



SUBJECT: Maintenance and Operational Readiness of Life-saving Appliances and extended service liferafts

REFERENCE:

- a) *IMO Resolution MSC.402(96) Requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear*
- b) *IMO Resolution MSC.404(96) Amendments to the International Convention for the safety of life at sea, 1974, as amended.*
- c) *MSC.1/Circ.1578) Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats*
- d) *MSC.1/Circular.1328 – Guidelines for the Approval of Inflatable Liferafts Subject to Extended Service Intervals Not Exceeding 30 Months*
- e) **SLS.14/Circ.499** - Equivalent arrangements accepted under regulation I5: Extended servicing intervals for inflatable liferafts communication by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda

TO: Ship-owners, operators, masters and officers of Antigua and Barbuda flagged ships and Recognized Organizations.

1. PURPOSE

This Circular provides information in respect of the amendments to Chapter III of SOLAS that came into force on 1 January 2020 by the adoption of Resolution MSC.402(96) in 2016 and explains the Antigua and Barbuda requirements.

This Circular also provides information on the approval of liferafts with extended service intervals in accordance with SOLAS Ch.III regulation 4 and Ch. III regulation 20.8.3 which has been communicated to the IMO vide SLS.14/Circ.499

2. APPLICATION

This Circular applies to all Antigua and Barbuda flagged ships.

3. BACKGROUND

The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), at its 96th session held in May 2016, adopted amendments to SOLAS regulations III/3 and III/20 by resolution MSC.404(96) to make mandatory the requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear.

This package of provisions, which entered into force on 1 January 2020, aims to prevent accidents with survival craft and addresses longstanding issues such as the need for a uniform, safe and documented standard related to the servicing of these appliances, as well as the authorization, qualification, and certification requirements to ensure that a reliable service is provided.

The Committee, at its ninety-eighth session (7 to 16 June 2017), approved the Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats, following the amalgamation of annex 1 to the Measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats (MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1) and the Interim Recommendation on conditions for authorization of service providers for lifeboats, launching appliances and on-load release gear (MSC.1/Circ.1277) in the Requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear (resolution MSC.402(96)), which revoked annex 1 to MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1.

The Antigua & Barbuda Flag Administration has approved a number of liferafts designed for extended service intervals and which have been tested and evaluated by a recognized organisation acting on behalf of the maritime administration in accordance with guidelines in MSC.1/Circ 1328. Full information is provided under IMO Circular SLS.14/499, which is available on our website.

4. OBLIGATIONS AND GUIDANCE/RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Actions

1. It is recommended that in accordance with the IMO's recommendations, Recognized Organizations, Owners and Managers should adopt the change with immediate effect when planning and carrying out operational tests with free-fall lifeboats.

2. Drills and exercises with lifeboats

It is essential that seafarers are familiar with the lifesaving systems on board their ships and that they have confidence that the systems provided for their safety will work and be effective in an emergency. Frequent periodic shipboard drills are necessary to achieve this.

2. For Antigua and Barbuda ship drills and exercises are to be carried out as per the IMO Guidelines provided by MSC.1 Circ.1578 Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats. The guidance in it is invaluable and contains the Organization's guidance on how to safely carry out an abandon ship drill using lifeboats.

Issued by

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