



**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS
DEPARTMENT OF MERCHANT SHIPPING
LEMESOS**

01 July 2006

Circular No. 12 /2006

TEN 5.13.09
TEN 4.28.03.5
TEN 16.17.18

To all Owners, Managers
and Representatives
of ships under the Cyprus Flag.

To all recognised Classification Societies
and Inspectors of Cyprus Ships

**Subject: Immersion Suits
Interpretation needed for the implementation of new provisions**

Further to my Circular No. 25/2005 dated 4 October 2005, on the above subject, please note the following:

The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the International Maritime Organization adopted on 20 May 2004, with Resolution MSC.152(78) amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended. These amendments entered into force on 01 July 2006.

1. With reference to the above amendments, according to paragraph 3 of regulation 32/Ch III/SOLAS 1974, as amended, an immersion suit must be provided for every person on board cargo ships.
2. A ship shall continue to carry the number of lifejackets required by regulation 7.2/Ch III/SOLAS 1974, as amended, even if the immersion suits onboard are classified as lifejackets.
3. A ship other than a bulk carrier, as defined in regulation 1/Ch IX/ SOLAS 1974, as amended, which is constantly engaged on voyages in warm climates, may be exempted from the said requirement. The Department of Merchant Shipping, having considered the Guidelines for Assessment of Thermal Protection (MSC/Circ. 1046), designates the following as warm climate sea areas for the scope of exempting ships from this regulation:
 - (i) The sector of the globe between latitude 30 degrees North and 30 degrees South.
 - (ii) The part of the Mediterranean Sea south of latitude of 35 degrees.
 - (iii) The Mediterranean Sea during the summer period (between 01/04 – 31/10)

(iv) The coasts of Africa (within 20 nautical miles from the shore) not included in (i) and (ii) above.

4. A Workstation is any place of the ship where the crew is occupied performing its normal duties (except watch keeping duties). Remotely located workstations are those located more than 100 metres, measured horizontally, from the place where the immersion suits are stowed. If a ship has such remote workstations, or places where additional liferafts (fwd or aft) are required in accordance with paragraph 1.4 of regulation 31/Ch III/SOLAS 1974, as amended, then, at least two (2) additional immersion suits must be placed at each of those stations.
5. A Watch station is any place of the ship where the crew performs its normal watch keeping duties. Remotely located watch stations are those located more than 50 metres, measured horizontally, from the place where the immersion suits are stowed. If a ship has such remotely located watch stations, then at least two (2) additional immersion suits must be placed at each of those watch stations.
6. Quantity and Storage of Immersion Suits

The immersion suits shall be so placed as to be readily accessible and their position shall be clearly indicated. The vessel's Fire Control & Life Saving Appliances Plan must be updated accordingly. The following two options may be considered for the storage of immersion suits:

Option (i) Storage: Immersion Suits to be stored on deck in a box or a centralised accessible store room within or outside of the accommodation (on the way to, or in the vicinity of the assembly stations or survival craft stations).

Quantity: If this solution is implemented, the quantity of the immersion suits to be placed onboard, is equal to the number of persons for which life-saving appliances are provided, as stated on the record of equipment of the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate, plus (if applicable) the immersion suits required by virtue of paragraphs 4 and 5.

or

Option (ii) Storage: Immersion Suits to be placed in Crew Cabins.

Quantity: If this solution is implemented, the quantity of the immersion suits to be placed onboard, is equal to the number of persons for which life-saving appliances are provided, as stated on the record of equipment of the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate; additionally, there should be at least two (2) readily available immersion suits located in the Navigation Bridge and at least two (2) located in the Engine Control Room, plus (if applicable) the immersion suits required by virtue of paragraphs 4 and 5.

7. Inspection and Testing of Immersion Suits

The monthly inspection of immersion suits required by regulation 20.7 /Ch III/ SOLAS 1974, as amended, must be carried out in accordance with the attached Guidelines approved by MSC on 28 May 2002 (MSC/Circ.1047).

A periodic testing of the immersion suits, in accordance with the attached Guidelines approved by MSC on 25 May 2004 (MSC/Circ.1114), must be carried at intervals not exceeding three years. Immersion suits which are already over three years of age must be tested by the next safety equipment survey.

The shore-based stations which have been accepted to provide services to Cyprus ships in respect of immersion suits must fulfil the criteria of my Circular No. 12/2001 dated 15 June 2001 on "IMO Resolution A. 761 (18) as amended. Liferaft servicing stations approved and certified by SOLAS Contracting Governments or Recognized Organizations (ROs)".

8. This circular supersedes my circular No. 25/2005 issued on 04 October 2005.

9. This Circular must be placed on board ships flying the Cyprus Flag.

S. S. Serghiou

Director

Department of Merchant Shipping

cc: Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Works
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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Ref. T3/1.02

MSC/Circ.1047
28 May 2002

**GUIDELINES FOR MONTHLY SHIPBOARD INSPECTION OF IMMERSION SUITS
AND ANTI-EXPOSURE SUITS BY SHIPS' CREWS**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-fifth session (15 to 24 May 2002), recognizing that SOLAS regulation III/20.7 requires monthly inspection of life-saving appliances to be carried out by using the checklist required by SOLAS regulation III/36.1 to ensure that their operational readiness is maintained in service, approved Guidelines for monthly shipboard inspection of immersion suits and anti-exposure suits by ships' crews, as set out in the annex.

2 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed Guidelines to the attention of all parties concerned, in conjunction with the relevant requirements of SOLAS regulations III/20.7 and 36.1.

ANNEX**GUIDELINES FOR MONTHLY SHIPBOARD INSPECTION OF IMMERSION SUITS
AND ANTI-EXPOSURE SUITS BY SHIPS' CREWS**

When carrying out the inspection of immersion suits and anti-exposure suits required by SOLAS regulation III/20.7, the following procedure is recommended.

- 1 Check closures on storage bag as well as general condition of bag for ease of removal of suit. Ensure donning instructions are legible. Confirm that suit is the type and size identified on the bag.
- 2 Lay the suit on a clean, flat surface. Make sure the suit is dry inside and out. Visually check for damage. Rips, tears or punctures should be repaired in accordance with manufacturer's instructions by a suitable repair station*.
- 3 Check the zipper by sliding it up and down to check for ease of operation. Using lubricant recommended by the manufacturer, lubricate the front and back of the zipper and the slide fastener. If the zipper is not functional, the suit should be removed from service and discarded or returned to the manufacturer or a suitable repair station.
- 4 If fitted, check inflatable head support and/or buoyancy ring for damage and ensure that it is properly attached. Check inflation hose(s) for deterioration. At least quarterly, the head support/buoyancy ring should be inflated and tested for leaks (this test does not apply to integral inflatable lifejackets). Leaks should be repaired in accordance with manufacturers' instructions by a suitable repair station.
- 5 Check retro reflective tape for condition and adhesion. Replace if necessary.
- 6 If fitted, check whistle and expiration date of light and battery.
- 7 Replace suits in the bag with zippers fully opened.
- 8 The opportunity should be taken at such monthly inspections for the crew to practise donning the immersion suits or anti-exposure suits.

* A "suitable repair station" is one authorized by the suit manufacturer and/or acceptable to the Administration.



Ref. T4/3.01

MSC/Circ.1114
25 May 2004

**GUIDELINES FOR PERIODIC TESTING OF IMMERSION SUIT AND
ANTI-EXPOSURE SUIT SEAMS AND CLOSURES**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-eighth session (12 to 21 May 2004), recognizing that shipboard inspections of immersion suits and anti-exposure suits carried out in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/20.7 and MSC/Circ.1047 may not be adequate to detect deterioration of seams and closures of the suits due to adhesive ageing, and having considered the recommendation made by the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment at its forty-sixth session, approved the Guidelines for periodic testing of immersion suit and anti-exposure suit seams and closures, as set out in the annex.

2 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed Guidelines to the attention of all parties concerned.

ANNEX**GUIDELINES FOR PERIODIC TESTING OF IMMERSION SUIT AND ANTI-EXPOSURE SUIT SEAMS AND CLOSURES**

- 1 Research performed by several Member Governments has demonstrated that the seams and closures of immersion suits and anti-exposure suits experience deterioration over time. The rate and severity of deterioration may vary widely, depending upon the specific components and procedures employed in the manufacture of the suit and the conditions under which the suit is stored. However, even under ideal conditions, the materials and adhesives used have a finite service life and will inevitably experience a reduction in strength and/or loss of watertightness with age.
- 2 The Guidelines for monthly shipboard inspection of immersion suits and anti-exposure suits (MSC/Circ.1047) are very helpful in identifying obvious problems with a suit, but do not adequately address deterioration of seams and closures (zippers, etc.) which may not be readily apparent by visual inspection. Such deterioration can be detected by pressurization of the suit with air, and testing of the seams and closures for leaks with a soapy water solution.
- 3 To ensure the maintenance of adequate strength and watertightness of seams and closures of immersion suits and anti-exposure suits with age, it is recommended that each suit be subjected to an air pressure test such as the following, at intervals not exceeding three years, or more frequently for suits over ten years of age:
 - .1 A suitable head piece, fitted with a means to inject air into the suit, should be inserted into the face orifice of the suit and secured so as to minimize leakage around the face seal. A low-pressure monitoring device, either integral to the fitting for air injection or as a separate device, should also be inserted. If the suit is fitted with detachable gloves and/or boots, the wrists and/or cuffs should be sealed by inserting a short length of suitable diameter plastic pipe and securing the gloves and/or boots with suitable wire ties or hose clamps. The zipper should be fully zipped, and any face flap closed. The suit should then be inflated to a pressure of 0.7 to 1.4 kPa (0.1 to 0.2 psi). If an auxiliary inflatable means of buoyancy is provided, it should be inflated through the oral valve to a pressure of 0.7 kPa (0.1 psi) or until firm to the touch.
 - .2 Each seam and closure of the suit - and each seam, oral tube and attachment points and joint or valve of any auxiliary inflatable means of buoyancy - should then be covered with a soapy water solution containing enough soap to produce bubbles (if leakage is noted at a foot valve to the extent that air pressure cannot be maintained, the valves should be sealed for the test).
 - .3 If leaks are revealed by the propagation of bubbles at seams or closures, the leaking areas should be marked and, after cleaning the suit thoroughly with fresh water and drying it, repaired in accordance with the suit manufacturer's recommendations.

4 It is recommended that the air pressure test be performed at a suitable shore-based facility equipped to make any necessary repairs in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. In view of the wide variety of materials and adhesives used in immersion suits and anti-exposure suits, it is strongly recommended that any repairs to a suit be carried out by a facility which has access to the original manufacturer's recommended servicing instructions, parts and adhesives, and suitably trained personnel. The air pressure test may be carried out on board ship if suitable equipment is available.
