



# **Information on the Regulations Applicable to Pleasure Vessels**

# INFORMATION ON THE REGULATIONS THAT ARE APPLICABLE TO PLEASURE CRAFT

## INTRODUCTION

Pleasure craft can be considered to be vessels that are used for sport or recreational purposes only and do not operate for any financial gain to the owner. A more extensive legal definition can be had by reference to the Merchant Shipping (Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure) 1998 as amended.

This document gives advice and some detail on what regulations apply. More specific information can be obtained by consulting the relevant regulations or by contacting the MCA.

**Note - If more than 12 passengers are carried, irrespective of whether payment is made, the vessel is a "passenger ship" under the Merchant Shipping Regulations. A passenger may be considered as anyone onboard not involved with the running of the vessel. If it is intended to carry more than 12 passengers, notification should be made to the Agency's local Marine Office. On a case by case basis, the local Marine Office may consider the granting of an exemption from the applicable Passenger Ship Regulations for a pleasure vessel carrying more than 12 passengers, on an occasional basis.**

## SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Pleasure craft of less than 13.7 metres in length are not covered by any statutory requirements as far as life saving or fire fighting equipment is concerned.

At 13.7 metres in length and over they are, however, obliged to comply with the Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances for ships other than ships of Classes III to VI (A)) Regulations 1999 and the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Small Ships) Regulations 1998 respectively. These vessels are classified as being Class XII in these Regulations.

## LIFE-SAVING EQUIPMENT

Vessels are to comply with the requirements of Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances For Ships Other Than Ships Of Classes III to VI(A)) Regulations 1999 ( SI 1999/2721). In this case all lifesaving equipment on board is to be in accordance MSN 1676 (M), The Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances for Ships Other than Ships of Classes III to VI(A)) Regulations 1999, and MSN 1677 (M) The Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances for Ships other than Ships of Classes III to VI(A) Regulations 1999.

**Alternatively vessels may comply with the general exemption issued to these regulations, on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2002, and the equipment standards contained within the associated schedule, attached to the end of this notice.**

## Notes

1. Life-saving appliances on vessels that proceed to sea are to be fitted with retro-reflective material.
2. The lifejackets required on class XII vessels must be either of BS EN 396, BS EN 399, CEN 150 standard, or a DOT (UK) approved type and must not depend solely on oral inflation for their buoyancy.

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

**For alternative requirements also see general exemption, issued on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2002, for Class XII vessels from the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Small Craft) Regulations 1998, attached to the end of this notice.**

Vessels over 500 gross tons must comply with Regulation 28 of the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Large Ships) Regulations 1998

Vessels over 150 tons gross and under 500 tons gross must comply with Regulation 17 of the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Small Ships) regulations 1998

Ships of under 150 tons gross but 21.34 metres in length or over must be equipped so that they can apply at least 1 jet of water from a powered fire pump to any part of the vessel. The pump should be situated outside propulsion machinery spaces but if it is not, another, possibly manually operated, pump must also be provided outside the space.

Vessels under 150 tons and less than 21.34 in length must have a fire pump, either power or manually operated, situated outside the machinery space.

In vessels of less than 15 metres in length or open decked boats of less than 21.34 metre length, 2 buckets on suitable length lanyards may be substituted for the pump.

Additionally, fire extinguishers must be provided: -

At least 2 for vessels under 21.34 metre length;

At least 3 for vessels over 21.34 metre length;

And where there is a machinery space, at least 2 portable extinguishers suited for oil fires in that space.

A fireman's axe must be carried on fully decked vessels less than 150 tons and 21.34 metres or more in length.

## **SOLAS V For Pleasure Craft**

On 1 July 2002, some new regulations came into force, which directly affect pleasure craft users. These regulations are part of Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, otherwise known as SOLAS V. Most of the SOLAS convention only applies to large commercial ships, but parts of Chapter V apply to small, privately owned pleasure craft. The following requirements apply to all craft, irrespective of size. If you are involved in a boating accident and it is subsequently shown that you have not applied the basic principles outlined in this document, you could be prosecuted.

## **VOYAGE PLANNING**

Regulation V/34 'Safe Navigation and avoidance of dangerous situations', is a new regulation. It concerns prior-planning for your boating trip, more commonly known as voyage or passage planning. Voyage planning is basically common sense. As a pleasure boat user, you should particularly take into account the following points when planning a boating trip:

- **Weather:** before you go boating, check the weather forecast and get regular updates if you are planning to be out for any length of time.
- **Tides:** check the tidal predictions for your trip and ensure that they fit with what you are planning to do.

- **Limitations of the vessel:** consider whether your boat is up to the proposed trip and that you have sufficient safety equipment and stores with you.
- **Crew:** take into account the experience and physical ability of your crew. Crews suffering from cold, tiredness and seasickness won't be able to do their job properly and could even result in an overburdened skipper.
- **Navigational dangers:** make sure you are familiar with any navigational dangers you may encounter during your boating trip. This generally means checking an up to date chart and a current pilot book or almanac.
- **Contingency plan:** always have a contingency plan should anything go wrong. Before you go, consider bolt holes and places where you can take refuge should conditions deteriorate or if you suffer an incident or injury. Bear in mind that your GPS set is vulnerable and could fail at the most inconvenient time. It is sensible and good practice to make sure you are not over-reliant on your GPS set and that you can navigate yourself to safety without it should it fail you.
- **Information ashore:** make sure that someone ashore knows your plans and knows what to do should they become concerned for your well being. The Coastguard Voluntary Safety Identification Scheme (commonly known as CG66) is also free and easy to join. The scheme aims to help the Coastguard to help you quickly should you get into trouble while boating. It could save your life.

## RADAR REFLECTORS

Many large ships rely on radar for navigation and for spotting other vessels in their vicinity. So, whatever size your boat is, it's important to make sure that you can be seen by radar. Regulation V/19 requires all small craft to fit a radar reflector 'if practicable'. If your boat is more than 15m in length, you should be able to fit a radar reflector that meets the IMO requirements of 10m<sup>2</sup>. If your boat is less than 15m in length, you should fit the largest radar reflector you can. Whatever size your boat is, the radar reflector should be fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions, and as high as possible to maximise its effectiveness.

## LIFE SAVING SIGNALS

Regulation V/29 requires you to have access to an illustrated table of the recognised life saving signals, so that you can communicate with the search and rescue services or other boats if you get into trouble. You can get a free copy of this table in a leaflet produced by the MCA, available at [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk), or you can also find it in various nautical publications. If your boat is not suitable for carrying a copy of the table on board (because it's small or very exposed), make sure you've studied the table before you go boating. Larger boats should keep a copy on board.

## ASSISTANCE TO OTHER CRAFT

Regulations V/31, V/32 and V/33 require you:

- to let the Coastguard and any other vessels in the vicinity know if you encounter anything that could cause a serious hazard to navigation, if it has not already been reported. You can do this by calling the Coastguard on VHF, if you have it on board, or by telephoning them at the earliest opportunity. The Coastguard will then warn other vessels in the area.
- to respond to any distress signal that you see or hear and help anyone or any boat in distress as best you can.

## **MISUSE OF DISTRESS SIGNALS**

Regulation V/35 prohibits misuse of any distress signals. These are critical to safety at sea and by misusing them you could put your or someone else's life at risk.

## **NAVIGATION**

With respect to navigation and collision avoidance any vessel that proceeds to sea, irrespective of size, is required to comply with the Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals & Prevention of Collisions) Regulations 1996. It is of paramount importance that all vessels at sea comply with the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea. These are contained within the Merchant Shipping regulations that also set out the penalties for non-compliance, which could be a fine of up to £50,000 in serious cases. Vessels over 13.7m in length must report accidents to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch. Vessels under 13.7m are not required to report accidents, but good practice would dictate that serious incidents are reported.

The Regulations require that all vessels that proceed to sea are correctly provided with, and exhibit, navigation lights, shapes and sound signalling devices consistent with the vessels' length, type and circumstances. Navigation lights are required if the vessel is likely to operate at night or in poor visibility by day.

Owners should ensure that the lights they provide on their vessels are of approved types, also that they are displayed in their correct position(s) on the vessel.

## **MANNING**

Provided it meets the following requirements a pleasure vessel which is less than 3000 GT has been exempted from the Merchant Shipping (Safe Manning, Hours of Work and Watchkeeping) Regulations 1997:

Vessels of  $\geq 24$  metres length and  $\geq 80$  GT should comply with the manning requirements set out in Marine Guidance Notes 195 and 156 for deck and engineering requirements respectively. Additionally from 31st December 2005, those ratings required for the safe manning of the yacht will also need to comply with Marine Guidance Note 270.

A vessel  $< 24$  metres length or 80 GT need not comply with the Manning Regulations.

## **CREW AGREEMENTS, HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK AND FIRST AID KIT REQUIREMENTS**

Any pleasure yacht of any size and with 5 or more paid crew, undertaking non-coastal voyages will require crew agreements and crew lists. Further information is given in MGN 149. MGN 111 provides information on the requirement to maintain an up to date list of crew at an address in the UK.

Additionally, where paid crew are employed on a UK flag vessel then occupational health and safety regulations provisions apply, principally the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 1997 (SI 1997 No 2962). MGN 20 gives information and advice.

For such vessels the requirements of the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Medical Stores) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995 No 1802) also apply with detailed requirements set out in Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1726 (M + F).

## **POLLUTION**

The requirements of the international pollution prevention regulations (MARPOL) apply to all vessels but for pleasure vessels no survey is required.

The Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Garbage) Regulations 1998 set out what garbage can be thrown over the side and where, under MARPOL Annex V regulations. Further information is given in MSN 1720.

Under a new EU Directive, all vessels will have to put waste in a waste reception facility before leaving a port.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Merchant Shipping Notices (MSNs) and Marine Guidance Notes (MGNs) are available on the MCA website: [www.mcga.gov.uk/](http://www.mcga.gov.uk/)

Regulations are available via the Internet at:  
[www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/stat.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/stat.htm)

Any further questions can be addressed to MCA Code Vessel Safety Branch, tel. 02380 329160



**Fire Protection  
and  
Life Saving  
Appliances  
for  
pleasure vessels  
over 13.7 metres  
in length (45 ft)**

In May 2002 the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) had reason to prosecute the owner of a privately owned motor cruiser for not keeping a proper look out and for having inadequate, time expired and insufficient life saving equipment on board his boat. The owner was convicted at Weymouth Magistrates Court.

Following this conviction the British Marine Federation (BMF) approached the MCA about the practical problems associated with complying with the Merchant Shipping Regulations for life saving appliances and fire protection. The possible conflict in also having to comply with the Recreational Craft Directive (RCD), with which vessels being placed on the market for the first time in Europe have to comply, was also raised.

BMF, MCA and the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) met and agreed equivalent standards of safety which avoids possible conflict with the RCD and takes account of equipment which is readily available and commonly used by the private boat owner. Unlike the Merchant Shipping Regulations, the agreed equivalent standards require boats to carry VHF radio and this means of summoning help is reflected in the scale of equipment required, which varies according to the distance from the coast that the vessel will be operating.

The MCA has issued general exemptions, to Class XII vessels from the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Small Craft) Regulations 1998 and the Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances For Ships Other Than Ships Of Classes III To VI(A)) Regulations 1999, provided that they comply with the agreed equivalent standards. This gives owners a choice of direct compliance with the existing MS Regulations or the equivalent standards.



## **EXEMPTION in relation to Life-Saving Appliances on Class XII vessels**

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The Secretary of State for Transport, in exercise of the powers conferred by Regulation 85 of the Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances For Ships Other Than Ships Of Classes III to VI(A)) Regulations 1999 ( SI 1999/2721) hereby exempts any vessel of Class XII, as defined in these regulations, from the requirements of Regulations 21, 48, 69, 71, 72, 78 and 84 as they apply to vessels of Class XII, subject to the condition that the vessel complies with the requirements of the Schedule to this Exemption.

Unless cancelled, this Exemption shall run until 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

**Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day of September 2002**

**Mr R. Spence**  
Divisional Director, Standards  
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SO15 1EG

**MS 93/4/18 Part 5**

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### **SCHEDULE (4 pages)**

#### **Life-Saving Appliances**

(1) Every ship of 13.7 metres in length and over engaged on a voyage to sea in the course of which it is more than 150 miles from the coast, and every ship of more than 24 metres in length shall carry:

- (a) one or more inflatable liferafts with a total capacity to accommodate at least the total number of persons on board. The liferaft(s) provided should be constructed to SOLAS standard, Wheelmarked or DTLR approved, except that the liferaft(s) should be equipped with "SOLAS B PACK";
- (b) four lifebuoys, two of which shall be fitted with buoyant lifelines and two with self-igniting lights and self-activating smoke signals;
- (c) a lifejacket suitable for a person weighing 32 kilogrammes or more for each such person on board;
- (d) a lifejacket suitable for a person weighing less than 32 kilogrammes for each such person on board;
- (e) each lifejacket required to be carried by subparagraphs (c) and (d) shall be fitted with a lifejacket light complying with an appropriate MCA recognised standard;
- (f) 4 parachute, 4 red hand, 4 white hand and 2 orange smoke flares;

- (g) a line-throwing appliance;
  - (h) a training or instruction manual containing instructions and information on the life-saving appliances provided in the vessel and their maintenance;
  - (i) a copy of the table "Life-Saving Signals and Rescue Methods, SOLAS No. 1" or "Life-Saving Signals and Rescue Methods, SOLAS No. 2";
  - (j) a maritime radio capable of transmitting and receiving, appropriate to the area of operation.
- (2) Every ship of 24 metres in length or over shall carry additional liferaft(s) to ensure that in the event of any one raft being lost or rendered unserviceable, there is sufficient capacity remaining for all on board.
- (3) Every such ship of 25.9 metres in length or over shall carry a rescue boat or inflatable boat. A lifeboat may be accepted as a rescue boat; provided that it also complies with the requirements for a rescue boat. The lifeboat, rescue boat or inflatable boat shall be served by a launching appliance.
- (4) Every ship of 13.7 metres in length or over but less than 24 metres in length and engaged on a voyage to sea in the course of which it is more than 20 miles but less than 150 miles from the coast shall carry:
- (a) one or more inflatable liferafts with a total capacity to accommodate at least the total number of persons on board. The liferaft(s) provided should be either:-
    - i) constructed to SOLAS standard, Wheelmarked or DTLR approved, except that the liferaft(s) should be equipped with "SOLAS B PACK" ;or
    - ii) built to the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), Offshore Special Regulations (OSR) Appendix A Part 2 requirements or to an equivalent ISO Standard. Liferaft(s) should be equipped to a level equivalent to that of a "SOLAS B PACK". This may, where necessary, include a "grab bag" to supplement the equipment integral to the liferaft; or
    - iii) built to the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), Offshore Special Regulations (OSR) Appendix A Part 1 requirements and manufactured prior to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003, until replacement is due. Liferaft(s) should be equipped to a level equivalent to that of a "SOLAS B PACK". This may, where necessary, include a "grab bag" to supplement the equipment integral to the liferaft;
  - (b) two lifebuoys, one of which shall be fitted with a self-igniting light;
  - (c) a buoyant lifeline at least 18 metres in length;
  - (d) a lifejacket suitable for a person weighing 32 kilogrammes or more for each such person on board;
  - (e) a lifejacket suitable for a person weighing less than 32 kilogrammes for each such person on board;
  - (f) each lifejacket required to be carried by subparagraphs (c) and (d) shall be fitted with a lifejacket light complying with an appropriate MCA recognised standard
  - (g) 4 parachute, 4 red hand, 4 white hand and 2 orange smoke flares
  - (h) A training or instruction manual containing instructions and information on the life-saving appliances provided in the vessel and their maintenance;
  - (i) a copy of the table "Life-Saving Signals and Rescue Methods, SOLAS No. 1" or "Life-Saving Signals and Rescue Methods, SOLAS No. 2";
  - (j) a maritime radio capable of transmitting and receiving, appropriate to the area of operation.

(5) Every ship of 13.7 metres in length or over but less than 24 metres in length and engaged on a voyage to sea in the course of which it is more than 3 miles but less than 20 miles from the coast or shall carry,:

- (a) one or more inflatable liferafts with a total capacity to accommodate at least the total number of persons on board. The liferaft(s) provided should be either:-
  - i) constructed to SOLAS standard, Wheelmarked or DTLR approved, except that the liferaft(s) should be equipped with "SOLAS B PACK" ;or
  - ii) built to the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), Offshore Special Regulations (OSR) Appendix A Part 2 requirements or to an equivalent ISO Standard. Liferaft(s) should be equipped to a level equivalent to that of a "SOLAS B PACK". This may, where necessary, include a "grab bag" to supplement the equipment integral to the liferaft; or
  - iii) built to the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), Offshore Special Regulations (OSR) Appendix A Part 1 requirements and manufactured prior to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003, until replacement is due. Liferaft(s) should be equipped to a level equivalent to that of a "SOLAS B PACK". This may, where necessary, include a "grab bag" to supplement the equipment integral to the liferaft; or
  - iv) built to the ISO Inshore Liferaft Standard requirement; or
  - v) alternatively, an equivalent capacity CE marked Category C rigid or inflated inflatable dinghy ready for immediate use;
- (b) two lifebuoys, one of which shall be fitted with a self-igniting light;
- (c) a buoyant lifeline at least 18 metres in length;
- (d) a lifejacket suitable for a person weighing 32 kilogrammes or more for each such person on board;
- (e) a lifejacket suitable for a person weighing less than 32 kilogrammes for each such person on board;
- (f) each lifejacket required to be carried by subparagraphs (d) and (e) shall be fitted with a lifejacket light complying with an appropriate MCA recognised standard
- (g) 4 parachute, 4 red hand, 4 white hand and 2 orange smoke flares
- (h) a training or instruction manual containing instructions and information on the life-saving appliances provided in the vessel and their maintenance;
- (i) a copy of the table "Life-Saving Signals and Rescue Methods, SOLAS No. 1" or "Life-Saving Signals and Rescue Methods, SOLAS No. 2".
- (j) a maritime radio capable of transmitting and receiving, appropriate to the area of operation.

(6) Every such ship of 13.7 metres in length or over but less than 24 metres in length and which only proceeds to sea on voyages in the course of which it is not more than 3 miles from the coast, shall carry:

- (a) two lifebuoys, one of which shall be fitted with a self-igniting light;
- (b) a buoyant lifeline at least 18 metres in length;
- (c) a lifejacket suitable for a person weighing 32 kilogrammes or more for each such person on board;
- (d) a lifejacket suitable for a person weighing less than 32 kilogrammes for each such person on board;
- (e) 4 red hand, 4 white hand and 2 orange smoke flares
- (f) a training or instruction manual containing instructions and information on the life-saving appliances provided in the vessel and their maintenance;

- (g) a copy of the table "Life-Saving Signals and Rescue Methods, SOLAS No. 1" or "Life-Saving Signals and Rescue Methods, SOLAS No. 2".
  - (h) a maritime radio capable of transmitting and receiving, appropriate to the area of operation.
- (7) (a) In ships of Class XII of 13.7 metres in length or over, an embarkation ladder shall be provided at each embarkation station extending, in a single length, from the deck to the waterline in the lightest seagoing condition under unfavourable conditions of trim of up to 10 degrees and with the ship listed not less than 20 degrees either way and where such distance exceeds 1 metre. Such ladder(s) may be temporarily attached.
- (b) In ships of Class XII of 13.7 metres in length or over but less than 24 metres in length, such ladder(s) may be replaced by approved devices to afford access to survival craft when waterborne.
- (8) Every liferaft shall be carried either:-
- (a) in approved FRP containers stowed on the weather deck or in an open space and fitted with float free arrangements so that the liferafts float free and inflate automatically; or
  - (b) for ship of 13.7 metres in length or over but less than 24 metres in length, in FRP containers or in a valise stowed in a readily accessible and dedicated weathertight locker opening directly to the weather deck.
- (9) Lifejackets carried for persons on watch shall be stowed in positions readily accessible from the manned watch station.
- (10) In ships of Class XII, every inflatable liferaft, compressed gas inflatable lifejacket and hydrostatic release unit shall be serviced by the manufacturer's approved agent, at the manufacturer's recommended intervals, however where liferaft(s) are stored in valises these should be serviced at least annually.

**END**

## **EXEMPTION in relation to Fire Protection on Class XII vessels**

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The Secretary of State for Transport, in exercise of the powers conferred by Regulation 47 of the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Small Ships) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/1011) hereby exempts any vessel of Class XII, as defined in these regulations, from the requirements of Regulations 23, 35 and 36, as they apply to vessels of Class XII, subject to the condition that the vessel complies with the requirements of the Schedule to this Exemption.

Unless cancelled, this Exemption shall run until 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

**Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day of September 2002**

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**MS 93/4/18 Part 5**

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### **SCHEDULE (2 pages)**

#### **Fire Protection**

Every ship of 13.7 metres in length or over but less than 24 metres in length, shall be provided with:-

1. (a) not less than two multi-purpose fire extinguishers to a recognised standard each with minimum fire rating of 13A/113B or smaller extinguishers giving the equivalent fire rating (in addition to that required in paragraph 2 below); or  
  
(b) a fire pump capable of delivering one jet of water with a minimum throw of 6 metres with a 6mm nozzle to any part of the ship. The fire pump, which need not be a dedicated fire pump, shall have one fire hose of adequate length with a 6mm nozzle and a suitable spray nozzle, and shall be either:-
  - i. a hand powered fire pump, fixed or portable, outside any engine space with one sea and hose connections; or
  - ii. a power driven fire pump outside any engine space, fixed or portable, with sea and hose connections; or
  - iii. a hand powered portable fire pump with a throwover sea suction and hose connection.

2. not less than two multi-purpose fire extinguishers to a recognised standard each with a minimum fire rating of 13A/113B; or smaller extinguishers giving the equivalent fire rating and
3. not less than two fire buckets with lanyards.

Multi-purpose fire extinguishers shall have a capability to deal with both Category A fires involving solid materials, and Category B fires involving liquids or liquefiable solids. Portable fire extinguishers provided in compliance with these Regulations shall be of approved types and/or technically equivalent to BS EN 3.

Fire buckets may be of metal, plastic or canvas and should be suitable for their intended service.

**END**