
[M Notices M1017 and M1311 are hereby cancelled]**Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons, Float Free Arrangements for Liferafts and Lifejackets on Fishing Vessels**

Notice to Builders, Owners, Skippers and Crew of Fishing Vessels

1. The Fishing Vessels (Life-Saving Appliances) Regulations were made on the 18 January 1988. These Regulations give effect to the provisions of the Safety at Sea Act 1986 concerning emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) for fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length, float free arrangements for the liferafts of fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length and lifejackets to be carried by fishing vessels of less than 12 metres in length. The lengths referred to in this notice are registered lengths.

2. This notice also makes recommendations, which are non-mandatory, in respect of the carriage of EPIRBs, liferafts and float free arrangements for fishing vessels of less than 12 metres length.

EPIRBs

3. The Regulations require that from at least 15 January 1989 fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length must carry a type of 406 MHz EPIRB which meets the Department's approval. The performance specifications of approved EPIRBs are to be found in Merchant Shipping Notices issued from time to time.

4. Certain exemptions may be permitted until 15 April 1992 in respect of fishing vessels which have had a 121.5 MHz EPIRB approved by the Department fitted by 15 March 1988, where it has been approved in combination with a liferaft and the liferaft's float free arrangement.

Float Free Arrangements for Liferafts

5. The Regulations require that from at least 15 January 1989 liferafts carried by fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in registered length be fitted with float free arrangements (which meet the Department's approval) whereby the liferafts are automatically released and activated from a sinking vessel.

Lifejackets and Lifejacket Lights

6. The Regulations brought in a requirement from 15 February 1988 for fishing vessels of less than 12 metres in length to carry lifejackets acceptable to the Department as described in the following paragraphs.

7. One adult lifejacket for each adult carried and the vessel should carry one spare lifejacket of that size. In addition, if there are children on board, there should be carried one child's lifejacket for each child carried, and if so, there should be carried one spare child's lifejacket. If there are more than 10 persons on board at least two extra lifejackets must be carried.

8. Each of the lifejackets referred to above must be fitted with a lifejacket light, which again must be to the approval of the Department.

9. Although there is no mandatory requirement for lifejacket lights to be provided in fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length, the Department continues to recommend that they should be provided in such vessels.

10. In addition, although there is no mandatory requirement for fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length to be provided with additional lifejackets, the Department continues to recommend that extra lifejackets be carried as follows. If there are more than 16 persons on board, an extra 25 per cent lifejackets should be carried and if more than eight persons are carried, but less than 16, an extra two lifejackets should be carried.

Penalties

11. The Regulations also state the penalties for the owner and the skipper of a vessel for not complying with the requirements of the Regulations. A proven offence in connection with EPIRBs and liferaft float free arrangements will be liable, on summary conviction, to attract a fine not exceeding £2,000, and in the case of lifejackets a fine not exceeding £500.

Recommendations for EPIRBs, Liferafts and Float Free Arrangements for Fishing Vessels Under 12 Metres Length

12. Fishing vessels of less than 12 metres in length are required to carry the life-saving equipment prescribed by Rule 81 of the Fishing Vessel (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975, namely at least two lifebuoys (one with a buoyant line) and six red star distress signals. They are also required to carry lifejackets, as described above, by the Fishing Vessels (Life-Saving Appliances) Regulations 1988.

13. Although there is no mandatory requirement for EPIRBs, liferafts and float free arrangements to be provided in fishing vessels of less than 12 metres in length the Department continues to recommend that they should be provided in such vessels.

14. Experience of casualties to small fishing vessels has shown that liferafts have been effective in providing essential out of water support in a cold climate for crews and many small fishing vessels now carry liferafts.

15. The Department strongly recommends that all fishing vessels under 12 metres in length which go to sea should carry a suitable liferaft for all persons aboard.

16. The liferaft will be additional to the equipment required to be carried under the Rules outlined in paragraph 12 and should be stowed, if practicable, in such a position that it can be easily and quickly launched on either side of the vessel. It should be fitted with a float free arrangement as described in paragraph 5.

17. The liferaft should be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Department of Transport
Marine Directorate
London WC1V 6LP
September 1991

© Crown copyright 1991