

CHAPTER 16

PYROTECHNIC SIGNALS AND LINE-THROWING APPLIANCES

16.1 General

16.1.1 The statutory requirements for pyrotechnic signals are contained in Schedule 7, Parts 1 to 4 and 6 of MSN 1676(M) as appropriate.

16.1.2 The statutory requirements for line-throwing appliances are contained in Schedule 7, Part 5 of MSN 1676(M).

16.2 Conditions of acceptance

16.2.1 Before new types of pyrotechnic signals and line-throwing appliances can be accepted as complying with the statutory requirements, detailed specifications illustrated as necessary by drawings and photographs should be submitted to the Nominated or Notified Body.

16.2.2 Pyrotechnic signals and line-throwing appliances should be prototype tested as required by Chapter 8, Section 1 of Volume 2 - Testing of Life-Saving Appliances and production tests as required by Chapter 8, Section 2.

16.3 Inspection

Pyrotechnic signals should be inspected regularly and replaced if any doubt exists as to their condition. In any case, all pyrotechnics should be renewed within four years from the date of manufacture. Pyrotechnics in liferafts may be retained if their expiry date is 6 months or more after the liferaft servicing date provided they appear to be in good condition.

16.4 Storage of pyrotechnics

Stowage of pyrotechnics should be on or near the navigating bridge. In passenger ships a magazine should be provided and in all other ships stowage should be in an acceptable safe and dry place, if no magazine has been provided. The siting of magazines should be considered with regard to susceptibility to spray and rain and magazines should be fitted with suitably sited drain holes.

16.5 Disposal of out-of-date pyrotechnics

Out-of-date pyrotechnics must be disposed of ashore by one of the following means:

- returning them to the supplier, directly or via their local representative;
- requesting a liferaft service station in the UK or overseas to accept any of the ships' out-of-date pyrotechnics when liferafts are being sent ashore for servicing; liferaft service stations deal with the disposal of the expired pyrotechnics on a regular basis and have arrangements locally to do this;
- contacting the local Coastguard or Police who will be able to arrange disposal through a military establishment;
- the firing of distress signals in any situation other than distress is an offence. Expired pyrotechnics should never be used at sea for testing or practice purposes or used on land as fireworks; the chemicals may have deteriorated to cause an unpredictable reaction upon ignition and should be landed ashore as soon as possible after their date of expiry. On no account should any line-throwing rocket be fired without the rocket line attached.

16.6 Provision of distress signals in Class V passenger ships

Although there is no general requirement for such ships to be provided with distress signals, some Class V ships operate at night in other than narrow waters and the absence of distress signals may hinder rescue operations under these conditions. The MCA therefore recommends that such ships carry at least three parachute distress signals when they are operating at night in an area where their distress would not immediately be apparent to persons on shore or in other ships.