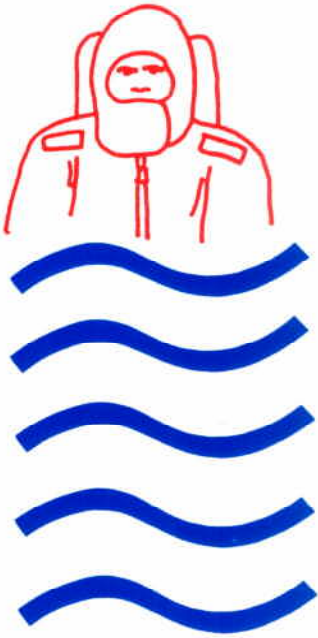
IMMERSION SUIT

CARE AND INSPECTION BOOKLET

U.S. MARINE SAFETY ASSOCIATION



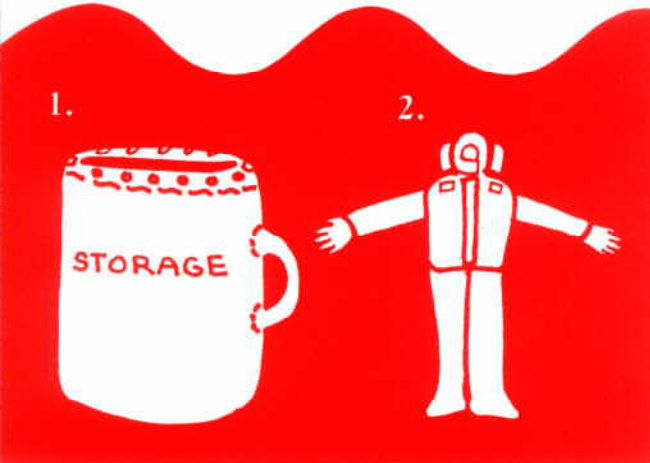
TIMING

Inspection is suggested before every voyage or at least quarterly.

SEVEN STEP INSPECTION PROCESS

1. Check closures on storage bag as well as general condition of bag for ease of removal of suit. Ensure Donning Instructions are legible. Be sure bag, size, and manufacturer of suit labeling are correct.

2. Lay suit on flat clean surface. Make sure suit is dry inside and out. Visually check for damage. Rips, tears, or small punctures can be repaired by an authorized repair station. Major tears, rips, punctures and chemical or heat burns must be inspected and repaired by the suit manufacturer.

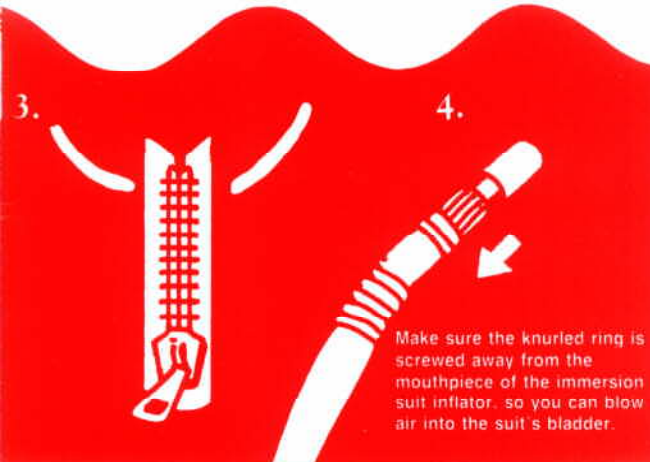


3. Check zipper by sliding up and down to check for ease of operation. Using lubricant recommended by the manufacturer, lubricate the front and back of the zipper and the slide fastener. (If the zipper is not functional the suit must be removed from service and returned to the manufacturer for repair.)

4. Check head support/buoyancy ring for obvious damage and ensure that it is properly attached. Check inflation hose for deterioration or leaks. See that the lock screw is in open position. Head support/buoyancy ring should be inflated and tested for leaks using one of the following two methods:

a. Inflate the bladder then immerse it in water, looking for bubbles, *or*

b. Inflate, let stand for 24 hours and check for firmness. Minor leaks can be repaired by an authorized repair station. Major leaks must be repaired by the manufacturer.



5. Check reflective tape. Replace if necessary. For best adhesion, repair should be completed by a factory authorized repair station.

6. Check whistle and PFD light for proper operation.

7. Check PFD battery/light for expiration date.

CLEANING

WASHING: In no case should the suit be drycleaned or exposed to any chemical solvents or cleaners. The suit should be handwashed with mild detergents and rinsed thoroughly with plenty of fresh water. Stains can be cleaned by gently rubbing with a soft bristle brush.

DRYING: Hang suit inside out on large wooden hanger in a cool (65 - 75 F), dry and well ventilated area. Do not expose to sunlight or direct heat. Following the drying of the interior of the suit, it should be reversed to completely dry the outside. When the suit has **thoroughly dried,** it can be returned to the bag by following steps 1 to 5 for Storage Instructions.

CERTIFIED REPAIR FACILITY

Immersion Suit Manufacturers recommend a complete inspection of your immersion suit by a certified inspection/ repair facility at least every two years. Suits 5 years old or older should be inspected annually.

Please contact your immersion suit manufacturer for a listing of certified repair facilities.

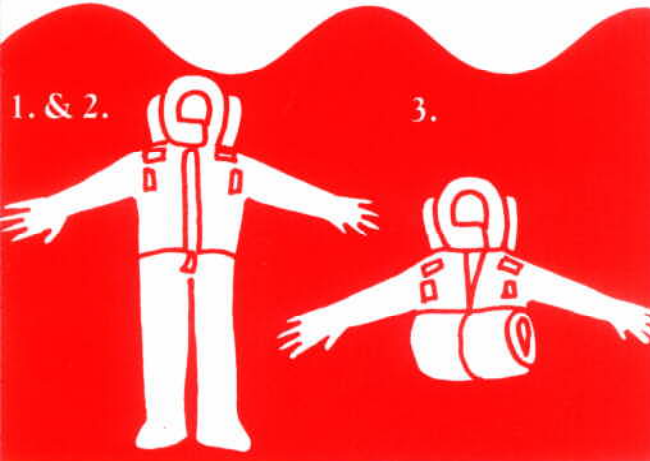
STORAGE

1. Lay suit out on flat, clean surface with arms out.

2. Make sure zipper is fully open and the lock screw on the inflatable oral tube is in the open position.

3. Roll suit, feet first, up to the chin area making sure not to crease the head support/ buoyancy ring or inflatable tubes.

4. Fold arms over rolled up legs and across chest.



5. Tuck hood into the roll and place in storage bag...and secure the bag closures.

6. Be sure suit is stowed in clean, dry area and is immediately accessible in case of emergency. Do not compress the suit in stowage as it may result in loss of buoyancy.

NOTE:

Storage recommendations vary between manufacturers. Consult your suit manufacturer for additional information.

4.

5.

DONNING INSTRUCTIONS

Your life may depend on your ability to quickly don your immersion suit in an emergency. It makes sense to have practiced beforehand. Monthly practice should reduce your donning time from minutes to seconds.

1. You should practice donning the suit, feet first, while lying or sitting on the deck. Vessel movement or list will often prevent donning the suit in a standing position.

2. Pull the hood over your head. Place one arm into each sleeve of the suit and reset the hood on your head. **OR** Place your weaker arm into the sleeve of the suit. Then reach up and pull the hood over your head with your free hand. Then place your strong arm into the sleeve of the suit.

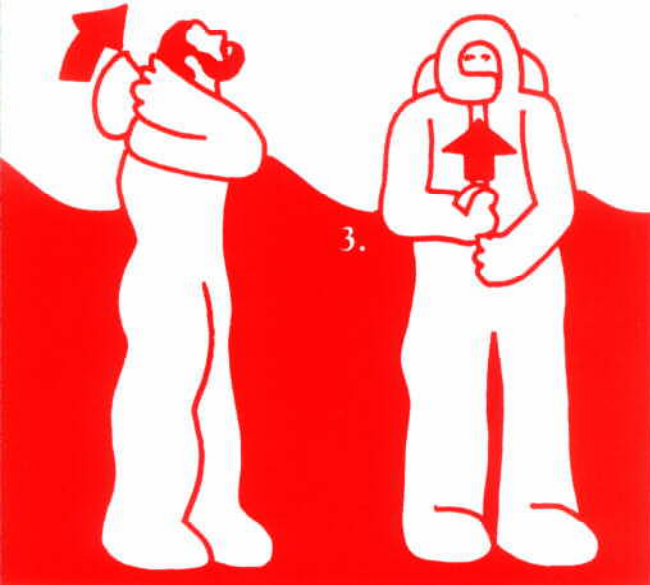
3. Holding the zipper below the slide with one hand, fully close the zipper by pulling on the lanyard with the other hand. Secure the flap over the face/mouth.

WARNINGS:

Do not inflate the air bladder until you are in the water to prevent damage or injury.

There is a risk of entrapment in submerged compartments due to suit buoyancy.

Jumping into the water is a last resort. Ease/lower yourself into the water if practical.

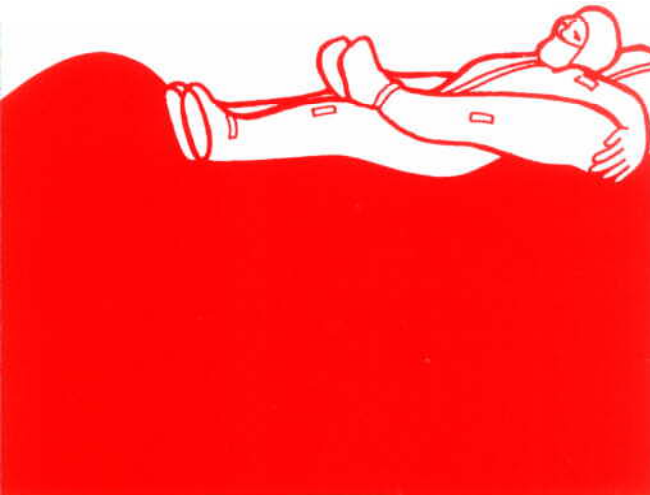


COLD WATER SURVIVAL

When you are in cold water, do not swim unless you are **sure** you can reach a nearby boat, fellow survivor, or floating object.

If a nearby floating object is large, pull yourself up on it. The more your body is out of water, the warmer you will be. Keep your head out of the water to lessen heat loss and increase survival time.

If there are others in the water, and conditions permit, swim in tandem with a companion. Keeping survivors together improves moral, and makes a larger target increasing the chance of rescue.



MORE COLD FACTS

Be aware that cold water (less than 90 degrees F!) can lower your body temperature. This is called Hypothermia. If your body temperature falls too low, you may be unable to swim, or hold onto floating objects. Further cold water exposure could result in unconsciousness and drowning.

Even if you are wearing a PFD, your body can cool down 25 times faster in cold water than in air. A cold water Immersion Suit helps reduce the rate your body is cooling in cold water.

Water temperature, body size, amount of body fat and movement in the water all play a part in cold water survival. Small people cool faster than large people. Children cool faster than adults.

Immersion Suits can help you stay alive longer in cold water. They can let you float without using energy and they protect your body from cold water.

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