



Marine Notice 12/2014

Recovery of persons from the Water

Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to provide advice to ship owners and ship operators on new SOLAS regulation III/17-1 adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) resolution MSC.338(91) which requires all ships to have plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water. The new SOLAS regulation came into force internationally on 1 July 2014.

The regulation applies to new ships constructed on or after 1 July 2014 and to existing ships by the first periodical or renewal safety equipment survey or certificate of survey, as applicable after 1 July 2014, (whichever comes first).

Background

In many incidents involving ships in distress with persons in the water, responding ships have often endangered the lives of their own crew to rescue persons from the water. In the absence of any specific plans and procedures to recover persons from the water, the safety of the recovering ship's crew can be compromised. Better preparation for recovering persons from the water will enable ships to have a greater chance to save lives at sea when dedicated search and rescue resources are not available. SOLAS regulation III/17-1 is the outcome of IMO's work that addresses this important matter.

IMO agreed it will be beneficial if ships to which chapter III of SOLAS does not apply to also have plans and procedures as adopted by resolution MSC.346 (91) for emergency situations where recovery of persons from the water is required. The resolution lists categories of vessels for which SOLAS contracting Governments are requested to determine to what extent the requirements of regulation III/17-1 should apply.

Australian position

AMSA intends to give effect to SOLAS regulation III/17-1 through Marine Order 25 (Equipment – lifesaving), which is currently under review.

SOLAS regulation III/17-1 will be applied to all regulated Australian vessels and foreign vessels to which Chapter III of SOLAS applies.

Guidance

IMO has developed the following circulars which contain guidance to assist owners and operators to meet the requirements of SOLAS regulation III/17-1:

- MSC.1/Circ.1447 – Guidelines for the Development of Plans and Procedures for Recovery of Persons from the Water
- MSC.1/Circ.1182 – Guide to Recovery Techniques
- MSC.1/Circ.1185/Rev.1. – Guide for Cold Water Survival

Equipment intended to be used for recovery operations will need to be identified in the plans and procedures developed through a risk assessment, taking into considering anticipated conditions and ship-specific characteristics.

The guidance recommends that drills be carried out to ensure that crew are familiar with the plans, procedures and equipment for recovery of persons from the water, as part of the routine man-overboard drills.

Owners and operators of new and existing ships should bring this information to the attention of their designers, shipyards, surveyors and other relevant persons, to assist in preparing for when the SOLAS regulation is given effect by Marine Order 25.

Copies of the relevant IMO documents are available on the IMO website or from AMSA.

<http://www.imo.org/knowledgecentre/indexofimoresolutions/Pages/Default.aspx>
<http://www.imo.org/OurWork/Circulars/Pages/IMODOCS.aspx>

Brad Groves
A/G Deputy Chief Executive Officer
08 August 2014

Australian Maritime Safety Authority
GPO Box 2181
CANBERRA ACT 2601

File No 2014/2187