

## M-Notices - June 2011

### **MIN 432 (M+F) – Safety During Transfer of Persons to and from Ships**

In response to two fatal accidents in UK waters, the MCA has issued detailed safety guidance on the transfer of personnel between ships. This guidance is aimed predominantly at ships' crew rather than pilots already trained in such transfers. The key lessons from the incidents in the Rivers Thames and Humber are that trained and fully briefed persons should be used to conduct transfers, with appropriate risk assessments carried out and strict operational procedures followed – particularly in cold, wet and adverse sea conditions.

Wherever possible, transfer of persons should take place with the vessel secured at a berth, via an accommodation ladder/gangway. However, it is recognised that sometimes it is unavoidable to undertake transfers of persons at sea. For a transfer when underway, masters should agree beforehand which vessel is the controlling vessel during the evolution. Often it is the larger of the two vessels which assumes control when, in reality, it would more appropriate for the receiving vessel to do this.

Where appropriate, both vessels should make way at the slowest speed necessary to provide a lee and/or a more stable platform, with the masters of both vessels mindful of the possible effects of interaction between the vessels.

#### **Before the Transfer**

The following should be considered prior to any transfer not alongside a berth: a risk assessment of the transfer activity should be undertaken, and appropriate safety measures put in place; and a briefing onboard both ships should be held for key personnel involved in the transfer, covering at least the following:

- number, experience and mobility of the persons to be transferred
- the type of boat being used and the resulting requirement for ropes, securing points, painters and fenders
- designated side for transfer
- navigational/time constraints
- the expected weather conditions
- required clothing and life-saving equipment for persons and ship teams
- type of ladder to be used and associated safety requirements available including manropes, rescue strops and lines for equipment and luggage
- actions required in the event of man overboard
- the masters or skippers of both vessels and the persons being transferred should be content for the transfer to take place

Before any transfer, the suitability of the type of transfer needs to be assessed by the masters of the vessels. If a person is not physically capable or mobile enough, they should not be transferred. Those being transferred should be briefed and fully understand the sequence of events including the correct use of pilot ladder, appropriate attire, donning of personal flotation device and use of the marine rescue strop.

A personal flotation device rather than a conventional, SOLAS approved solid lifejacket is recommended.

### **During the Transfer**

Lifejackets should be donned before going out on deck. The following are strongly recommended during transfers when the ship is not alongside a berth:

- 1) wearing of lifejackets by all involved
- 2) unless the boat conducting the transfer is very small or has an inflatable sponson, fenders are to be used at all times
- 3) for transfers using a pilot ladder, it is advisable to use a safety harness (or a marine rescue stop). It is to be noted that these could be dangerous in a swell as precision timing and communications between the person on the ladder and the person tending the rescue stop would be required
- 4) the person being transferred should not carry any bags or luggage
- 5) a lifebuoy (with man overboard marker and lifebuoy light) is to be made available and at night the transfer area is to be illuminated
- 6) only one person at a time allowed on a ladder
- 7) where practicable, manropes must be provided
- 8) a pilot ladder must never be placed within the bulwark of the boat
- 9) it should be ensured that there are clear, safe areas for persons to embark and disembark between vessels
- 10) when using a pilot ladder, the boats should be manoeuvred to ensure lee for lowering persons
- 11) personnel to be always available at the conning position, with availability of engines, and clear communication between the person at the conning position and those assisting in the transfer. There should also be a clear understanding between all those taking part of the meaning of all terminology used in the transfer.

Commonly agreed retrieval procedures should be in place before a transfer is undertaken while making way. MGN 432 provides guidance on the rescue of persons who fall in the water.

**MIN 408 (M) – Written Examination Dates 2011/12: Deck and Engineer Officers (Merchant Navy)**

**MIN 409 (M) – Written Examination Dates 2011/12: Engineer Officers (Yachts and Sail Training Vessels)**

**MIN 410 (F) – Written Examination Dates 2011/12: Deck and Engineer Officers (Fishing Vessels)**

These notes give the dates for written certificate of competency examinations carried out on behalf of the MCA between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012.

Oral examinations are carried out on an appointment basis.