



№ 6/CIRC/FSI

2022 / 03 /23

To: All Owners, Managers and Representatives of Ships flying
Georgia Flag, Masters and Officers, Recognized Organizations,
Flag State Inspectors, Recognized Agents

Subject: Life-Saving Appliances and Equipment

Reference:

- **International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), as amended;**
- **LSA Code, International Life-Saving Appliance Code, as amended;**
- **IMO Assembly Resolution A.761(18), Recommendations on Conditions for the Approval of Servicing Stations for Inflatable Life Rafts, adopted on 04 November 1993;**
- **IMO Resolution MSC.81(70), Revised Recommendation on Testing of Life-Saving Appliances, adopted on 11 December 1998;**
- **IMO Resolution MSC.55(66), Adoption of Amendments to the Recommendation on Conditions for the Approval of Servicing Stations for Inflatable Life Rafts (Resolution A.761(18)), adopted on 30 May 1996;**
- **IMO Circular MSC/Circ.1114, Guidelines for Periodic Testing of Immersion Suit and Anti-Exposure Suit Seams and Closures, issued 25 May 2004;**
- **IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1278, Guidance on wearing immersion suits in totally enclosed lifeboats, issued 23 May 2008;**
- **IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1490/Rev.1, revised Unified Interpretation of SOLAS regulation III/31.1.4, issued 25 November 2016;**
- **Directive 2014/90 EU of the European Parliament And of the Council, on marine equipment, 23 July 2014;**
- **Maritime Code of Georgia;**

1. Purpose:

1.1 The purpose of this Circular is to provide the interpretation and clarification from Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia (hereinafter referred as "MTA") regarding the policy for Life-Saving Appliances on board Georgia flagged vessels.

2. Application:

2.1 This Circular applies to Owners, Masters, Ship Officers of ships registered in the State ship registry of Georgia and MTA Recognized Organization.

2.2 The Circular applies to all ships and mobile offshore units (MOUs) subject to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

3. Requirements:

3.1 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.

3.2 The MTA will accept safety equipment and other materials or equipment approvals granted by another State that is a state Party to the SOLAS Convention or a MTA Recognized Organization (RO). Provided, the approvals are fully in accordance with Convention requirements. All newly installed lifesaving equipment must comply with SOLAS, the International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code,

and IMO Resolution MSC.81(70).

3.3 The MTA will also accept equipment that has been approved under the European Union Marine Equipment Directive (MED) 96/98/EC.

3.4 Existing equipment, which manufactured and tested in accordance with previous SOLAS Convention requirements, may continue to be used as long as it remains in serviceable condition.

3.5 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.

4. Service Providers Approval:

4.1 The MTA recognizes servicing facilities that are approved by a State which is Party to the SOLAS Convention or by MTA Recognized Organization (RO), the provided approvals shall be fully in compliance with International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.761(18), as amended by IMO Resolution MSC.55(66).

5. Equipment Servicing:

5.1 In accordance with requirements of the SOLAS Convention the inflatable life rafts, inflatable life jackets, marine evacuation systems, Immersion suits and inflated rescue boats at approved servicing facilities.

5.2 By the RO on the implemented the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (HSSC) inspection scheme, the inflatable life rafts, any inflatable life jackets, and any installed evacuation systems must be examined and certification of last servicing verified during the annual, periodical, and renewal surveys. On other vessels, this equipment is to be serviced just prior to, or during, the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate periodical and renewal surveys.

5.3 The RO surveyors must be satisfied that the servicing has been completed satisfactorily prior to endorsing or issuing the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate or HSSC Cargo Ship Safety Certificate. Attendance of the surveyor during the servicing of the life raft is not mandatory.

5.4 The MTA recognizes that annual servicing of the large numbers of life rafts required for passenger ships under their unique voyage conditions may impose difficulties. The MTA therefore endorses the servicing of life rafts in smaller more manageable groups throughout the certification year. Each life raft, however, must be serviced in a sequence that ensures that no life raft will exceed a 12-month servicing interval.

5.5 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.

5.6 The periodic testing of immersion suits shall be conducted according to IMO Circular MSC/Circ.1114. Suits less than 10 years old shall be tested at intervals not exceeding three (3) years; suits older than 10 years, or suits which have seams or closures that are in questionable condition may be required to be tested more frequently. Immersion suit air tests may be conducted on board ship if suitable equipment is available. Any necessary repairs should be conducted by an approved service provider in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

5.7 None inflatable life jackets must be must be examined and certification in accordance with rules of the RO.

6. Life Rafts:

6.1 Life rafts provided in compliance with SOLAS Regulation III/31.1.4 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. Consideration should also be given to facilitate launching.

6.2 As described in IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1243, remotely located survival craft such as the life rafts provided in compliance with SOLAS Regulation III/31.1.4 shall be provided with an embarkation ladder or other means of embarkation enabling descent to the water in a controlled manner as per SOLAS Regulation III/11.7. For this purpose, knotted ropes are not considered an acceptable means of embarkation.

6.3 On occasion, it may be necessary to temporarily carry persons on board in excess of the number currently authorized. 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 MTA may allow, for legitimate verifiable reasons, the substitution of inflatable life raft capacity appropriately installed in accordance with regulatory requirements to augment the required lifeboat complement as a temporary measure of equivalency. These temporary measures 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 MTA.

7. Immersion Suits and Thermal Protective Aids:

7.1 Immersion suits shall comply with section 2.3 of the LSA Code

7.2 An immersion suit shall be provided for every person on board the ship, unless expressly provided otherwise under SOLAS. 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.

7.3 Additional immersion suits as required under SOLAS III/32.3.3 shall be provided for each person on watch or at any normal work location that is remote from where immersion suits are normally stowed. At a minimum, additional suits shall be provided to the navigation bridge and the engine control room for all watch standers at those locations.

7.4 An immersion suit of appropriate size shall be provided for every person assigned to crew the rescue boat or assigned to the marine evacuation system party in accordance with regulation III/7.3 of the SOLAS convention.

7.5 A minimum of two (2) immersion suits and two (2) lifejackets must be provided at locations where remotely located survival craft are stowed in accordance with SOLAS Regulation III/31.1.4 and as detailed in IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1243.

7.6 The SOLAS Convention contains provisions for exempting vessels, other than bulk carriers, as defined in Regulation IX/1, that are constantly engaged on voyages in warm climates from the requirement to carry immersion suits and/or thermal protective aids. The MTA considers voyages in warm climates to be those within the zone between 30° north and 30° south latitudes. The thermal protective aids required by LSA Code, section 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.

7.7 In accordance with IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1278, strongly recommends that owners, operators and Masters emphasize those items in paragraph 4 of this Circular be followed on their vessels. 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 lifeboats cannot be embarked upon.

8. EPIRB Maintenance Requirements:

8.1 Satellite EPIRBS shall be 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:

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

8.2 Subject to maintenance at intervals not exceeding five years, to be performed at an approved shore-based maintenance facility.

9. Contact Details:

9.1 Recognized Organizations, Ship owner, Ship Operator or Management Company of a ship flying the Georgian flag, may contact MTA for additional consultation and assistance.

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SIGNED/SEALED
ELECTRONICALLY 

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