



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Carriage of Passengers Onboard Vessels for which Certificates State a Limiting Number of Passengers

Notice to all Shipowners, Masters, Designers, Classification Societies, Surveyors

PLEASE NOTE:-

Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel and you should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

Summary

- In the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) Report into the BREAKAWAY V the MAIB questions the 75kg Unit Weight used for persons on board United Kingdom ships;
- This figure may be revised internationally at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) but the process takes time;
- In the meantime owners/operators have an obligation not to overload a vessel
- This notice does not apply to lifeboats or life-rafts approved under Life Saving Appliances Regulations.

1. Introduction/ Background

1.1 The average unit passenger weight used in UK Merchant Shipping Legislation has been called into question in the Marine Accident Investigation Branch Report into the loss of the inland waterways Hire Boat "BREAKAWAY V".

2. Unit Weight per Person

2.1 The current unit weight per person, used internationally and advocated by the International Maritime Organization, is 75 kg. In light of the MAIB Report and statistical arguments, the United Kingdom has instigated a debate on changing the unit weight per person to a higher figure.

2.2 The IMO will take time to debate the issue.

3. ISO 12217

3.1 Separately, the International Standards Organisation is also considering the Unit Weight per Person for the Offset Load Test.

4. Advice to Owners and Operators

4.1 In the meantime, where a vessel is limited to the carriage of a specific number of passengers, the Passenger Deadweight should never exceed the declared total weight of passengers:

Total Passenger Deadweight = "Certified" No. of passengers x Unit Weight per passenger.

4.2 This advice is consistent with the obligation on any owner/operator not to overload a vessel which is an offence under the Merchant Shipping Acts and Regulations.

4.3 The obligation on any seafarer to render assistance to seafarers in distress remains unaffected.

4.4 Masters and owners should ensure that their freeboard mark or Load Line marks are not submerged, in operation, when the vessel has no list.

4.5 The distribution of passengers/persons upon which approval was given should inform the actual distribution of passengers/persons in service. In the case of self drive hire, this advice shall form an essential part of the "Handover Instructions".

More Information

Fishing & Codes Vessel Safety Branch
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/05
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel : +44 (0) 23 8032 9115
Fax : +44 (0) 23 8032 9161
e-mail: codes@mcga.gov.uk

General Inquiries: 24 Hour Infoline
infoline@mcga.gov.uk
0870 600 6505

MCA Website Address: www.mcga.gov.uk

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