



Technical Circular

No.: 020/2016

Date: 28th July 2016

To Whomsoever it may concern

Subject: United States Coast Guard Marine Safety Alert Reg Inspection of Life Jackets

- During recent inspections, USCG has discovered that in certain type of Life Jackets, the unicellular foam buoyant material within the nylon outer shell had degraded significantly over time, broke apart, crumbled and in some instances was reduced to dust.
- As a result of this discovery, the United States Coast Guard has issued a Marine Safety Alert 07-16 (copy attached) reminding all vessel operators / masters to routinely inspect lifejackets onboard ships to ensure they are suitable for service.
- The USCG strongly recommends that vessel owners/ operators and masters to inspect unicellular plastic foam lifejackets for potential indications of failure or degradation, specifically:
 - Compression: The lifejacket may be compressed from many years of stowage.
 - Loss of resiliency: The lifejacket is excessively hard, stiff or its foam is brittle. Normally after compressing the lifejacket to about half its initial thickness, the foam should expand to its original dimension in a short period of time.
 - Shrinkage: A physical reduction in size may be indicated by “wrinkling” of the coating on vinyl dipped type or by a loose fitting shell on a fabric-covered lifejacket.
 - The potential for problems applies to all older personal floatation devices (PFDs) and same should be closely examined.
- Listed below are some basic care and checks which will prolong the life of lifejackets;
 - Always stow the lifejacket in a well ventilated place away from direct sunlight.
 - Avoid extreme heat.

- Do not put heavy objects on lifejacket. Do not stow lifejackets one on top of other. Lifejacket lose buoyancy when crushed.
 - Rough treatment will break down the foam cells and the foam also tends to shrink with aging, which is again accelerated by excessive exposure to heat.
 - If a foam filled jacket feels flabby or the canvas cover appears loose over the filling, the jacket should be discarded.
 - Inflatable life jackets to be serviced at regular intervals.
- Ship Owners / operators and masters are advised to take note of the above USCG Marine Safety Alert and act accordingly.

Enclosure:

1. USCG Marine Safety Alert 07-16 Reg “Inspection of Life Jackets”.

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