



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Inspections and Compliance Directorate
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Implementation of Out of the Water Survival Craft Requirements for Commercial Vessels

While there have been various iterations to the laws that govern the requirements for Out of Water Survival Craft over the last five years, as it currently stands, the law requires that owners and operators of small passenger vessels presently allowed to have either an approved buoyant apparatus or life float as a survival craft (see 46 CFR Table 180.200(c) and 46 CFR 117.200(c)), must have an approved survival craft that, “ensures that no part of an individual is immersed in water” by **February 26, 2016**. We are providing this Marine Safety Information Bulletin, with some general guidance, to ensure you are aware of this issue and you are starting to plan for this requirement. The Coast Guard is also working on developing a more formal Policy Letter to assist industry and field units with the actual enforcement steps that will be taken.

Legislative Background: Section 609 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-281) added section 3104 to Title 46 of the U.S. Code. This section prohibited the approval of survival craft unless that craft “ensures that no part of an individual is immersed in water.” It also mandated that survival craft currently in service that do not meet the “immersion standard,” could only be approved up until January 1, 2015. But, in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-213), Section 303 directed the Coast Guard to submit a report on this issue to Congress, and to delay implementation of the 2010 law until 30 months from the submission of the report. The Coast Guard submitted that report on August 26, 2013, which in turn made February 26, 2016, the new implementation date.

Recommended Actions: If this law applies to you, the following list of points is designed to assist you in developing your compliance plan, and will facilitate any necessary discussions with the Coast Guard prior to the implementation date.

- Please consider how and where the Out of Water Survival Craft will be mounted. Consider whether or not structural modifications will require plan review by your local Officer in Charge Marine Inspections.
- Please consider how Out of Water Survival Craft will be deployed manually and how passengers and crew will egress to the survival craft.
- Please consider if the installation may affect the vessel’s approved stability calculations, which in turn may lead to potential changes in the passenger count.
- Please consider market demand for Out of the Water Survival Craft, and plan accordingly for procurement and/or servicing.

The Coast Guard intends to work with vessel owners and operators as they implement this statutory requirement. Questions concerning this notice should be directed to the Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Commandant (CG-CVC) at 202-372-1251.

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