



U.S. COAST GUARD SECTOR JUNEAU



January 4, 2016

MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Change in Survival Craft Requirements for Commercial Fishing Vessels

Ref: (a) Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010
(b) Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012

This Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB) is being published to inform Commercial Fishing Vessel owners and operators of new requirements for Survival Craft, which will come into effect on February 26, 2016.

Background – Commercial Fishing Vessels that operate between 0 and 12 Nautical Miles (NM) from the Baseline (mean lower low tide line) and are either 36' in length and greater or that carry 4 or more persons onboard, are currently required to carry a USCG approved Survival Craft. The minimum Survival Craft that currently meets this requirement is either a Buoyant Apparatus or a Life Float. Vessels that are under 36' in length and that carry less than 4 persons onboard and that operate less than 12 NM from the Baseline are currently not required to carry a Survival Craft. References (a) and (b) created new requirements for Survival Craft aboard Commercial Fishing Vessels.

New Requirements – Starting on **February 26, 2016**, all Commercial Fishing Vessels operating more than 3 NM from the Baseline, regardless of size or number of persons onboard are required to carry a Survival Craft that ensures that no part of an individual is immersed in water. Starting on **November 1, 2016**, all Commercial Fishing Vessels operating within 3 NM that are 36' or greater or operating with 4 or more people on board are also required to carry a Survival Craft that ensures that no part of an individual is immersed in water.

The minimum acceptable Survival Craft for these vessels will be a USCG approved Inflatable Buoyant Apparatus. This new requirement will also apply to vessels that are currently not required to carry a Survival Craft (i.e. vessels under 36' in length that carry less than 4 persons onboard) that operate between 3 and 12 NM from the Baseline and all vessels currently required to carry survival craft. The USCG approved Survival Craft(s) that comply with the new regulations taking effect on February 26, 2016 and November 1, 2016 include: an Inflatable Buoyant Apparatus or a Liferaft containing a SOLAS A pack, a SOLAS B pack or a Coastal pack, as approved under 46 CFR Subchapter Q.

Skiff Exemption Program - The Coast Guard Seventeenth District (Alaska) currently issues Survival Craft Exemption letters that allow Commercial Fishing Vessels to meet their Buoyant Apparatus/Life Float requirement with a suitable "skiff". These letters will become invalid for vessels operating more than 3 NM from the Baseline on February 26, 2016.

Contact – Any questions regarding compliance with references (a) and (b) or this MSIB can be directed to the Chief, Inspections Division, Lieutenant Ryan Butler at (907) 463-2477 or Ryan.Butler@uscg.mil. Further information can also be obtained from Sector Juneau's full time Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiners; Mr. Jim Paul at MSD Ketchikan (907) 225-4496, Mr. Steve Ramp at MSD Sitka (907) 966-5620 or Mr. Dave Hydock at Sector Juneau (907) 463-2846.

Sincerely,

S. D. GREENE
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection Southeast Alaska