

Circular recipients: (check box)

- Sdir : Norwegian Maritime Directorate
- A: 16 specially authorized employment offices
- U: Selected Foreign Service stations
- P: Equipment manufacturers, any subgroups
- OFF: Offshore companies/platform managers/operators
- Hov: Main organizations
- Others: Classification societies

No.: 1/2003
Date: 17 February 2003
Journal no.: A-2002/20742 / EOJ/
Reference to: Look under "Regulatory references")

Guidance on risk reduction measures relative to lifeboat drills and maintenance of lifeboats and launching arrangements.

This guidance applies to all ships carrying lifeboats or other boats for davit or free-fall launching. The purpose of the guidance is to contribute to the reduction of the risk of personal injuries in connection with lifeboat drills and maintenance of lifeboats and launching arrangements.

Regulatory references:

- Regulations of 15 September 1992 No. 700 concerning life-saving appliances on passenger ships and cargo ships - § 24 (corresponds to § 22 in *Excerpts from the Norwegian Passenger and Cargo Ship Legislation, Etc. 2000*).
- Regulation of 28 March 2000 No. 305 concerning surveys, construction and equipment of passenger ships engaged on domestic voyages, Appendix 1, Chapter III, Section 13.
- Regulation of 4 August 2000 No. 808 concerning the working environment, health and safety of workers on board ship.
- Regulation of 23 December 1999 No. 1529 concerning a Safety Management System for passenger ships.
- Regulations of 6 August 1996 No. 822 concerning a Safety Management System for cargo ships.

International instruments:

- Solas Ch. III – Regulations 19 and 30 (drills)
- Solas Ch. III – Regulation 20 (maintenance)
- International Safety Management (ISM) Code (safety management)

Risk assessment:

Abandon ship drills, including drills involving lifeboats and davit-launched rescue boats, are to be regarded as work operations and are to be risk assessed in the same way as other work operations, ref. Regulation of 4 August 2000 No. 808 concerning the working environment, health and safety of workers on board ship, § 2-1 (General guidelines for the working environment, safety and health) and § 2-2 (Risk assessment). Risk assessments should be documented as being made by competent personnel and cooperation with the equipment manufacturer in making such assessments is encouraged.

Maintenance:

A substantial proportion of accidents occurring in connection with lifeboat drills are caused by deficient or lacking maintenance. Set routines for the systematic inspection and maintenance of lifeboats and launching arrangements should be implemented in the vessel's maintenance system.

Any maintenance other than routine lubrication should be performed by personnel authorized by the equipment manufacturer. Anyhow, it is the responsibility of the master to ensure that any maintenance is performed by competent personnel.

Maintenance should never be carried out in connection with a drill. Instead, any maintenance work should be finished before the commencement of a drill. When the maintenance operation is finished, the necessary functional tests should be conducted before commencing any planned drill. Where lifeboats must be lowered or hoisted as part of the lubricating routines, such operations should be performed as part of the maintenance and never in connection with the drill itself.

Maintenance operations are comparable to other types of work operations in that necessary safety measures should be taken on the basis of risk assessments. The lifeboats should be secured by the suspension arrangement delivered by the equipment manufacturer, "hanging off pendants", in the case of any maintenance of hooks, winches or other parts of the launching arrangement necessitating the slackening of falls.

Reference is made to Solas Chapter III, Regulation 20.1., 20.11, the ISM Code, Section 10, and Regulation of 4 August 2000 No. 808 concerning the working environment, health and safety of workers on board ship.

Davit-launched lifeboats:

There is a risk of personal injury in most work operations related to the maintenance and launching of lifeboats. The risk of fatal accidents appears to be related, *inter alia*, to the presence of one or more persons in or on top of the boat at the time of launching or in maintenance situations. The following items should be carefully observed in order to reduce risk in connection with lifeboat drills and maintenance:

- Drills are to be conducted in a manner that ensures that no person is unduly exposed to risk. Training and drills should always be conducted without haste and the company and the master should be able to document that the necessary time is made available for conducting the drill safely. Reference is made to Regulation of 4 August 2000 No. 808 concerning the working environment, health and safety of workers on board ship, § 2-3, and the ISM Code, Section 10.
- It should be remembered that the evacuation time requirement is an equipment performance requirement which is not to be understood as a time requirement for the crew in conducting lifeboat drills. Reference is made to Solas Chapter III, Regulations 21.1.4 and 31.1.5.
- The launching of lifeboats to the water during drills should be carried out with the smallest possible number of persons in the lifeboats. The number of persons on board must be sufficient to ensure safe release from the hooks and manoeuvring the boat away from the ship's side. This information should appear from the muster list's task assignment. Reference is made to Solas Chapter III, Regulation 19.3.3.3.
- The lowering of lifeboats from the stowed position to the embarkation position, and conversely, should where possible be performed without any person in the lifeboat.
- It is recommended that the lifeboats be lowered empty to the water and hoisted to the embarkation position before launching them to the water, where appropriate. This

procedure should always be followed after finishing maintenance work on hooks and launching arrangements.

Free-fall lifeboats:

The launching of free-fall lifeboats implies a risk in connection with both drills and maintenance. It is important that the manufacturer's instructions be followed carefully for all operations.

- Free-fall lifeboats are to be launched to the water or dropped with the smallest possible number of people in the boat. The number must be sufficient to ensure safe release and manoeuvring of the boat when on the water. Reference is made to Solas Ch. III, Regulation 19.3.3.4.
- The interval between manned free-fall drills is 6 months. The Norwegian Maritime Directorate permits a 12-month interval in the case of ships having an arrangement for simulated launches where such launches are performed at least every 6 months. A simulated launch should follow the manufacturer's instructions and there should be no person on board. The lifeboat is required to move some centimetres down the ramp before the arrangement is deemed acceptable. Reference is made to Solas Chapter III, Regulation 19.3.3.4.

Follow-up:

In inspecting drills and at ISM audits, the surveyor or auditor may require that the risk assessment be documented and that the vessel's maintenance programme contain satisfactory routines for the inspection and maintenance of the life-saving equipment, and that the programme be properly executed.

For vessels carrying free-fall lifeboats which choose a 12-month interval for manned launching, it should be documented that the equipment permits simulated launches and that the required launches have been performed.

Rune Teisrud
Director General
of Shipping and Navigation

Arild Sætre
Acting Director