

# Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority  
General Directorate of Merchant Marine  
Control and Compliance Department

## MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-68

- To:** Recognized Organizations (ROs), Classification Societies, Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels and Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates.
- Subject:** Manning of survival craft and supervision.
- Reference:** Law No. 7 of October 27, 1977 – SOLAS.  
SOLAS Convention Chapter III regulation 10.
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### 1. Purpose:

- 1.1. Since the 1983 Amendments to SOLAS 74 came into force on 1 July 1986 a new Chapter III is included - "Lifesaving Appliances and Arrangements". Regulation 10 of this Chapter reflects new requirements for the manning of survival craft.

### 2. Scope / Applicability:

- 2.1. The requirements of a certificated person apply to all types of vessels engaged in international voyages.
- 2.2. SOLAS III/10: *"there shall be a sufficient number of crewmembers, who may be deck officers or certificated persons, on board for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board"*.



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## 3. Background

- 3.1. Previous SOLAS requirements were limited to the provision of a number of certificated lifeboatmen trained in the handling and operation of lifeboats and other lifesaving appliances on passenger vessels. The new requirements apply to all types of vessels engaged in international voyages and stipulate that "there shall be a sufficient number of crewmembers, who may be deck officers or certificated persons, on board for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board".
- 3.2. The new requirements refer not to a "certificated lifeboatman" but to a "certificated person" who is defined in the Regulation 3 of Chapter III as follows:

"Certificated person is a person who holds a certificate of proficiency in survival craft issued under the authority of, or recognized as valid by, the Administration in accordance with the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, in force; or a person who holds a certificate issued or recognized by the Administration of a State not a Party to that Convention for the same purpose as the convention certificate."

## 4. Requirement

- 4.1. To clarify the criteria followed by this Administration when regulation refer to "sufficient number", in case of passenger vessels engaged on international voyages of 200 GRT or more, the minimum number of deck officers or certificated persons, on board, for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board, shall be determined as shown in the following table:



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- 4.2.** Prescribed Complement of Each Lifeboat Minimum Number of Deck Officers or Certified Persons Shall Be:

Less than 41 persons: 2  
From 41 to 61 persons: 3  
From 62 to 85 persons: 4  
Above 85 persons: 5

- 4.3.** On each Panama flag vessel other than passenger ship, there should be at least the following assignment for operating and launching of each lifeboat on board:

One (1) Certificated Person in command; and  
One (1) Certificated Person as second-in-command

- 4.4.** In the manning of every survival craft there should be persons assigned and capable for the following:

Operating the survival craft radio equipment; and  
Operating the engine and carrying out minor adjustments (in case of lifeboats).

- 4.5.** All vessels that in addition to lifeboats installed also have liferafts on board, there should be a deck officer or certificated person placed in charge of each liferaft.

- 4.6.** Any vessel engaged to offshore operations (e.g. supply vessel, stand-by vessel), yacht and any type of vessel that due to its characteristics, nature of voyage and the number of persons on board that might not have lifeboat as primary method of abandon, there should be a deck officer or certificated person placed in charge of each liferaft.

- 4.7.** Into the group of vessels for the previous paragraph, the Administration may permit persons practiced in the handling and operation of liferafts to be placed in charge of liferafts in lieu of the deck officer or certificated person required.



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- 4.8. The Muster List shall specify which deck officer and/or certificated persons are assigned, and which are their substitutes (in case of key persons may become disable) to ensure at all times that the survival crafts are maintained in good condition and ready for immediate use.

**Note:** Deck Officers, by virtue of their Certificates of Competency, are considered to be proficient in survival craft.

**October, 2023** – *New Subject, new reference, new paragraph 1 (Purpose), paragraph 2 (Scope) and general review of the content of this MMC.*  
**June, 1992.**

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Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

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