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## **INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 98**

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### **Servicing of Inflatable Liferafts, Inflated Rescue Boats, Inflatable Lifejackets and Hydrostatic Release Units**

#### **Guidance and Instructions for Bahamas Recognised Organisations, Bahamas Approved Nautical Inspectors, Ship Owners, Managers and Masters**

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. This Bulletin provides guidance relating to the servicing of inflatable liferafts, inflated rescue boats, inflatable lifejackets and hydrostatic release units.
- 1.2. For Marine Evacuation Systems (MES), please refer to BMA Information Bulletin No.174.

#### **2. Application**

- 2.1. This Bulletin applies to all ships registered in The Bahamas fitted with inflatable liferafts, inflated rescue boats, inflatable lifejackets and hydrostatic release units.

#### **3. Service Intervals and Extensions**

- 3.1. Regulation 20 of Chapter III of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1074, as amended (SOLAS) requires that inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets, inflated rescue boats and hydrostatic release units (other than disposable hydrostatic release units) be serviced at intervals not exceeding 12 months.

- 3.2. The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) may extend the service period by up to 5 months if a ship is trading to ports where there are no approved service stations, in accordance with SOLAS Regulation III/20.8.1.1.
- 3.3. The BMA may allow an extension to the servicing interval in line with the relevant annual or periodical survey window, i.e. 12 months +/- 3 months, up to a maximum of 18 months from the last date of servicing, in accordance with IMO Circular MSC/Circ.955. In such instances where the latest servicing and previous servicing were not completed within a 12-month period but were done within the relevant annual or periodical survey windows, the Company does not need to apply to the BMA for an extension.
- 3.4. Where inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets, inflated rescue boats and hydrostatic release units (other than disposable hydrostatic release units) are serviced outside the relevant annual or periodical survey window, and cannot be serviced within the 12-month period, the Company<sup>1</sup> shall apply to the BMA, via the Recognised Organisation (i.e. Class), for an extension.
- 3.5. The Recognised Organisation is to review the application and seek authorisation from the BMA for the extension.
- 3.6. When reviewing applications for extension to service intervals, Recognised Organisations must verify that the justification for the extension is reasonable in the circumstances.
- 3.7. In considering any extension, due regard shall be given to dated components which may expire during this extension period (e.g. food, water, seasickness tablets, etc.). Otherwise, extensions shall be in line with the specified SOLAS allowances.
- 3.8. The period of the extension shall be limited to that considered necessary to carry out the required servicing and/or survey completion, but in no case shall the extension be for more than 5 months.

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<sup>1</sup> The "Company" is the entity responsible for the management of the ship in accordance with the ISM Code. For ships to which the ISM Code is not applicable, the Company is the Managing Owner in accordance with Section 52 of the Merchant Shipping Act.

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#### **4. "Extended Service Interval" Liferafts**

- 4.1. Liferafts designed for an extended service period of up to 30 months and approved by the Administration of the country of manufacture are acceptable to the BMA, provided that the approval is verified by a Bahamas Recognised Organisation as being in accordance with MSC.1/Circ.1328.
- 4.2. "Extended service interval" means a service interval in excess of 12 months. Therefore, the provisions of SOLAS Regulation III/20.8.1.1 do not apply.
- 4.3. Accordingly, the BMA will not approve requests for extension of the extended service interval, other than in circumstances of *force majeure*.
- 4.4. The Company should carefully plan servicing of liferafts with extended service intervals to ensure that the required service is completed within the extended service interval period.

#### **5. Revision History**

Rev.3 (26 January 2018) – New format and full revision, including removal of MES requirements (moved to new Bulletin 174).

Rev.2 (14 February 2011) – Amended to reflect requirement for BMA approval of extensions

Rev.1 (18 August 2010) – Addition of reference to extended service interval liferafts, editorial changes

Rev.0 (14 March 2007) - First issue