



## Key Issues

# Lifesaving Appliances

ICS co-ordinates the Industry Lifeboat Group (ILG) which is centrally involved in a number of important initiatives to improve the safety of lifesaving appliances (LSA) feeding into work at IMO, where the speed of current progress remains less than ideal.

Shipowners continue to express concern that some LSA are built to too low a standard and require disproportionate resources to maintain. Following a survey of members in 2017, ICS also remains concerned that the actual capacity of some freefall lifeboats, particularly some of those being built in Asia, does not always match the certified capacity due to inadequacy of some of the criteria of the existing IMO LSA Code.

Several years ago, following a fatal accident, the UK Marine Investigation Branch also made recommendations regarding water entering voids in foam filled chambers in the enclosed hulls of rescue boats. As this recommendation has yet to be closed out the ILG is considering what action may now be appropriate.

A key part of the current IMO work programme includes the development of new requirements for ventilation of survival craft, and consequential work related to the new IMO Code for ships navigating in polar waters. Given the need to cool lifeboat interiors in hot climates and to heat them in cold regions, while simultaneously maintaining an appropriate oxygen and CO<sub>2</sub> balance, this work has been challenging due to the established concept of having a standard ship's lifeboat being approved for use in all geographical areas. There is also a need to address the risk of carbon monoxide produced from machinery within lifeboats.

This IMO work is therefore ultimately expected to lead to the development of revised standards for new lifeboats and other LSA. The likely development of requirements for lifeboats in polar regions to carry additional supplies, together with increased space and facilities for occupants, is also likely to



reopen the debate about capacity for at least some LSA.

ICS has now concluded that maintaining the current approach to LSA, particularly the concept of 'one size fits all' for lifeboat design may not be appropriate in future. It is anticipated that the emerging requirements for LSA will drive new thinking on the regulatory approach towards them, and ICS agrees with the Royal Institution of Naval Architects (RINA) regarding the need for new IMO construction standards.

ICS is also following work being undertaken by a number of stakeholders regarding the safety of wire ropes which have been implicated in a number of recent lifeboat accidents. Some wire rope failures have reportedly been attributed to a lack of the correct lubrication or a failure to follow the correct procedures, a problem that may have been compounded by the trend of using solid core wire rope. Concern has also been expressed regarding the quality and suitability of some wire rope falls, and the path taken on some ships by the falls between davit sheaves, particularly on some modern designs where available space is often at a premium.

The Industry Lifeboat Group considers that the safety of wire rope falls is currently the biggest single safety issue affecting LSA and will continue to pursue solutions with the relevant stakeholders that have particular knowledge or expertise in this critical safety area.

