

**Marine Notice 12/2007
Supersedes Marine Notice 20/2003**

Prevention of accidents with lifeboats

This Marine Notice is issued to highlight actions that should be taken to prevent the unacceptably high incidence of accidents involving lifeboats. It supersedes Marine Notice 20/2003.

Recent consideration of this subject by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has resulted in the publication of the consolidated document MSC.1/Circ.1206 "Measures to Prevent Accidents with Lifeboats", which supersedes MSC circulars 1049, 1093, 1136 and 1137, the first two of which were referred to in Marine Notice 20/2003.

Specifically, MSC.1/Circ.1206 includes *Guidelines for periodic servicing and maintenance of lifeboats, launching appliances and on-load release gear* (annex 1) and *Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats* (annex 2). The circular relates not only to free-fall as well as davit-launched lifeboats.

To facilitate improvement in manuals for the operation and maintenance of lifeboat systems, IMO has also issued MSC.1/Circ.1205 *Guidelines for developing operation and maintenance manuals for lifeboat systems*.

Shipowners, ship operators, ship-vetting organisations, ship personnel, surveyors, manufacturers and all others concerned with the inspection of lifeboats, liferafts, rescue boats and fast rescue boats and their launching appliances and on-load release gear should give immediate effect to the provisions of the above-mentioned circulars, copies of which may be obtained from AMSA.

Launching, retrieving and maintaining survival craft can be a high-risk activity, particularly whilst at sea, and as with any high-risk activity, it should be approached in such a way that any hazards are identified and mitigated. Drills with survival craft should also be approached in the same fashion.

Design of some equipment and instructions supplied by the manufacturer with regard to repair and maintenance may require special attention and training of ship's personnel to attain the required level of familiarity to overcome risks. However, there has been no indication of undue risk to ships personnel involved in lifeboat drills if the lifeboat and its associated equipment are properly designed, constructed, installed, maintained, adjusted and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and the requirements of SOLAS.

The ISM Code Section 10 requires procedures to identify equipment and systems which, under sudden failure, may result in a hazardous situation. The Safety Management System should provide measures to promote the reliability of such equipment and systems. The ISM Code furthermore requires an established program of drills and exercises to prepare for emergency actions and that qualified and trained personnel are available to carry out necessary tasks on board the ship.

In relation to the development of appropriate procedures, it should be noted that an amendment to SOLAS Chapter III - Reg 19.3.3.3 entered force on 1st July 2006, providing ship operators with



improved flexibility in developing their procedures to minimise exposure of personnel should a lifeboat accident occur. Some further strategies that maybe applied to prevent or mitigate the effects of lifeboat accidents are summarised as follows:

- Safety pins fitted in holes through the release mechanism.

These pins, which are intended to prevent the unintended activation of the release mechanism, may only be fitted with the express approval of the manufacturer of the mechanism. The ship's Safety Management System procedures should specify that the pins should be removed from the holes at all times other than during the lowering and retrieval of the lifeboat during a lifeboat drill.

- Safety chains or pennants fitted between the falls and the lifeboat's structure.

The intended role of these pennants is to minimise the fall of the lifeboat in the event of the failure or inadvertent activation of the release mechanism. They are therefore different from the "hanging-off" or maintenance pennants mentioned in MSC.1/Circ.1206. To minimise shock loads required to be borne by the safety pennants and their connections to the lifeboat and the falls, these pennants should be as short as practicable. Bearing in mind these loads, pennants may only be fitted according to arrangements approved by the lifeboat and davit manufacturers. Procedures implemented under the ship's Safety Management System should require the pennants to be disconnected and removed from the lifeboat at all times other than when being used for a lifeboat drill.

- Unmanned "trial" lowering of lifeboat at commencement of a lifeboat drill.

This is an alternative to launching the lifeboat with its assigned operating crew on board from the outset of the drill.

AMSA recognises that Australian representation of manufacturers of the equipment covered by the MSC/Circ.1206 annex 1 guidelines may not yet be adequate to fulfil the requirements of paragraph 12 of those guidelines. Ship-owners and operators are therefore strongly encouraged to liaise with relevant manufacturers to establish the extent to which they provide representation in Australia. However, where these arrangements do not sufficiently meet the needs of ship-owners and operators, subject to strict conditions AMSA may consider accepting an Independent Lifeboat Servicing and Testing Organisation in accordance with the guidelines at attachment to this Marine Notice.

Notwithstanding such acceptance, ship-owners and operators should ensure that the equipment is maintained and serviced by suitably trained and skilled personnel in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

During inspections on Australian ships and port State control inspections of foreign-flag ships, AMSA surveyors will be taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure the required level of safety is maintained with the ship's survival craft.

Graham Peachey
Chief Executive Officer
19 June 2007

Australian Maritime Safety Authority
GPO Box 2181
CANBERRA ACT 2601

File No: 031726

Internet address for all current Marine Notices:
www.amsa.gov.au

Guidelines for acceptance of independent lifeboat servicing and testing organisations

Independent Lifeboat Servicing and Testing Organisations (ILSTOs) wishing to acquire for their operation AMSA acceptance as inspectors, maintainers or testers of specified equipment serviced on behalf of a nominated Company as defined in the ISM Code, should submit the following documentation:

1. Proof that their inspecting, maintaining or testing operations, as appropriate, are certified and comply with a quality standard (ISO 9001 or equivalent). The ILSTO's relevant standard procedures for these operations on lifeboat systems should be submitted.
2. Portfolio justifying at least two years experience with inspecting, maintaining or testing, as appropriate, that manufacturer's equipment.
3. A record system which provides traceability of work carried out and parts used must be maintained. All spare parts used should be the original manufacturer's spare parts. If the equipment manufacturer no longer exists and there are no original spare parts then the equipment should be replaced by equivalent equipment, such as equipment compliant with the European Marine Equipment Directive ("Wheelmarked").
4. Accredited Service Personnel detailed Training Program.
5. Copies of any approvals or acceptances issued to the ILSTO by other Administrations or IACS member classification societies in relation to the equipment proposed to be covered by the acceptance.
6. Evidence supporting claim that manufacturer's arrangements do not sufficiently meet the needs of the Company in relation to the requirements of annex 1 to MSC.1/Circ.1206.

Information referred in the preceding 1 to 6 should be readily available at the request of AMSA in case of an accident involving a lifeboat serviced by the ILSTO.

Two copies of all information referred in the preceding 1 to 6 should be sent to the Manager, Ship Inspection Group at AMSA's Head Office in Canberra.

Any acceptance, which relates only to specified equipment and a specified Company, will last until 31st December 2009 in the first instance. Updated documentation may be required for re-acceptance. In the meantime Independent Lifeboats Servicing and Testing Organisations are recommended to acquire Manufacturers authorisation.