

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-68

To: Recognized Organizations (ROs), Classification Societies, Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels and Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates.

Subject: Manning of survival craft and supervision.

Reference: Law No. 7 of October 27, 1977 – SOLAS.
SOLAS Convention Chapter III regulation 10.

1. Purpose:

- 1.1. Since the 1983 Amendments to SOLAS 74 came into force on 1 July 1986 a new Chapter III is included - "Lifesaving Appliances and Arrangements". Regulation 10 of this Chapter reflects new requirements for the manning of survival craft.

2. Scope / Applicability:

- 2.1. The requirements of a certificated person apply to all types of vessels engaged in international voyages.
- 2.2. SOLAS III/10: *"there shall be a sufficient number of crewmembers, who may be deck officers or certificated persons, on board for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board"*.

Merchant Marine Circular

3. Background

3.1. Previous SOLAS requirements were limited to the provision of a number of certificated lifeboatmen trained in the handling and operation of lifeboats and other lifesaving appliances on passenger vessels. The new requirements apply to all types of vessels engaged in international voyages and stipulate that "there shall be a sufficient number of crewmembers, who may be deck officers or certificated persons, on board for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board".

3.2. The new requirements refer not to a "certificated lifeboatman" but to a "certificated person" who is defined in the Regulation 3 of Chapter III as follows:

"Certificated person is a person who holds a certificate of proficiency in survival craft issued under the authority of, or recognized as valid by, the Administration in accordance with the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, in force; or a person who holds a certificate issued or recognized by the Administration of a State not a Party to that Convention for the same purpose as the convention certificate."

4. Requirements.

4.1. To clarify the criteria followed by this Administration when regulation refer to "sufficient number", there should a minimum number of deck officers and/or certificated persons, on board, for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board such as indicated in the paragraph 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

Merchant Marine Circular

4.2. All ships registered under the Panama flag will be required to have at least two (2) certificated persons on each lifeboat. The Master and Offshore Installation Manager (in case of non-self-propelled units) will make sure that the equitable distribution of Certificated Persons in every vessel's survival craft is as follow:

- One (1) Certificate Person in command; and
- One (1) Certificate Person as second in command

4.3. The Certificated Persons should have a list of all persons assigned to the survival craft and should see that persons under their command are acquainted with their duties.

4.4. In the manning of every survival craft there should also be persons assigned and capable for performing the following:

- Operating the survival craft radio equipment; and
- Operating the engine and carrying out minor adjustments (in case where lifeboats are the primary method of abandon).

Note: Unless one of the two certificated persons has the capability to operate the lifeboat engine and making small adjustments such as required by SOLAS Ch III Reg. 10.6, the person assigned to perform such tasks will be a crew member in addition to those indicated in the paragraph 4.2.

4.5. All vessels that in addition to lifeboats installed also have liferafts on board, there should be a deck officer or certificated person placed in charge of each liferaft.

4.6. Any vessel engaged to offshore operations (e.g. supply vessel, stand-by vessel), yacht and any type of vessel that due to its characteristics, nature of voyage and the number of persons on board that might not have lifeboat as primary method of abandon, there should be a deck officer or certificated person placed in charge of each liferaft.



Merchant Marine Circular

- 4.7. Into the group of vessels for the previous paragraph, the Administration may permit persons practiced in the handling and operation of liferafts to be placed in charge of liferafts in lieu of the deck officer or certificated person required.
- 4.8. The Muster List shall specify which deck officer and/or certificated persons are assigned, and which are their substitutes (in case of key persons may become disable) to ensure at all times that the survival crafts are maintained in good condition and ready for immediate use.

Note: Deck Officers, by virtue of their Certificates of Competency, are considered to be proficient in survival craft.

November 2023 – 4.2 and 4.3 replaced by one paragraph.

October, 2023 – New Subject, new reference, new paragraph 1 (Purpose), paragraph 2 (Scope) and general review of the content of this MMC.

June, 1992.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

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