

**Commonwealth of Dominica**



**Office of the Maritime Administrator**

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

**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY TRAINING AND DRILLS**

**REFERENCE: (a) International Safety of Life at Sea Convention, 1974, as amended;**

**(b) IMO Resolution MSC.350(92);**

**(c) MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1;**

**(d) IMO Resolution A.624(15); and**

**(e) IMO Resolution A.1050(27).**

**APPLICABILITY: This circular applies to all ships to which SOLAS Chapter III regulation 19 is applicable.**

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Circular is to provide guidance to all concerned regarding requirements and recent amendments made to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention, 1974 regarding the requirement of emergency training and drills.

**BACKGROUND:**

On 21 June 2013 at the 92<sup>nd</sup> session of the Maritime Safety Committee at the International Maritime Organization amendments to the International Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention, 1974, as amended were adopted. These amendments cover a number of chapters of the SOLAS Convention, including modifications of regulation 19 of Chapter III

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regarding the requirement of emergency training and drills on board ships. Amendments adopted by resolution MSC.350(92) include specific requirements regarding the conduct of drills on passenger ships and enclosed space entry drills.

Dominica Maritime Administration (DMA) would like to highlight the findings of a recent investigation involving a Dominica flagged vessel that was the subject of a shipboard fire resulting in the total constructive loss of the vessel. It was determined that the familiarization, training and drills that were conducted on board the vessel could have been better conducted and evaluated for improvement to help prevent and prepare for emergency situations on board.

It was recommended that drills could have been enhanced by incorporating specific objectives of each drill. Such objectives could include the closing of all ventilation of affected areas, securing valves or other means of providing fuel to a fire, the removal of a casualty from an affected areas etc. Objectives meant to be achieved throughout a drill can help identify emergency preparedness deficiencies and assist the company and crew effectively address any issues.

It was also recommended that training, drills and the evaluation of meeting specific objectives would have been made more effective and useful if a proper evaluation of the drill itself was conducted upon the conclusion of the drill. If objectives are not met, this should become an evaluation of the effectiveness of the drill, procedure, and/or other possible causes.

The final recommendation made upon the conclusion of the investigation was that housekeeping should be adequately maintained in working areas regardless of working activities that may be ongoing in order to minimize or eliminate risk. It may be useful to include an evaluation of housekeeping throughout the vessel during a drill as an objective to determine if there is any risk for personal injury, fire, or other issue that would compound an emergency.

The information provided above should be taken into consideration when effectively implementing the requirements for emergency training and drills which are outlined below.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

### **General**

#### **Familiarity with safety installations and practice musters**

Every crew member with assigned emergency duties shall be familiar with these duties

before the voyage begins.

On a ship engaged on a voyage where passengers are scheduled to be on board for more than 24 hours, musters of newly-embarked passengers shall take place prior to or immediately upon departure. Passengers shall be instructed in the use of the lifejackets and the action to take in an emergency.

Whenever new passengers embark, a passenger safety briefing shall be given immediately before departure, or immediately after departure. The briefing shall include the instructions required by regulations 8.2 and 8.4 of the SOLAS Convention, and shall be made by means of an announcement, in one or more languages likely to be understood by the passengers. The announcement shall be made on the ship's public address system, or by other equivalent means likely to be heard at least by the passengers who have not yet heard it during the voyage. The briefing may be included in the muster required by paragraph 2.2 of regulation 19. Information cards or posters or video programs displayed on ships video displays may be used to supplement the briefing, but may not be used to replace the announcement.

## **Drills**

Drills shall, as far as practicable, be conducted as if there were an actual emergency.

Every crew member shall participate in at least one abandon ship drill and one fire drill every month. The drills of the crew shall take place within 24 hours of the ship leaving port if more than 25% of the crew have not participated in abandon ship and fire drills on board that particular ship in the previous month. When a ship enters service for the first time, after modification of a major character or when a new crew is engaged, these drills shall be held before sailing. Dominica Maritime Administration may accept other arrangements that are at least equivalent for those classes of ships for which this is impracticable.

Crew members with enclosed space entry or rescue responsibilities shall participate in an enclosed space entry and rescue drill to be held on board the ship at least once every two months.

## **Abandon Ship Drill**

Each abandon ship drill shall include:

1. Summoning of passengers and crew to muster stations with the alarm required by regulation 6.4.2 of the SOLAS convention followed by drill announcement on the public address or other communication system and ensuring that they are made aware of the order to abandon ship;
2. Reporting to stations and preparing for the duties described in the muster list;

3. Checking that passengers and crew are suitable dressed;
4. Checking that lifejackets are correctly donned;
5. Lowering of at least one lifeboat after any necessary preparation for launching;
6. Starting and operating the lifeboat engine;
7. Operation of davits used for launching liferafts;
8. A mock search and rescue of passengers trapped in their staterooms; and
9. Instruction in the use of radio life-saving appliances.

Different lifeboats shall, as far as practicable, be lowered in compliance with the requirements of paragraph 3.4.1.5 of regulation 19 at successive drills.

Except as provided in paragraphs 3.4.4 and 3.4.5 of regulation 19, each lifeboat shall be launched, and maneuvered in the water by its assigned operating crew, at least once every three months during an abandon ship drill.

In the case of a lifeboat arranged for free-fall launching, at least once every three months during an abandon ship drill the crew shall board the lifeboat, properly secure themselves in their seats and commence launch procedures up to but not including the actual release of the lifeboat (i.e., the release hook shall not be released). The lifeboat shall then either be free-fall launched with only the required operating crew on board, or lowered into the water by means of the second means of launching with or without the operating crew on board. At intervals of not more than six months, the lifeboats shall either be launched by free-fall with only the operating crew on board, or simulated launching shall be carried out in accordance with the guidelines developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Dominica Maritime Administration may allow ship operating on short international voyages not to launch the lifeboats on one side if their berthing arrangements in port and their trading patterns do not permit launching of lifeboats on that side. However, all such lifeboats shall be lowered at least once every three months and launched at least annually.

As far as is reasonable and practicable, rescue boats other than lifeboats which are also rescue boats, shall be launched each month with their assigned crew aboard and maneuvered in the water. In all cases this requirement shall be complied with at least once every three months.

If lifeboat and rescue boat launching drills are carried out with the ship making headway, such drills shall, because of the dangers involved, be practiced in sheltered waters only and under the supervision of an officer experienced in such drills.

If a ship is fitted with mariner evacuation systems, drills shall include exercising of the procedures required for the deployment of such a system up to the point immediately

preceding actual deployment of the system. This aspect of drills should be augmented by regular instruction using the on-board training aids required by regulation 35.4 of the SOLAS Convention. Additionally every system party member shall, as far as practicable, be further trained by participation in a full deployment of a similar system into water, either on board a ship or ashore, at intervals of not longer than 2 years, but in no case longer than 3 years. This training can be associated with the deployments required by regulation 20.8.2 of the SOLAS Convention.

Emergency lighting for mustering and abandonment shall be tested at each abandon ship drill.

### **Fire drills**

Fire drills should be planned in such a way that due consideration is given to regular practice in the various emergencies that may occur depending on the type of ships and the cargo.

Each fire drill shall include:

1. Reporting to stations and preparing for the duties described in the muster list required by regulation 8 of the SOLAS Convention;
2. Starting of a fire pump, using at least the two required jets of water to show that the system is in proper working order;
3. Checking of fireman's outfit and other personal rescue equipment;
4. Checking of relevant communication equipment;
5. Checking the operation of watertight doors, fire doors, fire dampers and main inlets and outlets of ventilation systems in the drill area; and
6. Checking the necessary arrangements for subsequent abandoning of the ship.

The equipment used during drills shall immediately be brought back to its fully operational condition and any faults and defects discovered during the drills shall be remedied as soon as possible.

### **Enclosed space entry and rescue drills**

Enclosed space entry and rescue drills should be planned and conducted in a safe manner, taking into account, as appropriate, the guidance provided in the recommendations developed by the IMO.

Each enclosed space entry and rescue drill shall include:

1. Checking and use of personal protective equipment for entry;

2. Checking and use of communication equipment and procedures;
3. Checking and use of instruments for measuring the atmosphere in enclosed spaces;
4. Checking and use of rescue equipment and procedures;
5. Instructions in first aid and resuscitation techniques.

### **On board training and instructions**

On-board training in the use of the ship's life-saving appliances, including survival craft equipment, and in the use of the ship's fire-extinguishing appliances shall be given as soon as possible but not later than 2 weeks after a crew member joins the ship. However, if the crew member is on a regularly scheduled rotating assignment to the ship, such training shall be given not later 2 weeks after the time of first joining the ship. Instructions in the use of the ship's fire extinguishing appliances, life-saving appliances, and in survival at sea shall be given at the same interval as the drills. Individual instruction may cover different parts of the ship's life-saving and fire-extinguishing appliances, but all the ship's life-saving and fire-extinguishing shall be covered within any period of 2 months.

Every crew member shall be given instructions which shall include but not necessarily be limited to:

1. Operation and use of the ship's inflatable liferafts;
2. Problems of hypothermia, first-aid treatment for hypothermia and other appropriate first-aid procedures;
3. Special instructions necessary for use of the ship's life-saving appliances in severe weather and severe sea conditions; and
4. Operation and use of fire-extinguishing appliances.

On-board training in the use of davit-launched liferafts shall take place at intervals of not more than 4 months on every ship fitted with such appliances. Whenever practicable this shall include the inflation and lowering of a liferaft. This liferaft may be a special liferaft intended for training purposes only, which is not part of the ship's life-saving equipment; such a special liferaft shall be conspicuously marked.

### **Records**

The date when musters are held, details of abandon ship drills and fire drills, drills of other life-saving appliances and on board training shall be recorded in the ship's official log book or other such log book designed specifically for the record keeping of drills. If a full muster, drill or training session is not held at the appointed time, an entry shall be made in the log-book stating the circumstances and the extent of the muster, drill or training session held.

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

Owners, managers, Masters and crew are required to take note of the mandatory emergency training and drills required under regulation 19 of Chapter III of SOLAS, giving special consideration and full implementation of the amendments to the regulation.

Systems, guidelines, procedures etc. shall be in place by the effective date of the amendments in order to demonstrate full compliance with the requirements. Crew shall be adequately trained and knowledgeable in their duties related to training and drills at all times as prescribed by the regulation.

Such measures should include any lessons learned from previous incidents and/or casualties specific to the vessel and recommendations made by the IMO or other industry organizations following the investigation into other marine casualties and incidents that may be considered relevant to the ship, its operation and cargo.

Any questions can be directed to:

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