



SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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Ship Safety Bulletins provide safety-related information to the marine community.

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Subject: INFLATABLE LIFERAFTS AND RESCUE PLATFORMS
Stowage and Proper Access

This Ship Safety Bulletin repeals and replaces bulletins SSB 09/1993 and SSB 03/2001.

For the purposes of this bulletin, “liferaft” means an inflatable liferaft or inflatable rescue platform.

The following is both a reminder to shipowners, masters, mariners, operators, and fishers concerning the optimum stowage of liferafts for ease of deployment and access and a notice of Transport Canada’s intention to amend requirements concerning float-free arrangements.

The reminders in this Ship Safety Bulletin are for all vessels to which the following regulations apply:

- the *Small Fishing Vessel Inspection Regulations*,
- the *Large Fishing Vessel Inspection Regulations*,
- the *Small Vessel Regulations*, and
- the *Life Saving Equipment Regulations* (LSE).

Shipowners and operators of all vessels, irrespective of type and size, are encouraged to carry their liferafts in a manner that ensures they float free automatically should the vessel sink or capsize.

To ensure the float free capability, liferafts (including those that are davit launched) should be:

- a. placed in deep chocks, without lashing, so that they float free automatically if the vessel sinks, or
- b. secured by lashing fitted with a hydrostatic release unit, or
- c. placed or secured such that they will automatically float free.

The float free capability is currently required in some regulations for certain types, sizes and classes of vessels, including, for example, all vessels under 25 metres required to carry liferafts under the *Life Saving Equipment Regulations*.

Keywords:

1. Stowage
2. Liferaft
3. Float free

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Owners of commercial vessels automatically receive Bulletins.

This Ship Safety Bulletin goes further and reminds all vessel owners and operators that if their vessel carries liferafts, these should be float free whether currently required by the regulations or not.

Furthermore, with this Ship Safety Bulletin, Transport Canada advises all shipowners and operators that the float free requirement for liferafts (including those that are davit launched) will be proposed to become mandatory for all vessels as the Regulatory Reform initiative moves forward. This requirement will be included in the new *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations* and the new *Small Vessel Regulations, 2007* for vessels of all sizes carrying liferafts unless they are Canadian coastal liferafts in valise type containers. The proposal is to make the requirement mandatory for new vessels as the new regulations come into effect. For existing vessels, the proposal requires that they comply as liferafts are replaced and no later than five years after the coming into force of the new regulations. This requirement will not be applied to pleasure craft but their owners and operators are encouraged to meet it voluntarily. Comments on this proposed change to the requirements should be sent to marinesafety@tc.gc.ca or by mail to the address on page 1.

To ensure that the units float free automatically, liferafts should be stowed in an optimum position. This means placed in an area of the vessel where rigging, cables, structure and gear will not impede the manual launch or the float free capability of the liferafts in the event of an emergency. It also means that they can be easily accessed and deployed in an emergency.

Optimum positioning of liferafts is of the highest importance for the safety of all persons on board in the event of sinking or capsizing, particularly on vessels rigged for commercial fishing. Operators should decide how best to ensure the safe and rapid launch of liferafts in case of emergency and regularly carry out deployment drills.

The following are additional reminders to shipowners, masters, operators, and fishers regarding the stowage of liferafts.

1. Liferafts should be easily accessible and stowed in such a manner so as to ensure they have sufficient space around them for launching, they are not required to be lifted more than 1.5 m (5ft) from their cradles, and that at no time would it be necessary for persons to lift a liferaft over their heads.
2. Unless launching arrangements are provided, liferafts should be stowed in a location so that, when lifted from their cradles and moved over to the shipside railing or bulwark, they fall directly overboard.
3. Launching ramps used to assist in the deployment of liferafts should be significantly inclined to the horizontal so that their functioning is not adversely affected by an unfavourable 20° list.
4. Mariners operating in conditions of potential icing are reminded to pay particular attention to ensuring that their survival appliances are operationally ready at all times.

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