

**Commonwealth of Dominica**



**Office of the Maritime Administrator**

**TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

**SUBJECT: Guidelines for the Development of Plans and Procedures for Recovery of Persons from the Water**

**REFERENCE: (a) SOLAS, Regulation III/17-1;  
(b) Resolution MSC.338(91); and  
(c) Circular MSC.1/Circ.1447.**

**APPLICABILITY: This circular applies to all vessels to which SOLAS regulation III/17-1 is applicable.**

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Circular is to bring to the attention of all concerned the implementation of the new SOLAS regulation III/17-1 and the guidelines produced by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to assist with the development of plans and procedures for the recovery of persons from the water.

**BACKGROUND:**

On 30 November 2012 the Maritime Safety Committee at its 91<sup>st</sup> session adopted amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended, through resolution MSC.338(91). These amendments included the addition of regulation 17-1 of Chapter III concerning the recovery of persons from the water.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

All ships shall have ship-specific plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water taking into consideration the below guidelines developed by the IMO. The plans and procedures shall identify the equipment intended to be used for recovery purposes and measure to be taken to minimize the risk to shipboard personnel involved in recovery operations. Ships constructed before 1 July 2014 shall comply with this requirement by the first periodical or renewal safety equipment survey of the ship to be carried out after 1 July 2014, whichever comes first.

Ro-ro passenger ships which comply with regulation 26.4 shall be deemed to comply with this regulation.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **General**

Life-saving and other equipment carried on board may be used to recover persons from the water, even though this may require using such equipment in unconventional ways.

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Guide to Recovery Techniques (MSC.1/Circ.1182) and the Guide for Cold Water Survival (MSC.1/Circ.1185/Rev.1).

In particular, the Guide to Recovery Techniques provides a number of examples of how certain types of equipment can be used to recover persons from the water; and can also be used for the development of plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water.

The initiation or continuation of recovery operations should be at the discretion of the master of the recovering ship, in accordance with the provisions of SOLAS regulation III/17-1.

The plans and procedures should be considered as part of the emergency preparedness plans required by paragraph 8 of part A of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.

### **Matters to be considered when developing plans and procedures**

A risk assessment should be conducted and documented when developing plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water, including equipment intended to be used, taking into account the anticipated conditions and ship-specific characteristics.

The recovery plans and procedures should facilitate the transfer of persons from the water to the ship while minimizing the risk of injury from impact with the ship's side or other structures, including the recovery appliance itself.

To the extent practicable, recovery procedures should provide for recovery of persons in a horizontal or near horizontal ("deck-chair") position. Recovery in a vertical position should be avoided whenever possible as it risks cardiac arrest in hypothermic casualties (refer to the Guide for Cold Water Survival).

If carried, dedicated recovery equipment should be clearly marked with the maximum number of persons it can accommodate, based on a weight of 82.5 kg per person.

Recovery operations should be conducted at a position clear of the ship's propellers and, as far as practicable, within the ship's parallel mid-body section.

A source of illumination and, where required, a source of power should be available for the area where the recovery operation is conducted.

Ship-specific procedures for the recovery of persons from the water should specify the anticipated conditions under which a recovery operation may be conducted without causing undue hazard to the ship and the ship's crew, taking into account by not limited to:

- .1 maneuverability of the ship;
- .2 freeboard of the ship;
- .3 points on the ship to which casualties may be recovered;
- .4 characteristics and limitations of equipment intended to be used for recovery operations;
- .5 available crew and personal protective equipment (PPE);
- .6 wind force, direction and spray;
- .7 significant wave height (Hs);
- .8 period of waves;
- .9 swell; and
- .10 safety of navigation.

### **Competence and familiarization**

Drills should ensure that crew are familiar with the plans, procedures and equipment for recovery of persons from the water. Such drills may be conducted in conjunction with route

man-overboard drills.

### **Required Action by Owners/Operators**

Shipowners, operators, Masters and crew must ensure that plans and procedures in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/17-1 are developed and implemented on board by the required survey. The plans and procedures must be approved by the Commonwealth of Dominica Maritime Administration by a Recognized Organization or by the Administration directly prior to or during the next periodical or renewal safety equipment survey after 1 July 2014.

Any questions can be directed to:

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