

CHAPTER 14

LIFEBUOYS

14.1 General

14.1.1 Lifebuoys should comply with the requirements of Schedule 8, Parts 1, 2 or 3 of MSN 1676(M). Lifebuoys must be constructed of inherently buoyant material accepted by the Nominated Body. Cork may be used but Kapok is not considered to be a suitable buoyant material for lifebuoys.

14.1.2 Lifebuoys constructed of cork should be covered with good quality material; the sewing thread used to be of a quality not less than that of an undyed linen yarn having a count of 25 lea, 3 cord reverse twist (resultant TEX count 37), satin finish and complying with BS 4F 54 for thread of this count. The grab lines should be secured to the cover by sewing or seizing, and in addition by bands of a double thickness of the covering material, 76 mm wide, which must be secured around the section of the buoy at four equidistant points. Any type of line that complies with the BS EN standards, see Appendix O, may be used since the properties of stretch and grip are not critical in this application. No metal fastenings should be used in the manufacture of lifebuoys.

14.1.3 Lifebuoys made of synthetic materials should be embossed with the manufacturer's trade mark, or trade name of the lifebuoy.

14.1.4 To conform with the requirements of Schedule 8, Part 1, paragraph 1 of MSN 1676(M) lifebuoys should be coloured flame orange, or with red and white or orange and white sectors. Lifebuoys which are covered with synthetic material and conform with this paragraph need not be painted.

14.1.5 Where acceptance of a lifebuoy is requested specimens should be submitted to the Nominated or Notified Body for testing in accordance with Chapter 9, Part I of Volume 2 - Testing of Life-Saving Appliances, together with the appropriate fee.

Note:- Lifebuoys of 610 mm diameter complying with Schedule 8, Part 3 of MSN 1676(M) are acceptable for use in certain classes of vessels.

14.2 Lifebuoy self-igniting lights

14.2.1 General

14.2.1.1 Lifebuoy lights must comply with the requirements of Schedule 8, Part 4 of MSN 1676(M).

14.2.1.2 A specimen light for which acceptance is requested should be submitted to the Nominated or Notified Body and the manufacturer should also make available suitable test facilities for testing in accordance with Chapter 9, Part II and III of Volume 2 - Testing of Life-Saving Appliances. Lifebuoy lights must be attached to their respective buoys and the length of line should be that specified in the manufacturer's fitting instructions. The line should be attached to the light at the level of the centre of flotation where possible to prevent inclination of the signal in a seaway.

14.2.2 Chemical type lights

14.2.2.1 Lights of this type must be self-igniting in water and be capable of burning brightly for at least 2 hours. It is essential for such signals to be connected hard against a strong point of the ship; a flexible connection is liable to prevent the signal from freeing itself when the lifebuoy is thrown overboard.

14.2.2.2 Lights of this type should be attached to their respective lifebuoys by a length of line sufficient to allow a direct drop of at least 3.6 m to release the light (see also paragraph 3.7.4).

14.2.3 Electrically operated lights

Such lights must be self-igniting in water and should be stowed to prevent accidental or premature ignition. They may be operated by water activated cells or dry batteries. Lifebuoy lights in tankers must be of an electric battery type.

14.3 **Lifebuoy self-activating smoke signals**

14.3.1 General

14.3.1.1 Lifebuoy self-activating smoke signals must comply with the requirements of Schedule 8, Part 5 of MSN 1676(M).

14.3.1.2 Where acceptance of a lifebuoy self-activating smoke signal is requested, application should be made to the Nominated or Notified Body and the required number of signals tested in accordance with Chapter 9, Part II of Volume 2 - Testing of Life-Saving Appliances, together with the appropriate fee.

14.3.1.3 A lifebuoy self-activating smoke signal which is provided with a self-igniting light shall also be subjected to the performance, watertightness (immersed), watertightness (floating), lens strength (if appropriate), body strength, and attachment fitting strength tests required for a lifebuoy self-igniting light.

14.3.1.4 Lifebuoy smoke signals, whether combined with self-igniting lights or not, should be renewed within three years from the date of manufacture or earlier if any doubt exists as to their condition.

14.4 Lifebuoy buoyant lifelines

14.4.1 Lifebuoy buoyant lifelines must comply with the requirements of Schedule 8, Part 6 of MSN 1676(M).

14.4.2 Surveyors should note that the property of grip is essential in this application and should ensure that a suitable type of rope is used. See Appendix O - Polypropylene cordage for Life-Saving Appliances.

14.5 Stowage of lifebuoys

14.5.1 Every ship with a bridge which is required to carry two or more lifebuoys fitted with lights or smoke signals must carry one such lifebuoy on each side of the navigating bridge, in such a manner that it is capable of quick release by some method other than lifting the lifebuoy and throwing it overboard. These quick release lifebuoys should be so positioned as to drop clear of the ship's side upon release, and must each have a mass sufficient to operate the quick release arrangement or 4 kg, whichever is the greater.

14.5.2 Where four or more lifebuoys are required by the Regulations, two of them should be carried in brackets or cleats attached to the deck rails or some other convenient place near the stern of the ship. The remainder, if any, should be carried in a similar manner, well distributed on the weather deck rails. In small ships where there is difficulty in arranging for the quick release of lifebuoys from the navigating bridge, the surveyor may waive this requirement at his discretion if he is satisfied that the best alternative arrangement is made to ensure that the lifebuoys are readily available.

14.5.3 The actual number of lifebuoys required to be fitted on the various Classes of ships, together with the requirements for those to be fitted with self-igniting lights, smoke signals, lifelines or a combination of these items is detailed in the 1999 Regulations.