



SHIP-SAFETY-DIVISION International Safety Management (ISM)

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To: All shipowners, shipmanagers, designated persons of German ships

Sub.: Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats

1. Due to the number of serious accidents with lifeboats, Companies are recommended to consider the Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats as set out in [Annex 2 of IMO-Circular MSC.1/Circ.1206](#).

2. Lifeboat drills are to be conducted in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3 for the purpose of ensuring that ship's personnel will be able to safely embark and launch the lifeboats in an emergency. The Guidelines developed for lifeboats are also applicable for other emergency drills (e.g. rescueboat drills).

3. Considering the general safety management objectives, procedures for holding safe drills should be developed and implemented within the Safety Management System (SMS). The Procedures should consider the Guidelines as set out in Annex 2 of the a.m. IMO-Circular and the following principles:

- Drills shall be planned, organized and performed so that the recognized risks are minimized. Possible risks should be identified by a risk assessment.
- All drills shall be performed in accordance with the principles of occupational safety and health.
- When preparing drills, the manufacturer's instruction/training manuals should be reviewed to ensure that the planned drills are conducted properly. Such manuals should be accessible for everyone on board and it is to ensure that the crew is familiar with the guidance provided in the instruction/training manuals. (see also SOLAS Reg. III/35 Training manual and on-board training aids)
- Before conducting lifeboat drills, it should be checked that the lifeboat and its equipment have been maintained.
- Before launching lifeboats, the prevailing weather conditions and the local conditions should be taken into account.
- Lifeboats should not be lowered during an exercise, as long as the ship makes speed.
- The personnel who operate safety equipment shall be familiar with the functioning and operation of such equipment (e.g. launching appliances and release gear).

- Elements of the drill that involve unnecessary risks need special attention or may be excluded from the drill. The launching of a boat with its full complement of persons is an example of an element that may involve an unnecessary risk. Such drills should only be carried out if special precautions are observed.
- Drills should be carried out at safe speed. The experience of the crew is an important factor in determining how fast a drill or certain drill elements should be carried out.
- Simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats shall be carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats set out in the Appendix of circular [MSC.1/Circ.1206](#).
- [Circular MSC/Circ.1161](#) shall be taken into account when conducting fast rescue boat drills. (Guidance on training fast rescue boats launch and recovery teams and boat crews)

4. If a full drill is not held at the appointed time, an entry shall be made in the log-book stating the circumstances, the extent of the drill held and the planned time for the repetition of the drill. (see SOLAS reg. III/19.5, e.g. the lifeboat could not be launched due to weather conditions or port restrictions)

5. Shipowners, shipmanagers and designated persons are advised to take note of this circular and to bring the contents to the attention of their masters. Copies of IMO-Circulars [MSC.1/Circ.1206](#) and [MSC/Circ.1161](#) can be found on our website at:

<http://www.see-bg.de/schiffssicherheit/isme/ - msc>

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