



Office of
Deputy Commissioner
of Maritime Affairs

THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

LIBERIA MARITIME AUTHORITY

Marine Notice

SAF-007
Rev. 07/20

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

SUBJECT: Lifesaving Equipment - Immersion Suits and Thermal Protective Aids

Reference: (a) [Maritime Regulation 2.35](#)
(b) SOLAS 1978, as amended, Chapter III
(c) 2009, 1989 and 1979 MODU Codes Chapters 10 and 11
(d) LSA Code, as amended

Supersedes: Marine Notice SAF-001, dated 06/12

PURPOSE:

This Notice provides guidance interpretation and clarification of the Liberian Administration's policy regarding immersion suits and thermal protective aids aboard Liberian Flag vessels.

APPLICABILITY:

This Notice applies to Owners, Masters, Ship Officers and authorized Recognized Organization (RO) (the vessel's Classification Society which has been recognized and authorized to act on behalf of the Liberian Administration) and addresses several SOLAS and MODU Code requirements which have been established by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner.

REQUIREMENTS:

1.0 Immersion Suits and Thermal Protective Aids

1.1 Inspection, Testing and Repairing of Immersion Suits:

- .1 Monthly visual inspection: Selected and trained members of the crew may conduct the monthly visual inspection of the immersion suits on board the vessel in accordance with guidance in [MSC.1/Circ.1047](#).
- .2 Immersion suits in vacuum packs are also accepted on board provided:
 - .1 instructions for the monthly inspection of the vacuum pack are provided on board by the manufacturer of the immersion suit, which is considered equivalent to the monthly inspection in paragraph 1.1.1 above;

- .2 there is a sufficient number of immersion suits on board, which can be used exclusively for training and drills; and
- .3 if the inspection indicates that the vacuum pack is damaged, the immersion suit shall be immediately inspected as in paragraph 1.1.1 above, or sent for inspection and re-packing to an approved service station of the manufacturer.
- .3 Air Pressure Test: Seams and closures of immersion suits shall be tested in accordance with the guidance found in **MSC/Circ. 1114** 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.
- .4 Air test by ship's crew: Although **MSC/Circ.1114** states it is preferable to have the air pressure test conducted at a suitable shore-based facility equipped to make any repairs in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation. Allowances are given for the air pressure test to be conducted on board, provided the ship has suitable equipment to conduct the test and the test crew is properly trained. If the ship operator elects to conduct the air test of the immersion suits on board they may do so, provided:
 1. The ship is in possession of the manufacturer's Immersion Suit Service Manual and the appropriate Test Kit(s).
 2. The selected crew members shall be trained in the procedures and instructions in the manufacturer's Service Manual regarding the monthly, annual, and three year tests and inspections of the immersions suits on board the vessel as laid down in **MSC/Circ.1114**. A company training course may be used to satisfy this requirement.
 3. Procedures for the monthly, annual, and three year testing and inspection of the immersion suits shall be incorporated into the company's Safety Management System and provided to the ship.
 4. The annual and three year inspection and testing of the immersion suits requiring the air pressure test shall be performed to the satisfaction of the attending class surveyor.
 5. The results of the inspections shall be recorded in the vessels official logbook and any safety equipment inspection logbook maintained by the vessel.
 6. Annual and three year inspection and testing of the immersion suits by the crew shall be to the satisfaction of the attending class surveyor and would be acceptable for meeting the Safety Equipment Certificate annual survey requirements.
- 1.2 For purposes of SOLAS III, as amended, Regulations III/22.4.1.2, and III/32.3.2.3 the Administration 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. However, the thermal

protective aids described in Sections 4.1.5.1.24, 4.4.8.31, and 5.1.2.2.13 of the LSA Code, as amended, are an integral part of survival craft and rescue boat equipment and must be provided regardless of vessel route.

- 1.3 Existing cargo ships subject to these regulations, and any new cargo ships constructed after 1 July 2006, shall carry immersion suits for every person on board, no later than the first safety equipment survey on or after 1 July 2006. In addition, any ship subject to this regulation shall also provide a sufficient number of immersion suits for persons on watch and for use at remotely located survival craft stations (See SOLAS III/32/3 ([MSC.1/Circ. 1490/Rev.1](#))). The designated immersion suits provided for persons on watch shall be stowed on the bridge, in the engine room and other manned work stations.
- 1.4 Form E of the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate: The total number of immersion suits on board is required to be listed in section 2.8.8.1 of Form E to the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate (SEC). This number should include the immersion suits required for every person on board and the additional required for any watch or work stations, which are "remote locations". Thus, in most cases, the number of immersion suits in section 2.9 should be more than the number listed in section 2.1. of Form E.
- 1.5 If the total number of immersion suits required for every person on board is less than the total listed in 2.1 of Form E of the current SEC, the Owner/Operator has the option to request the class society to reduce the number in 2.1, or to provide additional immersion suits to match the number in section 2.1. In making this decision, Owners/Operators should consider the possible future need to carry additional persons on board and the requirement to provide additional immersion suits and other life-saving appliances.
- 1.6 Immersion suits and thermal protective aids are to be assigned by the Master or the Offshore Installation Manager OIM) in the case of a MOU when no Master is assigned. It is recommended, that they should be kept in staterooms along with life jackets.
- 1.7 An immersion suit shall be assigned for every person assigned to crew the rescue boat, and shall be readily accessible. The immersion suits required by 1.3 above may be used to comply with the immersion suits required for the rescue boat crew.
- 1.8 [MSC.1/Circ. 1278](#) provides excellent guidance regarding the wearing of immersion suits in totally enclosed lifeboats. In general, immersion suits should not be worn when boarding totally enclosed lifeboats. While abandon ship drills are a good opportunity to examine and demonstrate the use of immersion suits, crew training during these drills should emphasize that immersion suits are intended primarily to ensure thermal protection in cases where the totally enclosed lifeboat cannot be embarked on.

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