
Diving Systems

Notice to ship owners, managers, Masters, Approved Nautical Inspectors, Recognised Organisations and surveyors

This Notice supersedes BMA Information Bulletin No.93

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Notice provides the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) requirements for technical standards and certification of diving systems on Bahamian registered ships.

2. Application

- 2.1. This Notice applies to all hyperbaric diving systems fitted on Bahamian ships, whether integrated with a dedicated dive support vessel (DSV) or temporarily mobilised as a work spread.

3. Introduction

- 3.1. IMO Resolution A.831(19) *Code of Safety for Diving Systems, 1995* provides minimum standards for design, construction and survey of fixed diving systems, which may also be applied to temporary diving systems fitted on board vessels.
- 3.2. In addition, IMO Resolution A.692(17) *Guidelines and Specifications for Hyperbaric Evacuation Systems* provides guidelines and specifications for hyperbaric evacuation systems, as referred to in Chapter 3 of the Code of Safety for Diving Systems, 1995.
- 3.3. Internationally recognised standards are therefore available to be applied to diving systems on board ships, through IMO Resolution A.831(19) for Diving Systems and IMO Resolution A.692(17) for Hyperbaric Evacuation Systems.
- 3.4. Where a vessel is fitted with a diving system which is not included for survey under Classification Society rules, The Bahamas requires that minimum standards are applied to diving systems on board Bahamian registered ships based upon compliance with the above resolutions.

4. General Requirements

- 4.1. Vessels with fixed or temporary diving systems, which are not included for survey under Classification Society rules, shall comply with the Code of Safety for Diving Systems, 1995, as amended, including the Guidelines and Specifications for Hyperbaric Evacuation Systems, as applicable.

5. Hyperbaric evacuation systems

5.1. Number of systems

- 5.1.1. The BMA recommends that dive support vessels and dive systems are fitted with at least two hyperbaric evacuation systems, where practicable.
- 5.1.2. Where only a single hyperbaric evacuation system is fitted, the Company¹ should:
- i. undertake a risk assessment for each diving project/work area and establish appropriate safeguards, taking into account relevant guidelines and matters such as availability of alternative means of rescue, proximity of other dive support ships or diving facilities, location/proximity of Life Support Package (LSP), any training requirements, etc.;
 - ii. ensure that ship specific contingency plans take into account the location of the single hyperbaric evacuation system when undertaking any operations whilst divers are in saturation, noting that incidents can occur during non-diving operations.

5.2. Drills and Launching

- 5.2.1. Regulation 19 of Chapter III of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended (SOLAS Chapter III) requires lifeboats to be launched and manoeuvred in the water at least once every three months (with the exception of free-fall lifeboats, which have different requirements).
- 5.2.2. Hyperbaric lifeboats and evacuation systems are not specifically referred to in SOLAS Chapter III; however, they are subject to the training and drills requirement specified in A.692(17). Unfortunately, A.692(17) does not specify any time periods for these drills.
- 5.2.3. The BMA recommends that the training and drills requirement specified in Para.4 of A.692(17) is followed, i.e., that drills “...*should not normally be carried out while the chambers are pressurized, but should be carried out at each available opportunity*”.

¹ The “Company” is the entity responsible for the management of the ship in accordance with the ISM Code. For ships which the ISM Code is not applicable, Company is the Managing Owner in accordance with Section 52 of the Merchant Shipping Act.

5.2.4. In cases where the hyperbaric evacuation system cannot be launched due to the dive system being pressurised, an entry should be made in the Official Logbook explaining why the drill could not be undertaken (as per Paras. 6.4 and 6.5 of BMA Marine Notice 82) and the launch should take place at the first available opportunity.

5.2.5. The BMA recommends that the crew assigned to launching of the hyperbaric evacuation system “walk through” the procedures for launch at regular intervals, so that they are familiar with the operation of the launching system.

5.3. **Safety Equipment Certificate**

5.3.1. Hyperbaric lifeboats and hyperbaric evacuation systems that have been surveyed in accordance with A.692(17) by a Bahamas Recognised Organisation shall be recorded on the supplement to the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate (Form E) as providing the life-saving appliances and arrangements for divers in compression as follows:

5.3.2. Under section 2 of the Form E:

- i. the “total number of persons for which life-saving appliances are provided” in box 1 shall be **the total POB + divers in saturation**: this may be listed as the total number or as “XXX + YY divers in saturation”;
- ii. The hyperbaric lifeboat(s) or hyperbaric evacuation system(s) shall be listed under box 2.6 “other lifeboats”.

5.3.3. The Recognised Organisation that classes the ship should contact the BMA for instructions where the hyperbaric lifeboat(s) or hyperbaric evacuation system(s) have not been surveyed by a Bahamas Recognised Organisation

6. **Certification**

6.1. A Dive System Safety Certificate, in the model given in the Appendix to the Code, may be issued by the Recognised Organisation upon satisfactory verification of compliance.

7. **Exemptions, exceptions and equivalent arrangements**

7.1. Vessels not complying with the requirements and applying for an exemption, extension or equivalent arrangement shall be processed in accordance with the procedures detailed in BMA Information Bulletin no. 8.

8. **Queries**

8.1. Any queries on this Notice may be addressed to tech@bahamasmaritime.com or any BMA office.

Revision History

Version	Description of Revision
1.0	First Issue