

Guidelines for Training Crews for the Purpose of Launching Lifeboats and Rescue Boats from Ships Making Headway through the Water

Notice to Shipowners and Masters

This Notice supersedes Merchant Shipping Notice No. M.1218

Summary

This Merchant Shipping Notice is an integral part of the Merchant Shipping (Musters, Training and Decision Support System) Regulations 1999. It supersedes Merchant Shipping Notice No. M.1218 providing guidelines for training crews launching lifeboats and rescue boats from ships making headway through the water in accordance with regulation 6 of these Regulations.

1. The Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances) Regulations require lifeboats (the keels of which were laid on or after 1st July 1986) carried on cargo ships of 20,000 GRT and upwards, and all rescue boats to be capable of being launched when the ship on which they are carried is making headway at speeds up to 5 knots in calm water.

2. There is no requirement that lifeboat and rescue boat launching drills be carried out when a ship is making headway but regulation 10(8) of the Merchant Shipping (Musters, Training and Decision Support System) Regulations 1999 requires that if such drills are conducted, they must be conducted in accordance with the guidance specified in this Notice. This guidance, which has been developed by the International Maritime Organization on account of the potential hazards involved, consists of guidelines set out in the Annex to this Notice.

3. Such drills should not be carried out with boats other than those described in paragraph 2 of the Annex except where it has been determined by experience that the boats, release gear and launching arrangements are suitable for the

purpose, the boat crews have been fully trained, and the drills are carried out in accordance with well proven procedures.

MSPP2(C)
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton SO151EG

Tel: 01703 329184
Fax: 01703 329204

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**GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING CREWS FOR THE
PURPOSE OF LAUNCHING LIFEBOATS AND RESCUE BOATS
FROM SHIPS MAKING HEADWAY THROUGH THE WATER**

- 1.** There is no requirement in the Merchant Shipping (Musters, Training and Decision Support System) Regulations 1999 to carry out training in launching lifeboats and rescue boats from ships making headway through the water. However these guidelines should be followed if such training is undertaken.
- 2.** These guidelines apply to those launching drills undertaken with lifeboats and rescue boats capable of being safely launched with the ship making headway at speeds of up to 5 knots in calm water, and any other ship fitted with a lifeboat or rescue boat or both having on-load release gear adequately protected against accidental or premature use.
- 3.** These guidelines supplement the procedures to be followed for the particular equipment provided on board a ship and as described in the instructions and information found in the ship's training manual required by the Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances for Ships Other than Ships of Classes III to VI(A)) Regulations 1999. This will include instructions on launching and recovery, the use of the release gear, clearing the boat from the ship, and where applicable, the use of a painter. The boat's crew should be instructed in the procedures to be followed before the drill commences.
- 4.** Drills should either be carried out on board a ship at anchor or alongside where there is a suitable relative movement between ship and water or at a suitable shore establishment where similar conditions prevail. Alternatively, at the master's discretion, it may be carried out on board a ship when making headway in sheltered waters. For safety purposes, it is not necessary when training to exercise at the maximum design 5 knots headway launching capability of the equipment. Drills should be carried out with a low relative water speed particularly where inexperienced personnel are involved. When planning the drill consideration should be given to ensuring that, as far as practicable, the relative water speed will be at a minimum when recovering the boat.
- 5.** None of the provisions in these guidelines are intended to inhibit launching drills carried out on ships where such drills are carried out on a frequent and regular basis with fully trained and experienced boat crews.
- 6.** When planning for and carrying out launching drills the following precautions should be taken -
 - (a)** drills should only be carried out under the supervision of an officer experienced in such drills and under calm water and clear conditions;
 - (b)** provisions should be made for rendering assistance to the boat to be used in the drill in the event of unforeseen circumstances, for example, where practicable a second boat should be made ready for launching;
 - (c)** when practicable the drill should be carried out when the ship has minimal freeboard;
 - (d)** instructions as to procedures should be given to the boat's crew by the officer in charge before the drill commences;
 - (e)** the minimum number of crew members should be in the boat compatible with the training to be carried out;
 - (f)** lifejackets, and where appropriate, immersion suits should be worn;

- (g) except in the case of totally enclosed boats head protection should be worn;
- (h) for the purposes of the drill, skates where fitted should be removed unless they are designed to be retained under all launch conditions;
- (i) in the case of totally enclosed boats, all openings should be closed except for the helmsman's hatch which may be open to provide a better view for launching;
- (j) two-way radiotelephone communications should be established between the officer in charge of lowering, the bridge and the boat before lowering commences, and be maintained throughout the exercise;
- (k) during lowering and recovery and while the boat is close to the ship, steps should be taken to ensure that the ship's propeller is not turning, if practicable;
- (l) before the boat enters the water the boat's engine should be running; and
- (m) the launching and recovery should be followed by a debriefing session to consolidate the lessons learned.

