



**IMMARBE**

International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize

## **CARRIAGE, INSPECTION AND TESTING OF IMERSION SUITS ONBOARD BELIZE FLAG VESSELS**

TO ALL SHIPOWNERS AND OPERATORS, DEPUTY REGISTRARS, RESIDENT AGENTS,  
CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS.

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This Merchant Shipping Notice is intended to remind all Belize flagged vessels of the amendments made to SOLAS 74 Chapter III Regulation 32.3 by Resolution MSC.152(78), deemed to have been accepted on 1 January 2006 and that will enter into force on 1 July 2006.

### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. During the 78<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Maritime Safety Committee of IMO, amendments to SOLAS regulation III/32.3 were adopted. Under these amendments all cargo ships, regardless of their date of construction, will be required to provide immersion suits for every person onboard not later than the first Safety Equipment survey after July 01, 2006.
- 1.2. The revised SOLAS Reg. III/32.3, requires one immersion suit to be provided for each person on board a cargo ship with additional suits to be provided at work and at watch-keeping stations which are remotely located from the immersion suits storage locations.
- 1.3. IMMARBE has received a number of requests for clarification on the revised regulation and the comments herein are intended to provide guidance to meet the minimum requirements. However, Owners and Managers are reminded of their obligations to provide all crewmembers with a safe working environment and place additional immersion suits on board where necessary.

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1. For the purpose of this Merchant Shipping Notice;
  - 2.1.1. *Remotely located stations* are the watch or work stations within the navigation bridge, the machinery space and any other work and watch station(s) where the horizontal distance from the nearest storage of immersion suits is greater than 100 meters in length.

2.1.2. *Warm Climates* are the sea areas where the approximate variation of seawater temperature ranges above 20° C. The geographical sectors where these variations take place has been accepted as being between 30° North and 30° South of the Ecuador.

### **3. NUMBER OF SUITS REQUIRED**

- 3.1. One immersion suit is required for each person on board at the time. The suits must be of an approved type in accordance with the LSA Code and be provided in sizes appropriate for the crew onboard.
- 3.2. Immersion suits may be stored in either one or more muster and embarkation stations or otherwise distributed through out the crew cabins in readily accessible and clearly marked locations.
- 3.3. It should be noted that changes in the arrangement, storage and location of immersion suits will entail amendments in safety procedures and/or instructions that might need to be endorsed by the Recognized Organization issuing the ISM Certification.
- 3.4. In addition to the number of suits required for each person on board, a number of suits shall be placed in remotely located stations. A minimum of two (2) for the navigation bridge; two (2) for the machinery space and two (2) for any other location meeting the criteria of 2.1.1., will be considered satisfactory by this Administration.

### **4. INSPECTION AND TESTING**

- 4.1. The monthly shipboard inspection of immersion suits as required by SOLAS 74, Chapter III/Reg. 20.7 shall take into account the procedure recommended in the Annex to circular MSC/Circ.1047.
- 4.2. The periodic testing of immersion suits shall be based on the guidelines contained in the Annex to circular MSC/Circ. 1114. Particular emphasis should be placed in performing the air pressure test at intervals not exceeding three (3) years.
- 4.3. Records of monthly inspections and periodic testing of immersion suits should be maintained onboard at all times.

### **5. EXEMPTIONS**

- 5.1. A ship other than bulk carrier as defined in SOLAS 74, Chapter IX/Reg. 1, which is constantly engaged in voyages in warm climates, shall apply for an exemption to be issued by this Administration.
- 5.2. A vessel that has been trading in warm climates and which has been previously issued with an exemption to carry immersion suits where the geographical sectors fall outside the 30° North

and 30° South as prescribed in MSC/Circ. 1046, shall apply to IMMARBE for the re-issuance of the exemption.

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