

DRAFT

F. No. 17-NT(7)/2014

Date – XX.05.2019

Merchant Shipping Notice of 2019

Sub.: Acceptance of 'life rafts' in lieu of lifeboats on certain types of vessels – reg.

1. Chapter III of International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 [SOLAS Convention] addresses matters pertaining to life-saving appliances and arrangements on merchant ships. In India, this is addressed by Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Rules and through Executive Orders (DGS Order, Merchant Shipping Notice, Circulars etc.) issued by the Directorate General of Shipping, Govt. of India from time to time.
2. During review of the aforesaid Rules and Executive Orders it is observed that even though the SOLAS Convention permits acceptance of life raft in lieu of life boat on certain types of vessels, this aspect is not clearly reflected in the Rules and Executive Orders. This lack of clarity effects the uniform interpretation and implementation of the said Rules and Executive Orders as well as impairs maintenance of parity with international instruments on the subject matter.
3. **Passenger vessels**
 - 3.1. Rule 25 of Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Rules, 1991 (as amended) stipulates that every passenger ship shall carry lifeboats. Also, section 6.4.3 of DGS Shipping Order 05 of 2017 requires fitment of lifeboats on all passenger vessels notified as River Sea Passenger Vessels, Type IV. However, sub para (3) of Rule 30 and sub para (2) of Rule 31 of MS (LSA) Rules, 1991 permits acceptance of 'life rafts' in lieu of 'lifeboats' on vessels of Classes I and II respectively, for vessels of less than 500 gross tonnage and which are certified to carry not more than 200 persons. However, this acceptance is not clearly specified in respect of passenger vessels of Class III, IV, V, VI, VII and RSPV Type IV passenger ship.
 - 3.2. Considering that SOLAS Chapter III, Reg 21.1.4 permits passenger ships of less than 500 GT on international voyage (where the total number of persons onboard is less than 200) to carry 'life raft' in lieu of 'life boat' under certain conditions and that MS (LSA) Rules 1991 at Rule 30(3) and Rule 31(2) also has specified such acceptance for

passenger ship of Class – I and Class – II the same principle needs to be also adopted for other type of passenger vessels. In view of the same, it is clarified that every passenger ship of Class III, IV, V, VI and VII under MS (LSA) Rules, 1991 and every passenger ship of RSPV type IV as per DG Shipping Order 05 of 2017, which is less than 500 gross tonnage and certified to carry less than 200 persons may in lieu of being fitted with lifeboat(s), comply with the following as provided under Reg. 21.1.4 of chapter III of SOLAS.

- 3.2.1. Such vessels shall carry on each side of the ship inflatable or rigid liferafts complying with the requirements of Fourth Schedule of MS (LSA) Rules, 1991 of such aggregate capacity as will accommodate the total number of persons on board.
- 3.2.2. Unless the liferafts required by sub para 3.1.5 (i) above are stowed in a position providing for easy side-to-side transfer at a single open deck level, additional liferafts shall be provided so that the total capacity available on each side will accommodate 150% of the total number of persons on board.
- 3.2.3. If the rescue boat fitted on ship, if required, is also a partially or totally enclosed lifeboat complying with the requirements of Part II, III or IV of Third Schedule of MS (LSA) rules, 1991, it may be included in the aggregate capacity required by sub paragraph 3.1.5 (i), provided that the total capacity available on either side of the ship is at least 150% of the total number of persons on board; and
- 3.2.4. In the event of any one survival craft being lost or rendered unserviceable, there shall be sufficient survival craft available for use on each side, including those which are stowed in a position providing for easy side-to-side transfer at a single open deck level, to accommodate the total number of persons on board.
- 3.3. Sub paragraphs 3.1.5(i) to 3.1.5(iv) of this order may be read in conjunction with Rule 32, 33, 34 or 35 of MS (Life Saving Appliances) Rules, 1991 (as amended) and Section 6.4.3 of DG Shipping Order 05 of 2017, as applicable.

3.4. **Cargo vessels**

- 3.4.1. Rule 37(2) of MS (LSA) Rules 1991 (as amended) stipulates the carriage of life rafts on cargo ships of Class VIII or IX which are less than 85 m in length. Lack of clarity has been expressed whether such 'life rafts' are acceptable in lieu of 'lifeboats' on such vessels.

- 3.4.2. SOLAS Chapter III, Reg 31.1.3 permits acceptance of ‘life rafts’ in lieu of ‘lifeboats’ on cargo ships of less than 85 meters in length other than oil tankers, chemical tankers and gas carriers. In view of the same, it is clarified that paragraph 1 of Rule 37(2) of MS(LSA) rules 1991 may be interpreted to read as ‘Every such ship, if it is less than 85 meters in length, other than tankers, chemicals carrier and gas carriers, may in lieu of meeting the requirements of sub paragraph (2) of Rule 36 carry _____’
4. This shall come into force from the date of issue of this M S Notice.
5. This issues with the approval of Competent Authority.

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