

SOLAS CHAPTER III

Life-saving Appliances and Arrangements

Chapter III of the SOLAS Convention includes requirements for life-saving appliances and arrangements, including requirements for life boats, rescue boats and life jackets according to type of ship.

The International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code gives specific technical requirements for LSAs and is mandatory under Regulation 34, which states that all life-saving appliances and arrangements shall comply with the applicable requirements of the LSA Code.

Prevention of accidents involving lifeboats

Amendments to SOLAS - entry into force 1 July 2008

The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), at its 82nd session held from 29 November to 8 December 2006, adopted an amendment to SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.4 concerning provisions for the launch of free-fall lifeboats during abandon-ship drills. The amendment will allow, during the abandon-ship drill, for the lifeboat to either be free-fall launched with only the required operating crew on board, or lowered into the water by means of the secondary means of launching without the operating crew on board, and then manoeuvred in the water by the operating crew. The aim is to prevent accidents with lifeboats occurring during abandon-ship drills. The amendment is expected to enter into force on 1 July 2008.

Amendments to SOLAS - entry into force 1 July 2006

On 1 July 2006, amendments (adopted in May 2004) to SOLAS chapter III - *Life-saving appliances and arrangements* entered into force. They are intended to help prevent accidents with lifeboats during drills. They stemmed from work by the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE) intended to address the unacceptably high number of accidents with lifeboats in which crew have been injured, sometimes fatally, while participating in lifeboat drills and/or inspections.

The amendments to SOLAS regulations III/19 - *Emergency training and drills* and III/20 *Operational readiness, maintenance and inspections* concern the conditions in which lifeboat emergency training and drills should be conducted and introduce changes to the operational requirements for maintenance, weekly and monthly inspections so as not to require any persons to be on board, and servicing of launching appliances and on-load release gear.

Meanwhile, the MSC agreed an MSC circular on *Early implementation of draft SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.4*; an MSC circular on [Guidelines for developing operation and maintenance manuals for lifeboat systems](#) and an MSC circular 1206 on [Measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats](#) consolidating previous circulars MSC/Circ.1049, MSC/Circ.1093, MSC/Circ.1136 and MSC/Circ.1137. The consolidated circular includes the Guidelines for periodic servicing and maintenance of lifeboats, launching appliances and on-load release gear; Guidance on safety during abandon-ship drills using lifeboats; and Guidelines for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats.

Further information:-

[Surviving disaster – life-saving at sea - 24/9/2003](#)

[There will always be a risk that maritime accidents will happen, but preparing for such eventualities can mean the difference between lives lost and lives saved. This paper looks at how IMO's regulations and recommendations on surviving disasters at sea.](#)