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GUIDELINES FOR SIMULATED LAUNCHING OF FREE-FALL LIFEBOATS

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-ninth session (1 to 10 December 2004), recognizing the need to provide a basic outline of essential steps to safely carry out simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats, required by SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.4, and having considered proposals by the forty-seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Design and Equipment, approved the Guidelines for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats, as set out in the annex.

2 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed Guidelines to the attention of all parties concerned, for their application as appropriate.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES FOR SIMULATED LAUNCHING OF FREE-FALL LIFEBOATS

1 Definition

Simulated launching is a means of training the crew in the free-fall release procedure of free-fall lifeboats and in verifying the satisfactory function of the free-fall release system without allowing the lifeboat to fall into the sea.

2 Purpose and scope

The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide a basic outline of essential steps to safely carry out simulated launching. These Guidelines are general; the lifeboat manufacturer's instruction manual should always be consulted before conducting simulated launching. Simulated launching should only be carried out with lifeboats and launching appliances designed to accommodate it, and for which the manufacturer has provided instructions. Simulated launching should be carried out under the supervision of a responsible person who should be an officer experienced in such procedures.

3 Typical simulated launching sequence

- 3.1 Check equipment and documentation to ensure that all components of the lifeboat and launching appliance are in good operational condition.
- 3.2 Ensure that the restraining device(s) provided by the manufacturer for simulated launching are installed and secure and that the free-fall release mechanism is fully and correctly engaged.
- 3.3 Establish and maintain good communication between the assigned operating crew and the responsible person.
- 3.4 Disengage lashings, gripes, etc. installed to secure the lifeboat for sea or for maintenance, except those required for simulated free-fall.
- 3.5 Participating crew board the lifeboat and fasten their seatbelts under the supervision of the responsible person.
- 3.6 All crew, except the assigned operating crew, disembark the lifeboat. The assigned operating crew fully prepares the lifeboat for free-fall launch and secures themselves in their seats for the release operation.
- 3.7 The assigned operating crew activates the release mechanism when instructed by the responsible person. Ensure that the release mechanism operates satisfactorily and the lifeboat travels down the ramp to the distance specified in the manufacturer's instructions.

3.8 Recover the lifeboat to its stowed position, using the means provided by the manufacturer and ensure that the free-fall release mechanism is fully and correctly engaged.

3.9 Repeat procedures from 3.7 above, using the back-up release mechanism when applicable.

3.10 The assigned operating crew disembarks the lifeboat.

3.11 Ensure that the lifeboat is returned to its normal stowed condition. Remove any restraining and/or recovery devices used only for the simulated launch procedure.
