



CGD SEVEN (m)
Policy Ltr 13-97
OCT 29 1997

From: Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District
To: Distribution

Subj: OFFICER IN CHARGE MARINE INSPECTION (OCMI) APPROVAL OF
QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS FOR DESIGNATION AS PERSON IN CHARGE
OF LIFERAFTS AND INFLATABLE BOUYANT APPARATUS

Ref: (a) 46 CFR 199.100
(b) SOLAS 74, Chapter III, Regulation 10
(c) COMDTINST M16000.8, MSM Volume III, Chapters 15 & 19
(d) COMDTINST M16000.7, MSM Volume II, Chapter 20
(e) STOW 95, Section A, Chapter VI
(f) SOLAS Resolutions A.742(18), A.770(18)

1. In an effort to align U.S. regulation with international standards, and to provide for performance based regulation, the Coast Guard rewrote the lifesaving regulations for U.S. flag shipping to mirror the international requirements found in SOLAS. Under the rewrite, OCMI's are authorized to "permit persons practiced in the handling and operation of liferafts or inflatable bouyant apparatus to be placed in charge of liferafts or inflatable bouyant apparatus" as substitutes for licensed, documented, or certificated persons. This substitution is only valid for the person in charge of liferafts and inflatable bouyant apparatus and should not be extended to lifeboats or rescue boats.

2. OCMI acceptance of these substitutions is not mandatory. Reference (a) still requires trained persons to muster and assist untrained individuals as well as sufficient licensed, documented, or certificated persons to launch and operate the survival craft. In most cases the number of licensed, documented or certificated persons necessary to launch the survival craft will also be satisfactory to meet the minimum number of persons in charge required by reference (a). Where this is not the case, the OCMI may decide to accept substitutes for the *persons in charge* of the liferafts of inflatable bouyant apparatus.

3. This decision is to be based on the OCMI's evaluation of "the nature of the voyage, the number of persons permitted onboard, and the characteristics of the vessel" as enumerated in 46 CFR 199.100(c) (1). References (b) through (f) may be used for additional guidance. Specifically, the *person in charge* of the inflatables must be able to competently manage the people onboard and operate the survival craft for the time necessary before rescue.

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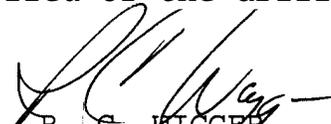
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4. The minimum criteria for accepting non-certificated substitutes for the person in charge, of inflatable rafts or bouyant apparatus should include:

a. satisfactory demonstration of the individual's skills during drills conducted on the vessel,

b. an affidavit by the vessel's present master attesting to the individual's competence, and

c. enrollment in a random drug testing program as per 46 CFR 16. Completion of a course in liferaft or Inflatable Buoyant Apparatus deployment and operation may be accepted by the OCMI in lieu of the drill requirement.


R. C. WIGGER
By direction

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