

**REPUBLIC OF PANAMA**

*Ministry of Finance and Treasury*

*Office of the Directorate of Merchant Marine Circular No. 68*

*Consular and Maritime Affairs*

**To:** Shipowners/Operators and Masters, ASI Inspectors, Class Societies and

Authorized Organizations

**Subject:** Certificate of Proficiency in Survival Craft

**Reference:** The STCW Convention and SOLAS 74/81/83

The 1983 Amendments to SOLAS 74 came into force on 1 July 1986 and included a new Chapter III - "Lifesaving Appliances and Arrangements". Regulation 10 of this Chapter reflects new requirements for the manning of survival craft.

Previous SOLAS requirements were limited to the provision of a number of certificated lifeboatmen trained in the handling and operation of lifeboats and other life-saving appliances on passenger vessels. The new requirements apply to all types of vessels engaged in international voyages and stipulate that "there shall be a sufficient number of crewmembers, who may be deck officers or certificated persons, on board for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board".

The new requirements refer not to a "certificated lifeboatman" but to a "certificated person" who is defined in the Regulation 3 of Chapter III as follows:

*"Certificated person is a person who holds a certificate of proficiency in survival craft issued under the authority of, or recognized as valid by, the Administration in accordance with the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, in force; or a person who holds a certificate issued or recognized by the Administration of a State not a Party to that Convention for the same purpose as the convention certificate."*

For this Administration, in all passenger vessels engaged on international voyages, the minimum number of deck officers or certificated persons, on board, for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board, shall be determined as shown in the following table:

**Prescribed Complement of Each Lifeboat Minimum Number of Deck Officers or Certified Persons Shall Be:**

Less than 41 persons	2
From 41 to 61 persons	3
From 62 to 85 persons	4
Above 85 persons	5

For each Panamanian self-propelled vessel carrying lifeboats, at least two crewmembers, other than the deck officers, must be designated "certificated persons".

In addition to the above table, each liferaft needs to carry one person in charge, but who is not necessarily a deck officer or a certificated person, who is practiced in the handling and operation of liferafts.

To effect the above requirements, this Administration established a program, on 1 January 1987, whereby a crewmember will be designated (as appropriate) as "certificated person" after duly passing an examination administered on his vessel by a duly authorized Inspector representing the Directorate of Consular and Maritime Affairs of the Republic of Panama. On successful completion of such an examination, the crewmember will be issued a "Certificate of Proficiency in Survival Craft" with no expiration date. In addition, a card titled "Proficiency in Survival Craft" will be inserted in his "Carnet de Marino" (Seaman's Identification Book).

The candidate for the "Certificate of Proficiency in Survival Craft" must fulfill the "Mandatory Minimum Requirements for the Issue of Certificates of Proficiency in Survival Craft" contained in Regulation 1 of Chapter VI of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 and its accompanying Appendix "Minimum Knowledge Required for the Issue of Certificates of Proficiency in Survival Craft".

Note: Deck Officers, by virtue of their Certificates of Competency, are considered to be proficient in survival craft.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular should be directed to:  
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