



TUVALU SHIP REGISTRY

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MARINE CIRCULAR

MC-5/2012/1

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FOR: Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Ship Masters, Ship Officers, Classification Societies, Flag State Inspectors

SUBJECT: APPROVAL, MAINTENANCE, AND SERVICING REQUIREMENTS OF LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES AND EQUIPMENT FOR TUVALU VESSELS

DEFINITIONS:

The following abbreviations stand for:

- "EU" – European Union
- "FPD" – Fall Preventer Devices
- "FPSO" – Floating Production, Storage and Offloading Unit
- "FSU" – Floating Storage Unit
- "HSSC" – Harmonized System of Survey and Certification
- "IACS" – International Association of Classification Societies
- "IMO" – International Maritime Organization
- "LSA" – Life Saving Appliance
- "MED" – Marine Equipment Directive
- "MODU Code" – Code for the Construction and Equipment of Mobile Offshore Drilling Units
- "MODU" – Mobile Offshore Drilling Units
- "MOU" – Mobile Offshore Units
- "RO" – Recognized Organization
- "SOLAS" – International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended
- "TPA" Thermal Protective Aid

The term "Administration" shall mean the Tuvalu Ship Registry.

PURPOSE:

This Marine Circular serves to provide guidance on the approval, maintenance and servicing requirements of life-saving appliances (LSA) and equipment for Tuvalu vessels and includes information on lifeboat servicing, lifeboat damage, falls and equipment dispensations.

APPLICATION:

The guidelines in this Marine Circular apply to all vessels including vessels under MODU Code 79/89.

REFERENCES:

- (a) SOLAS 74, as amended
- (b) LSA Code, as amended
- (c) Resolution MSC.81(70), as amended
- (d) EU Council Directive 96/98/EC on MED
- (e) Resolution A.761(18)
- (f) Resolution MSC.55(66)

- (g) MSC/Circ.1114
- (h) MSC.1/Circ.1278
- (i) MSC.1/Circ. 1243
- (j) Tuvalu Marine Circular MC-16/2011/1
- (k) Tuvalu Marine Circular MC-2/2012/1

CONTENTS:

1. Approval of LSA and Equipment

- 1.1. LSA approvals that have been granted by another SOLAS contracting State, or a Tuvalu RO, or a RO on behalf of another SOLAS contracting State will be accepted on condition that the approvals are in full compliance with the Convention requirements laid out in SOLAS 74, LSA Code, and Resolution MSC.81(70) including their respective amendments.
- 1.2. Existing LSA approved based on earlier Convention requirements are acceptable and can be continue service so long as they remain serviceable.
- 1.3. Equipments that have been approved under the European Union Marine Equipment Directive (MED) procedures are acceptable.
- 1.4. Please refer to Tuvalu Marine Circular MC-2/2012/1 for more specific guidance to ROs that have been authorized to carry out this function on behalf of this Administration.

2. Approval of Service Providers

- 2.1. As some manufacturers do not have a wide network of service stations to support their products, it is necessary for Tuvalu to accept servicing facilities approved by another SOLAS contracting State or by a RO on behalf of Tuvalu or another SOLAS contracting State on condition that the approvals are in compliance with A.761(18), as amended by Resolution MSC.55(66).
- 2.2. As Tuvalu does not maintain a list of every service station recognized worldwide, Tuvalu relies on the extensive network of RO offices which should have the appropriate local knowledge to recommend service stations in their area which will be acceptable.
- 2.3. Please refer to Tuvalu Marine Circular MC-2/2012/1 for more specific guidance to ROs that have been authorized to carry out this function on behalf of this Administration.
- 2.4. With regard to the servicing and maintenance of lifeboats, launching appliances and on-load release gear, please refer to Tuvalu Marine Circular MC-16/2011/1.

3. Servicing of Equipment

- 3.1. SOLAS requires that inflatable life rafts, inflatable life jackets, marine evacuation systems, and inflated rescue boats be serviced at approved servicing facilities.
- 3.2. On vessels that have implemented the 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 stipulated in the 1988 SOLAS Protocol. On other vessels, this equipment is to be serviced just prior to, or during, the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate periodical and renewal surveys.
- 3.3. 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 RO surveyor during the servicing of the life raft is not mandatory unless specifically requested by this Administration.

- 3.4. Tuvalu recognizes that annual servicing of the large numbers of life rafts required for passenger ships under their unique voyage conditions may impose difficulties. Tuvalu 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.
- 3.5. The servicing interval and procedures for inflated rescue boats must be in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements. The facility performing the servicing must comply with the requirements of section 2.1 above.
- 3.6. The periodic testing of immersion suits shall be conducted according to 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.

4. Life Rafts

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. As described in 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.
- 4.3. 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 Administration 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 three (3) months. This accommodation will only be allowed with the specific approval of the Administration.

5. Immersion Suits and Thermal Protective Aids

- 5.1. Immersion suits shall comply with section 2.3 of the LSA Code.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. 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. For the purposes of this paragraph, a normal work location is a location where a crewmember regularly carries out normal work functions. Examples may include but are not limited to: control rooms, machine/work shops, galleys, offices, and remote lookout positions. Such a work location would be considered remote if it is not in the

direct vicinity of the primary survival craft and/or normal stowage position of the individually assigned immersion suits, and could not reasonably be retrieved in the event of an emergency. At a minimum, additional suits shall be provided to the navigation bridge and the engine control room for all watch standers at those locations.

- 5.4. 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 SOLAS Reg III/7.3. The immersion suits provided under this requirement may be used to comply with section 5.2 above.
- 5.5. 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 Reg III/31.1.4 and as detailed in MSC.1/Circ.1243.
- 5.6. SOLAS contains provisions for exempting vessels, other than bulk carriers, as defined in SOLAS Reg IX/1, that are constantly engaged on voyages in warm climates from the requirement to carry immersion suits and/or thermal protective aids. Tuvalu 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 Sections 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. Procedures for applying for exemption can be found in Tuvalu Marine Circular MC-10/2011/1.

6. Guidance on wearing Immersion Suits in totally enclosed Lifeboats

Tuvalu fully concurs with MSC.1/Circ.1278, and strongly recommends that owners, operators and Masters emphasize those items in paragraph 4 of MSC.1/Circ.1278 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.

Yours sincerely,
Deputy Registrar
Tuvalu Ship Registry