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## Excursion boats

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

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### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Marine Notice is intended to provide Bahamas requirements for excursion<sup>1</sup> operations on inflatable boats (commonly referred to as “zodiacs”), including Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs) and Semi-rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (SHIBs).

### 2. Application

- 2.1. This Marine Notice applies to all Bahamas flag ships fitted with inflatable boats (regardless of length or capacity) intending to carry passengers.
- 2.2. This Marine Notice is effective from 01 July 2022.

### 3. Introduction

- 3.1. The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) has noted a significant increased demand for expedition cruises, offering passenger excursion services on board inflatable boats around remote destinations.
- 3.2. The operational areas where these inflatable boats are normally employed, might be subject to an immediate need of assistance. Safe operation of the inflatable boats has been a concern for stakeholders and interested parties.
- 3.3. Currently the use of inflatable boats from a mother ship<sup>2</sup> is not addressed by International Maritime Organization (IMO) instruments. In the absence of international standards or mandatory instruments, the BMA is introducing this Marine Notice to outline its requirements for inflatable boats used for excursions.

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<sup>1</sup> An “excursion” is a short journey or a trip to surrounding destinations from the mother vessel, often with a group of people and/or other inflatable boats.

<sup>2</sup> The “mother ship” is the ship from which the boats are deployed and operated

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- 3.4. The Company<sup>3</sup> or excursion boat operator, if different, shall develop excursion boat operating procedures in line with the requirements stated in this Marine Notice.
- 3.5. The Company, or excursion boat operator if different, shall adopt any additional local requirements or restrictions applicable to the use of inflatable boats.

#### **4. Standards and regulatory**

##### **4.1. Requirements**

- 4.1.1. The Company or excursion boat operator, if different, shall develop excursion boat operating procedures which may also take into account any additional local requirements or restrictions applicable to the use of inflatable boats.
- 4.1.2. The company should incorporate the use of inflatable boats and associated operating procedures, risk analysis and training as part of the company safety management system (SMS).

##### **4.2. Identification**

- 4.2.1. The company shall ensure that systems and procedures are in place to distinguish and identify each inflatable boat by giving a reference such as a name or number and mother vessel.
- 4.2.2. The company shall ensure that systems are in place to identify any component used for the inflatable boats operation, and establish a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly verification to ensure expiry date, maintenance and inspections are current.

##### **4.3. Inflatable boat standards**

- 4.3.1. The inflatable boats are to be manufactured and certified according to a recognised national or international standard, such as ISO 6185-1:2018, ISO 6185-2:2018, ISO 6185-3:2018, ISO 6185-4:2018, or equivalent<sup>4</sup>.
- 4.3.2. For existing Bahamas flagged ships that have already ordered or fitted inflatable boats certified under different standards, such as recreational craft Directive 94/25/EC or 2013/53/EU, these will be accepted for use, however, any new or replacement inflatable boats should comply with the requirements of this Marine Notice.

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<sup>3</sup> The "Company" is the entity responsible for the management of the mother ship in accordance with the ISM Code. For ships which the ISM Code is not applicable, the Company is the Managing Owner in accordance with Section 52 of the Merchant Shipping Act

<sup>4</sup> Such as EU directives

- 4.3.3. Inflatable boats certified under equivalent standards will be considered by the BMA..
- 4.4. ***Mother ship standards***
- 4.4.1. Appropriate consideration and construction standards will apply based on the type of fuel been stored for the inflatable boats.
- 4.4.2. The inflatable boat refuelling station and its arrangements (SOLAS category of the space, its surroundings, type of fuel, storage tank arrangements, etc) will be subject to a comprehensive risk analysis by the Company. This analysis shall be reviewed by the Recognised Organisation that classes the mother ship.
- 4.4.3. The refuelling station should be separated and independent from the mother ship's bunker station. Special consideration shall be made with regards to fire protection, and explosion proof or intrinsically safe components for this space such as but not limited to ventilation (supply and extraction) and sensors.
- 4.4.4. Associated fire suppression arrangements shall be to the satisfaction of the Recognised Organisation. Special consideration shall be given to any vents that terminate in a fire risk area, or a smoking area, that may or may not impact on an existing Alternative Design and arrangement (AD&A) study.
- 4.4.5. The Recognised Organisation is delegated to conduct such reviews and will contact the BMA if any deviation from the IMO instrument is identified.
- 4.4.6. Based on the tank location, fuel type and its potential risk, an additional fire risk analysis shall be conducted in line with MSC.1/Circ.1274.
- 4.4.7. Consideration of inflatable boat storage location and its potential fire hazard should also be considered and subject to a separate study, if necessary.

## 5. Inflatable Boat Equipment

### 5.1. General outfit

5.1.1. Each inflatable boat shall be fitted with the following equipment.

Equipment	Description
<b>Part A Mandatory list:</b>	
Engine "Kill Cords"	
Navigational equipment	Such as a compass or GPS
Radio communication system	
Portable fire extinguisher	
Quoit and 20m floating line	
Paddles	At least 1 pair, exemption may be considered when more than one inflatable boat is involved in the same operation.
Boat hook	
Lifejackets or buoyancy aids	Sufficient for all crew and passengers (if not already provided)
<b>Optional list:</b>	<b>Implementation is subject to the result of the Risk Assessment.</b>
Safety/Survival kits	This might be shared among other inflatable boats, when involved in the same operation.
AIS/Position transmitter	
Navigational lights	
Search light	
Radar reflector	
Anchor	

Subject to the risk analysis referred to in paragraph 6.3.1, additional equipment may be required. An example list of additional items to be considered is provided in the Annex.

## 6. Operations

### 6.1. Tendering operations & shore landing

6.1.1. It is noted that the requirements for passenger ship tenders and operational limitations provided in MSC.1/Circ.1417, are not intended for inflatable boats and are therefore not applicable.

6.1.2. Inflatable boats used as excursion boats are understood to be engaged on several excursion activities such as sightseeing around a point of interest, coastline cruising and shore landing.

- 6.1.3. Inflatable boats for the purpose of shore landing are restricted to the following criteria:
- i. When the hazards has been assessed and the outcome has been defined as acceptable.
  - ii. when a landing permit has been granted by the local authority, as applicable.
- 6.1.4. Subject to satisfactory risk analysis and planning, inflatable boats may be operated at night or under restricted visibility. Such assessment is to be completed prior to each expedition operation and should be part of the Company's SMS

## 6.2. **Refuelling**

- 6.2.1. The Company shall develop appropriate procedures and risk analysis for inflatable boat bunker operations and associated storage and handling of the fuel.
- 6.2.2. Petrol (gasoline) tanks shall be made of steel and located in a suitable location. This may be within the refilling station, in the mooring station or inside a void tank, based on the location and fire risk associated. Options such as self-sealing fuel tanks, or "quick release" tanks<sup>5</sup> may be considered acceptable.
- 6.2.3. Associated fire suppression arrangements shall be to the satisfaction of the Recognised Organisation. Special consideration shall be given to any vents that terminate in a fire risk area, or a smoking area, or that impact on an existing Alternative Design and arrangement (AD&A) study.
- 6.2.4. Based on the tank location, fuel type and its potential risk, an additional fire risk analysis shall be conducted in line with MSC.1/Circ.1274.

## 6.3. **Operational requirements**

- 6.3.1. Based on the intended inflatable boat operations, taking into consideration the climate, area and the distance from the mother ship or safe haven, a risk assessment shall be conducted to assess any equipment, safety/survival kit required as deemed necessary.
- 6.3.2. Prior to each expedition voyage a risk assessment and voyage planning shall take place and be recorded. Such assessment shall also take into account, but not be limited to, the intended operations, weather forecast, distance from safe haven and any equipment and gear necessary to ensure safety of the crew and passengers.

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<sup>5</sup> Quick release to sea tanks are generally limited to 500 litres capacity.

6.3.3. Minimum manning of two (2) crew (subject to paragraph 7) is required for expedition voyages, when operating independently<sup>6</sup> and outside visual range of the mother ship. Subject to appropriate risk assessment for the intended voyage it is recommended that the crew have basic engine mechanics knowledge and boat handling experience.

6.4. ***Pollution Prevention***

6.4.1. As passenger excursions often include navigation in sensitive areas requiring special attention to pollution prevention, operations in these areas should comply with local requirements, if any.

6.4.2. Exhaust emissions and noise emissions from engines (whether inboard or outboard) should be considered and should comply with a recognised standard (such as [Directive 2013/53/EU](#) or similar).

6.5. ***Passenger safety***

6.5.1. A safety briefing shall be provided to all passengers prior to boarding the inflatable boats. When there is only one Boat Master<sup>7</sup> onboard, an additional set of supportive safety information shall be provided.

6.5.2. The Company shall ensure that each passenger has a lifejacket or buoyancy aid, and that suitable clothing is provided or used by the passengers for the climate.

6.6. ***Launch and recovery***

6.6.1. Inflatable boats shall not be launched or recovered with any persons on board, unless the launch and recovery system is specifically designed for this purpose.

6.6.2. Where ship's cranes are used to launch the inflatable boats, the Company should develop appropriate procedures for crane handling and to determine competent persons for such operations.

6.6.3. Cranes shall be subject to the regular maintenance and inspection intervals stated in the Merchant Shipping (Hatches and Lifting Plant) Regulations 1988.

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<sup>6</sup> Without any other boats close by

<sup>7</sup> Boat master might also be referred as expedition leaders.

## 7. Manning and training

- 7.1. The Company may select qualified crew members or persons from a qualified external company as boat masters.
- 7.2. Whether the boat master is a crew member or an external contractor, the Company shall ensure that the individuals have training and certification appropriate to the assigned inflatable boat based on:
- i. Engine power
  - ii. Boat length
  - iii. Passenger capacity
  - iv. Specific itinerary and distance from the nearest land/mother vessel
  - v. Recognised certification, in compliance with the local authority.
- 7.3. The Company shall ensure that the boat master has competences in the following areas, as applicable:
- i. Navigational equipment
  - ii. Radio equipment
  - iii. Fire fighting
  - iv. First Aid
  - v. Man overboard procedures
  - vi. Sea survival (including use of distress signals and pyrotechnics)
- 7.4. The company shall ensure that the boat master is familiar with the Company's excursion procedures. Such procedures shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- i. Safety and Survival equipment
  - ii. Fire on inflatable boats
  - iii. Grounding
  - iv. Wildlife safety (precautions and awareness)
  - v. Passenger embarkation procedures
  - vi. Passenger briefings
  - vii. inflatable boat check in/out checklists
  - viii. Shore landing procedures
  - ix. Return to mother vessel procedures
  - x. Operating in ice procedures
  - xi. Local regulations

**8. Maintenance and repairs**

- 8.1. Maintenance and inspections of inflatable boats and lifting gear shall be carried out by a competent person<sup>8</sup> in line with the company's procedures and manufacturers' recommendations.
- 8.2. Maintenance and inspections shall be recorded to provide objective evidence that this has been carried out according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- 8.3. Major repairs such as, but not limited to, tube punctures and FRP hull cracks, shall be conducted in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements.
- 8.4. A thorough inspection of the inflatable boat shall be conducted at the end of each excursion by the crew. Any defects shall be recorded for follow up.
- 8.5. It is recommended that spare parts are carried on board for the inflatable boats, such as puncture repair kits, tube valves, FRP repair kits, etc.

**9. Bahamas annual inspections**

- 9.1. Commencing 01 July 2022, Bahamas Approved Nautical Inspectors (ANIs) shall verify that the Company has effectively implemented this Marine Notice. This shall include:
  - i. Verification of the general condition of the inflatable boats
  - ii. Verification of lifting arrangements/launch and recovery arrangements
  - iii. Verification that kits (such as safety and survival), as applicable are adopted by the company, available and in good order.
  - iv. Verification of records (such as Engine logs, inspection logs, repairs logs, maintenance logs, equipment logs).

**10. Inflatable Boat Operations Certificate**

- 10.1. With effective date of 01 July 2022, the Company shall apply for an Inflatable Boat Operations Certificate (IBOC). The IBOC will be issued by the BMA.
- 10.2. The IBOC will have a validity of 5 years and is subject to annual verification at Bahamas annual inspections.
- 10.3. The IBOC will serve as official acceptance by the BMA for the use of inflatable boats, when requested by local authorities.

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<sup>8</sup> Please see Marine Notice 89



- 10.4. A fee is payable for the issue of an IBOC as follows:
- i. Review of documents and issue of initial IBOC: \$300.00
  - ii. Renewal of IBOC: \$150.00
  - iii. Amendments to an IBOC: \$50.00

## **11. Queries**

- 11.1. Any queries on this Notice may be submitted to [tech@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:tech@bahamasmaritime.com) or any BMA office.



## Annex – Safety kit and survival kit example contents

### *Safety kit sample.*

Safety Kit		
tarp	Flashlight	First aid kit (waterproof)
portable compass	signal mirror	Parachute rockets – flares
handheld flares	Orange smoke floats (water-proofed)	whistles
emergency blankets (waterproofed)	waterproofed roll of duct tape	foot air pump with hose
drinking water	SOLAS ration for the total boat POB	Wrench for removal of bolts in flywheel cover
spare fuel filter	spare fuel line	Checklist for gear in kit
Shelter (waterproofed)	avalanche shovel	Thermal protective aid (TPA)

### *Survival kit Sample:*

Survival Kit		
SOLAS Rations for the total POB	tarps	shelters
emergency blankets	climbing rope – waterproof	toilet paper
Ziplock bags	spare batteries for flashlight	accessory rope
knife	notepad & Pencil	lighters
emergency waterproof candles	first aid kit	water
aerial flares (waterproof)	handheld flares (waterproof)	Roll of fluorescent flagging tape
smoke floats (waterproof)	spare batteries for radio equipment	Tool kit – waterproof
Spare portable fuel tank (for emergency only)	Sea anchor	Sun lotion
Puncture repair kit		
Wool Blankets – waterproof	canister stove	pot for melting snow
avalanche shovel	hypothermia bag	wool hats -waterproof
wool socks – waterproof		