DMA Circular no. 019

5 knot post-installation test after replacement of non-compliant on-load release gear

1. Rule reference

- Notice B from the Danish Maritime Authority, chapter III, regulation 1.5 (SOLAS, chapter III, regulation 1.5)
- Notice B from the Danish Maritime Authority, chapter III, regulation 34.
- LSA Code, paragraph 4.4.7.6.

2. Other references

- MSC.81(70), Revised recommendation on testing of life-saving appliances, part 2, paragraph 5.4.
- MSC.1/Circ.1392, Guidelines for evaluation and replacement of lifeboat release and retrieval systems, paragraph 24.3.
- MSC.1/Circ. 1206/Rev.1, Measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats.

3. Explanatory note

Notice B from the DMA (SOLAS), chapter III, regulation 1.5, requires that, for all ships, on-load release mechanisms not complying with paragraphs 4.4.7.6.4 to 4.4.7.6.6 of the LSA Code must be replaced or modified not later than at the next scheduled dry-docking after 1 July 2014, but not later than 1 July 2019.

Where a lifeboat is to be fitted with a replacement lifeboat release and retrieval system, in cases where the lifeboat is also a rescue boat and/or is installed on board a cargo ship of 20,000 gross tonnage or above, part of the post-installation test according to MSC.1/Circ.1392, “Guidelines for evaluation and replacement of lifeboat release and retrieval systems”, paragraph 24.3, consists of the 5-knot installation test described in MSC.81(70), part 2, paragraph 5.4.

Although the responsibility for conducting the testing lies with the release and retrieval system manufacturer or its representative, ship’s crew may be requested to assist in performing the test. Companies have raised safety concerns relating to the launching of lifeboats whilst the ship is underway at 5 knots.

4. Post-installation test

The Danish Maritime Authority can accept that post-installation test of replaced or modified on-load release mechanisms are carried out in two steps:

- 5-knot towing test by lowering the life-/rescue boat into the water without releasing it, no persons need to be on board the life-/rescue boat during this test.
- Test of the release mechanism may be performed with the vessel stopped.

The above is acceptable provided that it can be verified by safer means that the replacement release and retrieval system fully complies with the LSA Code, paragraph 4.4.7.6 and subparagraphs.

5. Alternative means for achieving 5 knots

The Danish Maritime Authority accepts alternative equivalent testing methods to achieve 5 knots, which may include i.e.:

- Creating a wash of 5 knots induced by a vessel located forward of the launching position or with both vessels securely moored to quay.
- Use of tidal streams.

It must be ensured that the water is moving at the required speed to a depth deeper than the survival craft draft.

6. RO instruction

On cargo ships alternative means for achieving 5 knots must be approved by the RO.