



# SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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**Subject:** Safety measures concerning life-saving appliances

### Scope

This bulletin applies to **all** Canadian vessels.

### Purpose

This bulletin reminds the marine community of some well-established safe practices for life-saving appliances. The recommendations and information provided in this bulletin are complementary to the applicable legal obligations.

### Safety reminders

Transport Canada would like to remind the marine community of considerations relating to

- the compatibility of retrofitted and/or replaced components of life-saving appliances;
- the need to check your life-saving equipment visually on an ongoing basis;
- sizing of personal life-saving equipment; and
- the storage location and condition of life-saving appliances.

### Survival craft and rescue boats

Ensure components of survival craft and launching appliances that have been retrofitted or replaced work as designed by the manufacturer. All components must comply with the equipment type approval requirement. They also need to be compatible, per the manufacturer's recommendations.

### Keywords:

1. Survival craft
2. Lifejackets
3. Immersion suits
4. Hydrostatic release units

### Questions concerning this Bulletin should be addressed to:

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Pay special attention if a vessel has upgraded her survival craft but has kept her existing launching appliance, and vice versa. Vessel owners, operators and equipment suppliers are asked to verify that all components of survival craft release mechanisms, and more specifically release hooks and lifting rings, meet design requirements.

For more information, read Marine Safety Advisory Letter no. 04/18 - Failure of lifeboat release hook, published by the Transportation Safety Board.

Ensure crew are trained in how to operate release mechanisms safely on board the vessel. Include instructions for how to do this in the vessel's safety procedures. This is required under paragraph 106(1)(b) of the [Canada Shipping Act, 2001](#).

### ***Lifejackets***

Visually inspect all lifejackets after every boat drill. Confirm that humidity in the storage location has not accidentally activated the lights. Remember that these lights work once only. Also inspect lifejacket straps for wear and tear by pulling firmly on the straps.

Every crew member who is assigned an individual lifejacket must try it on to confirm that it is of an appropriate size. Tie straps at the neck must fit snugly under the chin, not over the chin or close to the mouth. Not every model of lifejacket fits everyone properly.

### ***Immersion suits***

Visually inspect immersion suits after every boat drill to confirm they are in a safe condition. Pay close attention to glued seams. Check for potential failures of the gluing compounds.

To confirm it fits correctly, every crew member must try on his or her assigned immersion suit prior to departure. A suit that is too large will not seal properly around the face, and a suit that is too small may not close correctly at the chin. Both cases will allow water to leak into the suit, which jeopardizes its primary purpose of keeping a person dry and warm when in the water.

### ***Hydrostatic release units***

At every boat drill, inspect the hydrostatic release units installed on life rafts. Check that they appropriately secure the liferafts to the vessel, per the manufacturer's instructions.

### ***Storage locations***

Regularly ensure that

- storage locations continue to protect the appliances stored inside them from the elements;
- storage locations are kept clean and are clearly indicated; and
- access to the storage locations is always unobstructed, regardless of the weather or the vessel's operation.

In addition to the safe practices highlighted in this bulletin, all life-saving appliances must be maintained periodically in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and as prescribed by various regulations.