

# Maritime New Zealand Guidelines

MARINE GUIDANCE NOTICE ISSUE 15 – NOVEMBER 2009

## CREW VISIBILITY DURING EMERGENCIES ON SSM PASSENGER VESSELS

This guidance is for:

- New Zealand safe ship management (SSM) owners and masters
- safe ship management companies in New Zealand, and their surveyors
- Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) safety inspectors, auditors and maritime investigators.

### Purpose

To advise how crewmembers can be readily distinguished from passengers during an emergency.

### Background

An engine room fire occurred on a passenger vessel with more than 300 passengers and six crew. When the crew donned their lifejackets, it was reported that they became indistinguishable from passengers, who were similarly dressed. This was despite the crew lifejackets being labelled "CREW" and marked with reflective tape.

### Making crewmembers visible

Passengers should be able to readily distinguish crew from other passengers in two circumstances:

- when they have an unimpeded view of crew members, and
- when their view of crewmembers is obscured by the presence of other passengers.

When crew wear clearly marked lifejackets, those passengers with a clear view of the lifejacket are very likely to understand that the wearer is a crewmember. However, in a crowded or confined space, many passengers are unlikely to have a direct view of crewmembers, and in particular what they are wearing. This is likely to increase the difficulty crewmembers will have in making their presence clear to these passengers.

The above incident suggests that markings on lifejackets, while important, do not provide a total solution. In crowded situations, identification of crewmembers can be assisted if they:

- Wear on their upper body a distinguishing vest under their lifejacket. This should stand out in poor visibility, for instance, a jacket made from luminous material.
- Wear clearly identifiable head gear, eg with "CREW" printed on it. The head gear should be highly visible, eg made of luminous material. This makes it possible for passengers who have an obscured view of a crewmember to see identifying marks of a crewmember over the heads of other passengers.
- Stand above passengers to put themselves in a position of visibility. This also can assist the crewmember's communication with passengers.

## Testing visibility of crew

Drills should be held with a large number of passengers to test that crewmembers are highly visible to passengers.

## Stowage of crew lifejackets and other equipment

When an emergency is declared not all crewmembers may be near the place where crew lifejackets and other crew emergency clothing are stowed. Valuable response time may be lost when crewmembers need to move some distance to access their lifejackets.

It is recommended that additional lifejackets and other garments are stowed in several locations on the vessel so that all crewmembers can readily access them when needed.

## SSM company implications

SSM companies should discuss with operators of passenger vessels if they need to take additional measures to increase the visibility of crew in emergencies. If changes are made, the ship's emergency procedures should be amended.

## Note

This marine guidance notice should be read with the wider requirements for emergency management in Maritime Rules Part 23: Operational procedures and training. Crew visibility is just one component of effective emergency management.

## Further information

For further information please contact our Wellington office:

Phone: 0508 22 55 22 or (04) 473 0111

Fax: (04) 494 8901

Email: [enquiries@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:enquiries@maritimenz.govt.nz)