



MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

Issued by the Merchant Shipping Division, Sri Lanka

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NOTICE TO MASTERS, OFFICERS, TRAINING INSTITUTES, SHIP OWNERS, MANAGERS, OPERATORS, AND RECOGNISED ORGANISATIONS

Inspection and Testing of Immersion Suits on board Sri Lankan Flag Ships

The monthly inspection of immersion suits required by Regulation 20.7 and 36.1 of Chapter III of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended, must be carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for the Monthly Shipboard Inspection of Immersion Suits and Anti-Exposure Suits by Ships' Crews approved by MSC on 28 May 2002 (MSC/Circ.1047).

Moreover, the periodic pressure testing of the immersion suits must be carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Periodic Testing of Immersion Suit and Anti-Exposure Suit Seams and Closures approved by MSC on 25 May 2004 (MSC/Circ.1114), at intervals not exceeding:

- a. three years for immersion suits which are less than twelve years of age,
- b. two years for immersion suits which are over twelve years of age.

The intervals are counted from the suit's date of manufacture, up to three years for the first periodic testing. Subsequent periodic testing is counted from the date of the last periodic testing.

It is recommended that the periodic testing is performed at suitable shore based facilities equipped to make any necessary repairs in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

Furthermore, it is also acceptable for the periodic pressure testing to be carried out onboard Sri Lankan Flag ships by the ships' crews (as per MSC/Circ.1114), if suitable equipment and trained personnel are available, as follows:

1. The periodic testing of the immersion suits in this case must be carried out, as follows:
 - a) every 30 months (2½ years) onboard by the ship's crew, for immersion suits which are less than ten years of age,
 - b) every year onboard by the ship's crew, for immersion suits which are over ten years of age, and
 - c) every fifth year, at a suitable shore based facility, irrespective of immersion suit's age.

2. The ship must be in possession of the immersion suit Manufacturer's Service Manual and an appropriate Test Kit accepted / recommended by the immersion suits manufacturer. (written acceptance / recommendation should be available onboard)
3. The ship's crewmembers designated to perform the testing shall be trained in the use of the test equipment and the procedures / instructions contained in the manufacturer's Service Manual regarding the periodic testing and the related inspections of the immersion suits. All designated crewmembers shall hold a valid training certificate issued by the test equipment manufacturer.
4. Procedures for the periodic testing and inspection of the immersion suits must be incorporated into the instructions manual for onboard maintenance in accordance with the guidelines contained in Regulation 36 of Chapter III of SOLAS.
5. The results of the inspection and testing of the immersion suits must be recorded in the official log required by Regulation 36.7 of Chapter III of SOLAS. The date of the testing and inspection and the name(s) of person(s) conducting the testing must also be recorded in the ship's official logbook as required by Regulation 36.7 of Chapter III of SOLAS.
6. If, as a result of the onboard periodic testing / inspection, an immersion suit is found to need repair, such repairs must be made at a suitable shore based facility approved by the manufacturer
7. The periodic testing may be conducted without a RO surveyor being present.

Vacuum Packed Immersion Suits (exchange concept) may also be accepted onboard Sri Lankan Flagged Ships on case by case basis provided:

- a. Instructions for, the monthly inspection of the vacuum pack are provided onboard by the immersion suits manufacturer. It is hereby accepted that these instructions substitute the monthly inspection procedure required by the MSC/Circ.1047.
- b. If the inspection indicates that the vacuum pack is damaged, the immersion suit must immediately be either inspected as per the MSC/Circ.1047 or sent for inspection and re-packing to an approved service station.
- c. There is a sufficient number of immersion suits available onboard for drills.

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