



TECHNICAL CIRCULAR No. 207 of 20th July 2014

To:	All Surveyors/Auditors
Applicable to flag:	All Flags
Subject:	How to reduce fatalities during lifeboat drills
Reference:	Safety Measures

The statistics say that 16% of lives lost by merchant mariners happen during training exercises. The UK P&I Club has issued Bodily Injury News - Summer 2014 edition including an article to investigate why the figure of lives lost by merchant mariners during drills is so tragically high. About 16% of lives are lost from training exercises supervised by qualified and experienced seafarers.

Lessons learned from the prior incidents can be summarized as follows:

- The entire crew should be capable of operating the lifeboat systems, easily understanding the mechanics and procedures even with minimum training or experience.
- Communication between the crew during drills must be clear, with confirmed completion of each step throughout the exercise.
- When the design of the lifeboat launch system and its components are complicated, Members should consistently train on the operation, repair and maintenance of the entire lifeboat system.

If necessary, require that the manufacturer supply easily understood instructions and diagrams to explain the proper operation OR create a common operating procedure safety manual independent of the manufacturer instructions.

The only remedy for human error is continuous training and adequate risk assessment procedures. The most effective training for the seafarers is for them to know why something is done a particular way, to better understand the procedures - not just remember them.

As a result their understanding gives the crew members more confidence in the systems. Training should specifically address the launching of lifeboats. Drills must be reliable and safe with minimum risk to those participating.

The IMO amended SOLAS in 2006 and 2008 to address conditions under which lifeboat drills are conducted, introduce changes to the maintenance and inspection requirements, and drills without requiring crew members to be onboard the boat.

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REFERENCES:

- Safety Measures

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Kindest Regards,

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