

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING NAUTICAL WING

Merchant Shipping Notice XX/2025 -

DRAFT FOR COMMENTS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

File Ref. No:

Date: 23.06.2025

Subject: Guidelines for approval of LSA Service Stations for servicing of Inflatable Life Saving Appliances i.e. Inflatable Life Raft, Inflatable Rescue Boat, Inflatable Life Jacket and Immersion Suits & Procedure for approval of Competent Persons for servicing of such LSA - reg.

Introduction:

1. The International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended, (SOLAS Convention) addresses, *inter-alia*, matters pertaining to life-saving appliances and arrangements on merchant ships, at Chapter III of the said Convention. In India, the compliance with the said requirements of Safety Convention is addressed by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Rules, 1991 and the orders/notices/circulars issued by the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), Govt. of India from time to time. The said rules and circulars of DGS mandates that inflatable life rafts, inflatable rescue boats and other such inflatable lifesaving appliances shall be serviced in accordance with the relevant guidelines issued by this office and as prescribed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

2. The Regulation 20 of the SOLAS Convention deals with operational readiness, maintenance, and inspections. Sub-para 8 of the said regulation stipulates the international requirements for Servicing of inflatable life rafts, inflatable life jackets, marine evacuation systems, and maintenance and repair of inflated rescue boats. Sub-para 9 of the said regulation stipulates the requirements for periodical servicing of hydro-static release units. Sub-para 11 of the regulation prescribes the requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats, rescue boats and fast rescue boats, launching appliances and release gears.

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING

NAUTICAL WING

3. The importance of servicing of such Life Saving Appliances (LSA) by the Original Equipment Manufacturers or by the agency duly approved by the OEM on a time-bound manner are pertinent. The Directorate had already issued Merchant shipping Notice No. 01 of 2020 dated 06/01/2020 with respect to maintenance, repairs and thorough examination of Life Boats, rescue boats and its launching appliances in accordance with MSC Resolution 402(96). Similarly, it is mandatory that servicing of inflatable LSAs shall be conducted in accordance with the IMO Assembly Resolution A 761 (18) and the applicable guidelines of the DGS. Further, it is essential that the approval process of Life Raft service stations, requirement of servicing of inflatable LSAs shall also be revised based on the principle applicable for Life Boats and its launching appliances. Therefore, the Directorate in consultation with the stakeholders reviewed all the existing guidelines in line with the Internationally accepted norms. Accordingly, the revised guidelines for servicing of inflatable LSAs and approval of LSA service stations as stipulated herein below shall be implemented with effect from **the date of entry into force of this circular.**

Part-I Approval of Service Station for inflatable LSAs:

4. All the LSA Service stations in India must have a valid approval from the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) for performing servicing of inflatable LSAs in accordance with the SOLAS and the IMO Assembly Resolution A.761 (18). Only the DGS approved service stations are permitted to carry out periodical servicing of LSAs from any Indian ships or foreign ships while in Indian waters. Such service station should meet the applicable IMO guidelines, have a quality standards system, be registered with the local statutory authorities and have competent person for servicing the inflatable appliances. Such Competent person/persons will be responsible for activities related to servicing of inflatable LSA in that servicing station.

4.1 The approved service station and the competent person will be issued with the necessary certificates valid for a period of 5 years with an intermediate verification between 2nd and 3rd anniversary dates. Onus of making application for Initial/Renewal/Intermediate verification is purely on the service station. The Principal

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING

NAUTICAL WING

officer of the Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) concerned shall carry out the Initial/Intermediate/Renewal verification audit of the service stations.

4.2 Certificate of approval of LSA service station (Initial and Renewal) will be issued by the Directorate based on the recommendation of the Principal Officer of the concerned Mercantile Marine Department (MMD). This process ensures that the servicing of all the safety equipment meets the required standards and regulations as per IMO & DGS Guidelines.

4.3 The approved service station and the competent persons shall route their submission through the Directorate General of Shipping for the renewal of stated certification confirming continued compliance with the applicable IMO and DGS guidelines.

4.4 The Competent Person shall be attached to a particular Service Station, duly approved by this Directorate and Name of the competent person shall reflect on the concerned Service Station Approval, issued by the Directorate.

Authorization for Servicing of Inflatable LSAs by the Service Stations:

5. Considering the fact that different make of LSAs being used on the ships, increasing number of ports on the Indian Coast, the availability of OEM authorized service stations and to meet the time bound requirements of the shipping industry, it has been decided that following principles shall be complied with while carrying out the repair and servicing of various makes of the lifesaving appliances. Henceforth, the servicing of LSAs shall be carried at service station as under.

5.1 DGS approved service Stations established by the OEM or duly approved by the concerned Manufacturer of the make and model of the LSA and having appropriately trained, qualified, OEM authorized Service Personnel may carry out the servicing of LSA in an Indian port where the vessel has offloaded the equipment's. The servicing shall be carried out in accordance with the prescribed procedures / manual of

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING

NAUTICAL WING

the OEM and consuming spares of the OEM and/or spares as approved by the OEM. The Competent Person of the Service Station shall issue the Servicing Certificate with a validity of 12 months in normal course, specifying the OEM Approval Number and validity on the Certificate under the self-certification scheme. Such Certificate must accompany a copy of a valid OEM Approval at the time of issuance of such certificate.

In case the OEM Approved Service Station is not available in the Port, where the LSA has been offloaded by the vessel, the Servicing can be carried out at an OEM Approved Service station at the adjacent Port within the State. However, a Letter of intimation to the Local MMD to be filed by the Owner of the Vessel and/or by the Approved Service Station in such cases.

5.2 In the event that the manufacturers (OEM) or OEM authorized and approved service station is not available in the port / adjacent port, then other Service Stations, not approved by the OEM but duly approved by this Directorate may carry out the Service of LSA at the Port, where the LSA has been offloaded by the Vessel, provided that such Service Station possesses OEM Spares and consumables and having the OEM service manuals. Such servicing must be witnessed by the Local MMD Surveyor or by a Surveyor of any Recognized Organization and the Certificates must be endorsed by the visiting Surveyor of Local MMD or Recognized Organization to ensure compliance with applicable standards. However, an intimation to such effect to be filed before the Local MMD for such servicing activities by the Non-OEM approved Service Station.

5.3 In case of passenger Vessels such witness of Servicing must be verified by the Local MMD surveyor and Service Certificate must be endorsed by the attending MMD Surveyor.

6. The servicing of inflatable LSAs in India for all the ships calling Indian ports by any entity other than the DGS approved LSA service station shall be prohibited.
7. All the DGS approved LSA service stations must maintain Quality Standards System. In accordance with the Quality Standards System every approved 'LSA' servicing station shall maintain records of servicing and submit the Quarterly statement of activities to the

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING

NAUTICAL WING

concerned MMD and to the Directorate. The record shall be updated at the intervals not exceeding one week in case of updating of records in the online portal of DGS, which is being launched shortly.

8. All expired pyrotechnics must be disposed in accordance with the guideline under NT Circular 01 of 2015 dated 18.05.2015. Necessary records shall be maintained for the use and disposal of pyrotechnics.
9. In case of any breach of above instructions or an adverse report in regard to the approval of competent person, service station, the approval of the service station and of competent person may be withdrawn or suspended and such action may invite penal provision in accordance with the provisions under the M.S Act 1958.

Part-2: Procedure for approval of Competent Persons for servicing of Inflatable Life Saving Equipment's i.e. Inflatable Life Raft, Inflatable Rescue Boat, Inflatable Life Jacket and Immersion Suits – reg.

10. The SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) Convention, Chapter III focuses on life-saving appliances and arrangements. It mandates that all life-saving equipment be maintained and serviced by qualified personnel, implicitly encompassing the concept of Competent Persons. This ensures that those responsible for the upkeep and functioning of safety equipment possess the necessary training and expertise to perform their duties effectively, thereby enhancing the overall safety and preparedness of vessels at sea. Compliance with these requirements is crucial for safeguarding the lives of crew and passengers in maritime operations.
11. Additionally, MSC.1/Circ.1223 provides guidelines on the training and certification of personnel responsible for the maintenance and servicing of lifeboats and other life-saving appliances, emphasizing the need for competence in these critical roles.
12. Therefore, the inflatable LSAs shall be serviced in India only by the Competent Persons certified by the DGS. Such certified competent persons can be attached to any one Service Station approved by the DGS. The application for approval of "Competent Persons", to be submitted by any DGS approved LSA Service Station directly to DG Shipping along with the Bharatkosh fee receipt as applicable. Upon verification of basic eligibility criteria of

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING

NAUTICAL WING

the applicant, the Directorate will forward the application to Jurisdictional MMD for assessment of competency of the applicant.

13. The approval procedure for Competent Persons shall be solely managed by the Principal Officer of the Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) and will include both an online or offline written examination and a practical examination/demonstration of competencies pertaining to servicing of inflatable LSAs.
14. A standardized Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) test, along with subjective type questions will be implemented for the Competent Person examination. It will be followed by the evaluation of practical skills in servicing of inflatable LSAs of the applicant at the service station.
15. The approval of the Competent Person shall be issued by the Directorate based on the recommendation of the concerned MMD. This process ensures that all required standards and regulations as per the SOLAS/IMO Guidelines are met.
16. DG Shipping shall exercise their authority to make necessary amendments to the Approval of Service Station for Inflatable Life Raft, Inflatable Rescue Boat, Inflatable Life Jacket and Immersion Suits regarding the addition and deletion of Competent Persons. The name of a Competent person should not be included in more than one LSA service station.
17. The minimum criteria of educational qualification and experience as prescribed in the following table may please be followed for considering a Competent Person of Inflatable Life Saving Equipment.

Sl. No.	Qualification	Experience	OEM Training
1	<p>Possess a Bachelor's Degree in any Engineering stream or related field from any institution recognized by the State / Central Govt. Or</p> <p>Qualified in Marine Engineering Stream (2nd Engg or MEO Class 1) or Master Mariner / Chief Officer COC issued by DGS or equivalent.</p>	<p>Minimum 6 months Experience in attending Servicing - Testing - Repair & re Certification of Inflatable Life Rafts & Rescue Boats in DG Shipping Approved Service Station along-with a DGS Approved Competent Person.</p> <p>Should have serviced minimum of 50 Life rafts during the training period.</p>	<p>The candidate must possess Training and certification from a min of three numbers of OEM recognized by the Directorate from different countries.</p> <p>Note: Approval from two different OEM from same country will not be accepted.</p>

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING

NAUTICAL WING

2	<p>Possess a B.Sc (Bachelor of Science) Degree in any stream from any Institution, recognized by the State / Central Govt OR</p> <p>Possess a Diploma in any Engineering stream from any Institution, recognized by the State / Central Govt.</p>	<p>Minimum 1 Year Experience in Assisting a Competent Person in Servicing - Testing - Repair & re Certification of Inflatable Life Rafts & Rescue Boats in DG Shipping Approved Service Station.</p> <p>Should have serviced minimum of 50 Life rafts during the training period.</p>	<p>The candidate must possess Training and certification from a min of three numbers of OEM recognized by the Directorate from different countries.</p> <p>Note: Approval from two different OEM from same country will not be accepted.</p>
3	<p>Passed 10+2 Level or Trade Certification (ITI) by any Institution, recognized by the State / Central Govt</p>	<p>Minimum 3 Years Experience in Assisting a Competent Person in Annual Servicing - Testing - Repair & re Certification of Inflatable Life Rafts & Rescue Boats in DG Shipping Approved Service Station.</p> <p>Should have serviced minimum of 50 Life rafts during the training period.</p>	<p>The candidate must possess Training and certification from a min of three numbers of OEM recognized by the Directorate from different countries.</p> <p>Note: Approval from two different OEM from same country will not be accepted</p>

18. Any Competent Person, already approved by the DG Shipping will continue to be recognized and will not be required to meet the above criteria. However, the approval of existing Competent person would require to be Re Validated by the Directorate based on confirmation of his physical presence and activity in the attached Service Station, by the jurisdictional MMD, against submission of a Declaration by the Management of Approved Service Station.
19. Internal transfers of Competent Persons within the same company across various branches shall be approved by the DGS. Similarly, transfers from one company to another will fall under the responsibility of the DGS. In such cases, proper proof of resignation and job handover documentation must be submitted to the Directorate for deletion of name in the Certificate of approval of the present employer and the endorsement of name in the certificate of approval of another service station.

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING

NAUTICAL WING

20. A Competent Person certification issued by the DGS for Inflatable Life Saving Equipment will remain valid for all the service stations, provided they hold the necessary OEM approval for those service stations.
21. This Circular supersedes the preceding NT wing/Miscellaneous Circular No. 02 of 2014 dated 04.03.2014, NT Circular No. NT/LSA/01/2016 dated 19.02.2016 and Merchant Shipping Notice 13 of 2016 dated.25.11.2016 on the aforesaid subject and is issued with the approval of the competent authority.

[Capt. Nitin Mukesh]
Dy. Nautical Advisor-cum-Sr. DDG(Tech.)
DGS, Mumbai

Encl. : A copy of Application Form.

To

All Stakeholders through the DGS Website.

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING
NAUTICAL WING
APPLICATION FORM FOR APPROVAL OF COMPETENT PERSONS

Form: CP/001	APPLICATION NO. :
1. NAME OF THE CANDIDATE	
2. DATE OF BIRTH	
3. NAME OF THE COMPANY	
4. NAME OF THE COMPETENT PERSON	
5. ADDRESS OF THE COMPANY	
6. TELEPHONE NO.	
7. FAX NO.	
8. EMAIL ID	
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	
9. BASIC EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION a) Bachelors Degree in any Engineering or Marine qualifications b) B.Sc (Bachelor of Science) or Diploma in Engineering in any stream c) Passed 10+2 Level or Trade Certification (ITI) "As applicable" .	
10. TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION APPROVED BY OEM (Must be authorized by at least three manufacturers from different countries)	
11. EXPERIENCE:	
11 (A) Years of Experience at the Service Station (a) Minimum 6 Months (b) Minimum 1 Years (c) Minimum 3 Years "As applicable"	
11 (B) Experience in servicing of Life Rafts. (Minimum of 50 life rafts.)	

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING

NAUTICAL WING

12. RECOMMENDATION BY INCHARGE OF THE SERVICE STATION:	
ATTACH RELEVANT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS SIGNATURE OF THE CANDIDATE
FEES PAID: RS ----- TRANSATION REF. NO.....DATE..... MODE : PAYMENT THROUGH BHARATKOSH	
DATED: -----	PLACE: -----
DECLARATION BY THE COMPANY / MANAGER	
I hereby solemnly declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the particulars given in the form are true & correct. In case of any fraudulent information, Criminal proceedings may be initiated against me / Company / Manager as per the Indian penal code. I have been authorized by the Owner / Manager to make this application. A prescribed fee of Rs. _____ in your favour is enclosed. I request you to grant the Approval as "Competent Person" in respect of applicant mentioned at Point No.1.	
DATE : PLACE:	NAME : SIGNATURE OF SERVICE STATAION IN CHARGE