



Merchant Shipping Directorate



## IMMERSION SUITS AND ANTI-EXPOSURE SUITS

### Technical Notice SLS.8 Rev.2

*Notice to Shipowners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters,  
Owners' Representatives and Recognised Organisations*

Reference is made to SOLAS 74 Chapter III Regulation 32.3, as amended.

In accordance with the provisions of Regulation 32.3.2 cargo ships, other than bulk carriers (as defined in SOLAS 74 Chapter IX Regulation 1), may be exempted from the requirement of Regulation 32.3.2 when such ships are constantly engaged on voyages within "warm climates". Following consideration of the guidance provided in MSC/Circ 1046 – Guidelines for the Assessment of Thermal Protection, this Administration has defined the following sea areas for the scope of application of the exemption provision:

- the sea area between the parallels of latitude 30° North and 30° South;
- the sea area of the Mediterranean Sea south of latitude 35° North;
- the sea area within 20 nautical miles from the coasts of Africa not included in the sea areas above.

On ships that are required to provide every person onboard with an immersion suit complying with the requirements of the Life-Saving Appliances Code Section 2.3, there shall also be available:

- at least two additional immersion suits of the same type located in the navigating bridge
- at least two additional immersion suits of the same type located in the engine room
- at least two additional immersion suits of the same type located at workstations where the crew performs its normal duties (except watch-keeping duties); if the horizontal distance from the workstations to the stowage position of the immersion suits is more than 100 metres.
- An adequate number of immersion suits intended solely for training purposes and marked accordingly.

Immersion Suits may be either stored at clearly identifiable locations close to the survival craft embarkation stations or may also be distributed to each individual member of the crew.

The monthly shipboard inspection of immersion suits and anti-exposure suits as required by SOLAS 74 Chapter III Regulation 20.7 shall take into account the guidelines contained in MSC/Circ.1047.

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Vacuum packed immersion suits which have transparent packaging of sufficient strength durable for stowage during ship operations and are capable of being opened without damaging the suit and with minimal effort, shall meet the following requirements in-lieu of MSC/Circ.1047:

- a) the airtight packaging shall be inspected on a monthly basis in-line with the manufacturer's recommendations, together with a basic check of the visible portions of the package suit
- b) if any defects or damages are noticed to either the airtight packaging or the immersion suit, then the suit shall be removed from its vacuumed package and inspected as per MSC/Circ. 1047. In case of any doubt on the suit's condition inside the vacuumed package, then the immersion suit shall be unpacked and tested in accordance with MSC/Circ. 1047
- c) if after the inspection of the unpacked immersion suit, which was tested in accordance with MSC/Circ. 1047, reveals a defective vacuum pack, then additional immersion suits (25% of the vacuum packed immersion suits onboard), shall be unpacked and tested as per MSC/Circ. 1047. If further defects are revealed, then all vacuum packed immersion suits shall be tested in accordance with MSC/Circ. 1047
- d) sufficient spares shall be made available to replace any defective or damaged immersion suits sent for additional testing
- e) a sufficient number of immersion suits packed in bags similar to vacuum packed immersion suits, shall be made available for drill and training purposes, the number of which shall be included in the Ship's Management System and/or Safety Inventory. Such suits shall be clearly marked to be used for training and drill purposes only
- f) a surveyor may request to open vacuum packed immersion suits to his/her satisfaction in case an inspection in accordance with (a), (b) or (c) warrants such measures
- g) immersion suits that have been removed from their vacuum packaging must be treated as suits in standard packaging and shall be inspected as specified in SOLAS Chapter III, until such time that these are sent away for repackaging as an airtight unit by an approved service station. Adequate and sufficient storage space must be provided for immersion suits removed from their packaging.
- h) Any irregular but frequent defects or abnormalities related but not limited to the storage, condition, quality or function of vacuum packed immersion suits, shall be immediately reported to the administration.

Air pressure testing of immersion suits, including vacuum packed immersion suits and anti-exposure suits is to be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and the guidance contained in MSC/Circ.1114, as applicable, at intervals not exceeding three years. The intervals are counted from the suit's manufacturing date up to three for the first testing interval. Subsequent testing intervals shall be counted from the last of the three year testing interval. Testing should be performed at a suitable shore-based facility or alternatively on board the ship provided that suitable testing equipment is available.

Notwithstanding the above, any immersion suits of over 10 years of age must be serviced annually at an approved service station.



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Any repairs to immersion suits or anti-exposure suits should be carried out by a facility having trained personnel and access to the manufacturer's instructions, parts and adhesives.

Lif jackets required by SOLAS 74 Chapter III Regulation 7.2 shall be available onboard regardless of the type of immersion suits provided.

### Additional Information

MSC/Circ.1047 can be downloaded from:

<https://www.transport.gov.mt/MSC-1-Circ-1047-Guidelines-For-Monthly-Shipboard-Inspection-Of-Immersion-Suits-And-Anti-Exposure-Suits-By-Secretariat.pdf-f3872>

MSC/Circ. 1114 can be downloaded from:

<https://www.transport.gov.mt/MSC-1-Circ-1114-Guidelines-For-Periodic-Testing-Of-Immersion-Suit-And-Anti-Exposure-Suit-Seams-And-Closure-Secretariat.pdf-f3871>

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