OCIMF

Survival Craft

A Seafarers Guide

Oil Companies International Marine Forum

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A Seafarer's Guide

OCIMF's mission is to be the foremost authority on the safe and environmentally responsible operation of oil tankers and terminals, promoting continuous improvements in standards of design and operation.

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Glossary

Administration	The Flag State to which a particular ship is registered and under which legislation the ship operates.
Davit Horn	The horn arrangement positioned at the top of the davit arm that takes the weight of the release gear and lifeboat off the falls when the lifeboat is in the stowed position.
Davit Launched Lifeboat/Liferaft	A survival craft that is lowered to the waterline while still attached to the davit falls, the speed of descent being controlled by the davit winch brake. Note: '*Davit Launched Lifeboats*' may also be referred to as '*Gravity Lifeboats*'
Drill	An event to practice and train for an emergency response. Also known as an '*Exercise*'.
Fall Preventer Device	A means of preventing inadvertent hook release or of restricting the potential movement of the survival craft by such release. Fall Preventer Devices include '*Maintenance Strops', 'Hanging Off Pennants' and 'Safety/Maintenance Pins*'.
Free-Fall Lifeboat	A survival craft that drops to the waterline solely under the influence of gravity and is not attached to the davit once it has been released.
Gravity Lifeboat	See '*Davit Launched Lifeboat*'.
Hanging off Pennant	A wire or strop that attaches the survival craft directly to the davit for use when performing maintenance on the falls or release hook.

Harbour Pin	A pin that mechanically prevents the operation of the davit. Traditionally used to prevent accidental release while alongside in port.
International Maritime Organization (IMO)	The section of the United Nations with responsibility for coordination of international maritime safety and environmental issues. Conventions and Resolutions passed by IMO are implemented onboard vessels, by individual Flag States, as legislation.
Morse Cable	A control cable that moves axially inside an exterior sheathing. It is often used for controlling outboard motor throttle operation and steering.
Personal Flotation Device	A personal flotation device is a device designed to assist a wearer, either conscious or unconscious, disabled or exhausted, to keep afloat with their mouth and nose (airway) above the water surface. Also referred to as *PFD, lifejacket, life preserver, Mae West, life vest, life saver, cork jacket, life belt, flotation suit*.
Recovery Strop	A soft strop or strops that connect between the release hook and the survival craft to separate the heavy hook arrangement from the seafarer when recovering the survival craft during heavy sea conditions. Also referred to as '*Heavy Weather Strops*'.
Release Hook	The hook that connects the survival craft to the davit.
Remote Releasing Wire	The control wire by which the winch brake of a davit launched lifeboat can be released from within the lifeboat.

Safety/ Maintenance Pin	A fall preventer device that comprises of a pin that mechanically blocks the release hook from opening.
Simulated Launch	A simulated launching is a means of training the crew in the free-fall release procedure of free-fall lifeboats and in verifying the satisfactory function of the free-fall release system without allowing the lifeboat to fall into the sea.
Survival Craft	Is a craft capable of sustaining the lives of persons in distress from the time of abandoning the ship. Often referred to as '*Lifeboats*' or '*Liferafts*'.
Toolbox Talk	The safety briefing that takes place before an activity commences that informs all participants of expectations and possible hazards.

Introduction

This guide has been published by the Oil Companies International Marine Forum with the aim of providing practical information to assist seafarers with the safe operation and maintenance of survival craft. Although the main focus of the guidance is directed at personnel onboard, it will also be of interest to shore managers and company superintendents having general responsibilities for shipboard safety.

Over recent years, there have been a number of serious incidents within the industry during the inspection, maintenance and routine testing of survival craft. The root cause of many of these incidents has been identified as changes in equipment design which, in-turn, have led to a lack of familiarity with the operational and maintenance requirements of installed equipment. This is perhaps most noticeable with on-load release systems, where a large number of differing approved designs has the potential to lead to confusion with regard to the mechanism's operation and maintenance requirements.

It is recognised that the International Maritime Organization, together with industry organisations representing the broad spectrum of manufacturer's and users, is actively developing revised design criteria for survival craft. However, this work may take some time to complete and it will be several years before any agreed measures are universally adopted and implemented within the industry. The guidance contained within this publication is aimed at bridging this gap by recommending measures that are applicable to existing systems and their safe operation.

Previous studies of survival craft incidents have identified unplanned hook release during routine activities as the event most likely to cause serious injury or damage. Several recommendations within this guide are aimed at preventing such incidents and include the use of control measures, such as fall preventer devices, during exercises and drills involving the launching or recovery of survival craft.

The structure of this guide recognises the different types of survival craft that may be found onboard. Section 1 ‘Equipment’, Section 2 ‘Maintenance and Inspection’ and Section 3 ‘Familiarisation and Training’ address general issues that are applicable to all survival craft. Separate sections then consider individual types, which are broadly categorised as ‘davit launched lifeboats’, ‘free-fall lifeboats’, ‘dedicated rescue boats’ and ‘davit launched liferafts’. Particular issues relating to the survival craft type, together with its launching and recovery, are described in each of the separate sections. Finally, the Annexes provide examples to assist with the development of onboard procedures and risk assessments that address the launching and recovery of survival craft.

The guidance is considered to be of primary relevance to personnel serving on tankers and gas carriers. However, many of the recommendations will also be applicable to seafarers serving on other types of cargo ship.

Section 1

Equipment

The design, construction and testing of Survival Craft, including lifeboats, liferafts and rescue boats and associated equipment, are conducted to pre-determined rigorous standards that are described in the International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code, which has been mandated by the IMO in compliance with requirements of the 1974 SOLAS Convention.

The large number of manufacturers of this equipment has led to numerous combinations of lifeboat and davit arrangements, as well as currently over 70 different types of release hook mechanisms. Each combination has its own very similar, but also very different, way of operating, which has resulted in the seafarer being faced with a major challenge when it comes to understanding each and every type of equipment they may face at sea. Although the industry is striving to rationalise the functional design and ultimate standardisation of this equipment, this may take several years to achieve. In the interim, there are certain steps that can be taken to ensure that the equipment can be safely operated and maintained.

Owners and Operators should consider:

- Standardisation of the equipment that they have within their fleet
- conducting detailed plan approval of the equipment provided on new build ships
- engaging the vendor(s) of the survival craft during final commissioning to ensure that equipment is correctly installed and to use the opportunity to provide vendor training
- ensuring that the operation and maintenance manuals provided use easily understood, concise wording, in English and the working language of those onboard
- ensuring that any modifications carried out on life saving appliances are undertaken in compliance with Flag State and

Classification Society requirements. When new or replacement equipment is provided, ensure that robust management of change procedures are followed to ensure compatibility

- ensuring that any issues and concerns are fed back to the vendor to promote the continued development of safe equipment
- promoting the effective dissemination of lessons learnt from any incidents and near misses involving survival craft, both within their fleet and to the industry through established groups representing interests such as ship operators, P&I Clubs and Classification Societies.

Seafarers should ensure that they are familiar with the specific equipment on their vessel by:

- Referring to the SOLAS training manual
- actively participating and supporting drills and exercises to gain 'hands on' experience of the specific equipment on their ship
- if required, to carry out maintenance routines, ensuring that they are fully conversant with the safe operation and maintenance of the equipment under their care.

It is important that all onboard are actively encouraged to provide feedback to the Master on any issues associated with survival craft, including safety concerns and operational difficulties, in order that owners or operators can be advised and implement corrective action.

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