The Administration will also accept equipment that has been approved under the EU Marine Equipment Directive.

- 1.3 Manufacturers of lifesaving appliances are responsible for ensuring that testing is performed in accordance with the LSA Code and for providing documentation that this has satisfactorily been accomplished
- 1.4 Existing equipment, which was manufactured and tested in accordance with previous SOLAS Convention requirements, may continue to be used as long as it remains in serviceable condition.

2.0 Servicing

- 2.1 Inflatable life rafts, inflatable life jackets, marine evacuation systems, and inflated rescue boats be serviced at approved servicing facilities. Servicing facilities that are approved by a State which is Party to the SOLAS Convention, and acceptable to the vessel classification society or servicing facilities that have been approved by a Liberian Recognized Organization on behalf of a Party to the SOLAS Convention; are acceptable to the Administration, provided, the approvals are in compliance with Reference (c). Vessel Owners and Agents should consult closely with their Classification Society when selecting a service station to ensure that it meets the requirements of IMO Resolutions.
- 2.2 Inflatable life rafts, life jackets, and marine evacuation systems are to be serviced annually immediately prior to, or at the time of, the periodic or renewal safety equipment surveys carried out by the Classification Society.
- 2.3 Inflatable rescue boats are to be serviced in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. The rescue boat must be serviced at an approved facility acceptable to the vessel's classification society.
- 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 the 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 Commissioner upon reasonable request to allow up to 17 months from the last date of service for the required service to be completed.
- 2.6 The Office of the Deputy Commissioner 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 Commissioner therefore approves 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/31.1.2, Regulation III/31.1.2.2, or Regulation III/31.1.3.2 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 guard rails 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 recertified to provide the necessary capacity. If the existing lifeboats are already certified to their maximum capacity, the Office of the Deputy Commissioner 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 provided for 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 three (3) months. This accommodation will only be allowed with the specific approval of the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, 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 vessel does reasonably adhere to the appropriate provisions of the ILO Convention.

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 Commissioner, 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/31.2 of 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 Regulations III/7.3, 22.4.1.2, III/32.3.2.3 and III/32.3.3.3, Liberia defines warm climates as being that between 32° North and 32° South latitudes. For vessels, other than bulk carriers operating exclusively within this trading zone, immersion suits and thermal protective aids will not be required. The thermal protective aids required by LSA Code Sections 4.1.5.1.24, 4.4.8.31, and 5.1.2.2.13, however, are an integral part of survival craft and rescue boat equipment which must be provided regardless of vessel route.

- 5.2 Liberia 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 Commissioner requires that immersion suits constructed in accordance with LSA Code Section 2.3 be provided for all persons on board.
- 5.3 Existing cargo ships no later than the first safety equipment survey on or after 1 July 2006 and any new cargo ships constructed after 1 July 2006 shall carry immersion suits for every person onboard each cargo ship subject to these regulations. In addition, any ship subject to this regulation will also provide additional immersion suits so that individuals who will be working some distance from where their immersion suits are stored will have access to an immersion suit. This would be similar to the protection afforded by the requirement for an additional liferaft fitted forward and/or aft as required by SOLAS Regulation III/31.1.4, and the additional lifejackets required by SOLAS Regulation III/7.2.2.
- 5.3.1 As an example each such ship, in addition to the immersion suit for every person carried on board, shall be required to carry at least one additional immersion suit of adequate size near the additional liferaft(s) when fitted forward or aft, so that the immersion suits may be available to the crew working out on deck away from the accommodation block.
- 5.3.2 A number of additional immersion suits may also be required at other locations if the vessels class society surveyor determines that there are watch or work stations, which are so remote from the place where a crewman's immersion suit is stored, that in an emergency it is unreasonable to expect a crewman could acquire the assigned immersion suit.
- 5.4 Testing and repairing immersion suits:
- Select members of the crew shall be appointed and trained to conduct the monthly visual inspection of the immersion suits.
 - Immersion suits shall be sent ashore for testing of seams and closures in accordance with the guidance found in MSC Circular 1114 dated 25 May 2004 as follows:
 - Immersion suits less than 10 years old once every three years, and
 - Immersion suits over 10 years old every other year.
- All repairs shall be completed by an authorized repair facility.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 The three (3) immersion suits per lifeboat required by SOLAS, Regulation III/32.3.2 for cargo ships and Regulation III/22.4.1 for passenger vessels 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.
- 5.7 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, Regulation III/31.1.3, all persons are to be provided with immersion suits.
- 5.8 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 5.6 above.

6.0 EPIRB Maintenance Requirements

6.1 MSC Resolution 152(78) modified SOLAS Regulation IV/15. 9 to read as follows:

“9. Satellite EPIRBS shall be:

.1 annually tested for all aspects of operational efficiency, with a special emphasis on checking the emission on operational frequencies, coding and registration, at intervals as specified below:

.1 on passenger ships, within three months before the expiry date of the Passenger Ship Safety Certificate; and

.2 on cargo ships, within three months before the expiry date, or three months before or after the anniversary date of the Cargo Ship Safety Radio Certificate.

.2 subject to maintenance at intervals not exceeding five years, to be performed at an approved shore-based maintenance facility.”

7.0 Lifeboat Air Support Systems

7.1 Periodic Inspections

In accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and guidelines the air support system shall be subject to periodic inspection carried out by the vessel’s crew on a monthly basis as required by SOLAS 2004 Edition, as amended, Regulation 20.7.

7.2 Annual Examinations

All life boat air support systems and bottles shall be examined at least annually by the attending class society surveyor as part of the annual statutory survey for the Safety Equipment Certificate (SEC) or MODU Code certificate.

7.3 Recharging

If the air pressure in the bottles should fall below ten percent (10%) of the normal full level air pressure, then the air bottles should be recharged in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and guidelines. The air bottle can only be recharged on board from an air compressor that has been certified for providing air that is fit for human consumption. If applicable, the on board air supply air recharging systems should be checked for air quality as part of the annual statutory survey for the SEC or MODU Code certificate. If the ship is not equipped with such an air compressor then the bottle must be sent ashore to an authorized service facility for recharging or exchange.

7.4 Hydrostatic testing

Hydrostatic testing of lifeboat air support bottles shall be carried out once every five years or in accordance with the recommendations of the bottle manufacturer whichever is due the

earliest. The air support bottles shall also be hydrostatically tested prior to refilling a bottle that has been discharged. The hydrostatic test date must be permanently marked on the bottles or, if the bottles are made of a material that cannot be stamped with the date, a tag indicating the hydrostatic test date should be securely attached to the bottles. Intervals for hydrostatically testing cylinders of the ultra lightweight type may vary and will depend upon the requirements of the cylinder manufacturer and the vessel's classification society. Servicing of the cylinders must be performed to the satisfaction of the classification society surveyor.

7.5 Gauges

The accuracy of the primary pressure gauge and secondary air pressure gauge shall be verified at least once every five years or in accordance with the recommendations of the bottle manufacturers whichever comes first. Verification of the gauges must be performed to the satisfaction of the classification society surveyor.