

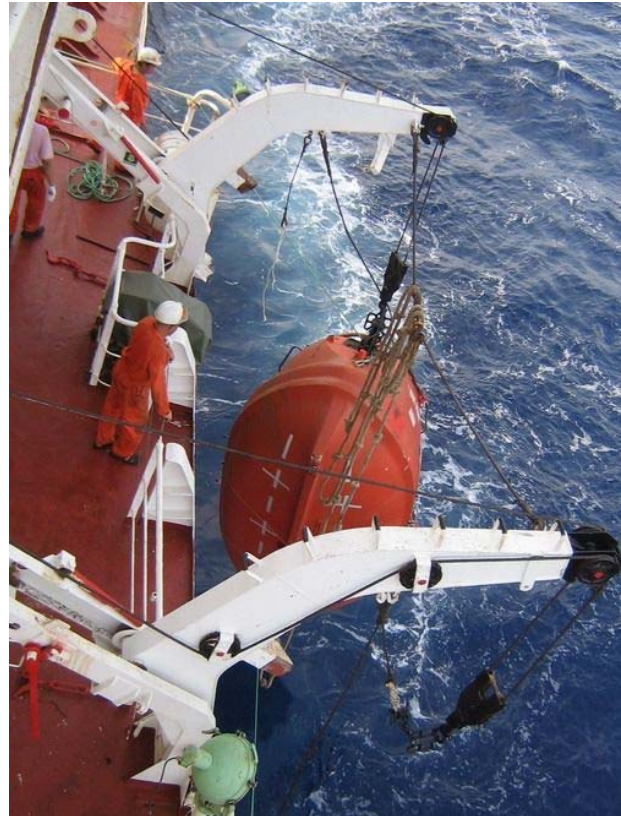
Lifeboat launches during abandon ship drills

Lifeboat accidents continue to occur during lifeboat drills on board ship.

In an effort to minimise the risk to the seafarers taking part in such drills, the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee has decided to clarify the application of SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.3 which governs the launch of lifeboats during abandon ship drills.

The regulation requires each lifeboat to be launched and manoeuvred in the water by its assigned operating crew at least once every three months during an abandon ship drill. However, Circular MSC.1/Circ. 1326 states that although the regulation requires the lifeboat to be launched and manoeuvred as previously indicated, *it does not require that the assigned operating crew be on board the lifeboat when it is launched.*

The Committee has therefore agreed that the assigned operating crew is not required to be on board the lifeboat during launching, unless the Master, having taken into account all safety aspects and in accordance with the authority conferred to him by paragraph 5.5 of the ISM Code considers the lifeboat should be launched with the assigned operating crew on board.



During the period 1 September to 30 November 2009 the Port State Control (PSC) regions of Paris MOU and Tokyo MOU will launch a Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on lifeboats. The PSC of the regions of Indian Ocean MOU and Black Sea MOU will also participate.

The clarification provided in MSC circular 1326 should also be observed by Port State Control officers involved in the CIC on lifeboats.

Gard's general advice to Members is that crew members should not be on board the lifeboats in the course of lowering and hoisting during exercises, until the IMO has provided detailed new requirements for safe on-load release hooks, and until existing hooks have been certified to comply with such new requirements.

Gard also refers to Loss Prevention Circular no. 02-08: Lifeboat accidents during drills, issued in February 2008 which provides general advice on how to deal with this problem on board.

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