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CIRCULAR Panama Marine Evacuation System (MES) procedure

Panama has issued MMC-394 to provide the procedure to be followed for the test of the Marine Evacuation System (MES).

[Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators | Surveyors/Auditors](#)

[C21036 | 22 October 2021](#)

Marine Evacuation System (MES) is an appliance for the rapid transfer of persons from the embarkation deck of a ship to a floating survival craft, according to the definition of SOLAS, Chapter III, Regulation 3.14.

Marine Evacuation Systems (MES) are maintained by **intervals not exceeding 12 months** servicing, and the only opportunity to assess the system ability to deploy in an emergency is during **the six (6) yearly rotational deployment** therefore the Panama Maritime Authority (PMA) wishes to ensure that MES operates to a required standard at these rotational deployments, through [MMC-394](#), dated June 2021.

The Circular describes the components and types of MES, as well as deployment of MES and failure criteria, deployment of MES and success criteria, use of deployment as a training exercise and deployment and service history.

Every Marine Evacuation System (MES) shall be serviced (Reg. III/20.8.1):

1. **at intervals not exceeding 12 months**, provided where in any case this is impracticable, the Panama Maritime Authority may extend this period to 17 months; and
2. **at an approved servicing station** which is competent to service them, maintains proper servicing facilities and uses only properly trained personnel.

Dromon [Publication](#) for on-board maintenance and drills agenda mentions the Marine Evacuation System (MES) that shall need to be followed on board the vessels.

[Rotational deployment of Marine Evacuation Systems \(Reg. III/20.8.2\)](#)

In addition to or in conjunction with the servicing intervals of marine evacuation systems required by above paragraph, each marine evacuation system should be deployed from the ship on a rotational basis at intervals to be agreed by the Panama Maritime Authority provided that each system is to be deployed **at least once every six (6) years**.

Construction of the marine evacuation systems (LSA Code – 6.2.1)

The passage of the marine evacuation system shall provide for safe descent of persons of various ages, sizes, and physical capabilities wearing approved lifejackets from the embarkation station to the floating platform or survival craft. Strength and construction of the passage and platform shall be to the satisfaction of the PMA.

Performance of the marine evacuation system (LSA Code – 6.2.2)

Where one or more marine evacuation systems are provided on a ship, at least 50% of such systems shall be subjected to a trial deployment after installation. Subject to these deployments being satisfactory, the untried systems are to be deployed within 12 months of installation. A marine evacuation system shall be such as to enable the total number of persons for which it is designed, to be transferred from the ship into the inflated liferafts within a period of 30 min in the case of a passenger ship and of 10 min in the case of a cargo ship from the time abandon ship signal is given.

Inflatable liferafts associated with marine evacuation systems (LSA – 6.2.3)

Any inflatable liferaft used in conjunction with the marine evacuation system shall:

- conform to the requirements of section 4.2 of LSA Code;
- be sited close to the system container but be capable of dropping clear of the deployed system and boarding platform;
- be capable of release one at a time from its stowage rack with arrangements which will enable it to be moored alongside the platform;
- be stowed in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/13.4; and
- be provided with pre-connected or easily connected retrieving lines to the platform.

Marking on marine evacuation systems ((LSA – 6.2.5)

The marine evacuation system shall be marked with:

- maker's name or trade mark;
- serial numbers;
- date of manufacture (month and year);
- name of approving authority;
- name and place of servicing station where it was last serviced, along
- with the date of servicing; and
- the capacity of the system.

Preparation for Rotational Deployment of MES

Rotational deployment of MES is required **at least once every six (6) years** according to SOLAS, Reg. III/20.8.2 and **within twelve (12) months when paragraph 6.2.2.2 of the LSA Code is applicable**. Dromon shall be present to witness the rotational deployment of MES.

The PMA reserves the right to request at any time objective evidence on the verification and fulfilment of rotational deployment of MES.

Act now

Ship Owners / Managers / Operators should take into consideration the above information and ensure compliance on board Panama flying vessels.