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HOME OFFICE

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Telephone: VICTORIA 6655, ext.



Please address any reply to

THE UNDER SECRETARY
OF STATE

quoting: FIR/66 300/63/1

Your reference:

6th December, 1967.

Sir,

FIRE SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 50 /1967Lifejackets

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State to refer to the report of the Joint Committee on Fire Fighting at Sea which accompanied Fire Service Circular No. 17/1967. In paragraph 14 of this Report, it was stated that surface craft and helicopters which may be used for off-shore operations cannot be relied upon to carry enough lifejackets for the firemen as well as the crew. The Joint Committee accordingly recommended that each brigade should plan to provide its own lifejackets of a type confirming to Schedule 12 of the Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Rules 1965 and should place no reliance for this purpose on the service providing the transport.

2. The only type of lifejacket approved under the above Rules for use by personnel other than crew members is one having wholly inherent buoyancy. Because of its bulk, however, this type of lifejacket is not entirely satisfactory for fire-fighting operations. Discussions have therefore taken place with the Board of Trade (Marine Survey Office) with a view to finding a more suitable type of lifejacket. A jacket which relies for its buoyancy wholly on inflation is not acceptable to the Board. The Board have however approved the use of a jacket which has partial inherent buoyancy with facilities for topping-up by inflation and which complies with British Standard No. 3595:1963. This approval is subject, in view of the special hazards involved, to an extra 5% of lifejackets being carried as a reserve.

3. To assist fire authorities operating fireboats to meet their obligations under the Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances) Rules 1965, the Board of Trade have also given their approval to the use of the above type of lifejacket by the crews of these vessels and by firemen carried on them. This approval is also subject to the proviso that a 5% reserve of lifejackets is carried and to the further proviso that the Board is notified of the names of the vessels and the ports where they are based. As soon, therefore, as fireboats have been equipped with the new lifejackets, fire authorities are asked to send the names of the boats and of their home ports to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, Fire Department, Horseferry House (Room 360), Dean Ryle Street, London, S.W.1.

/4. As

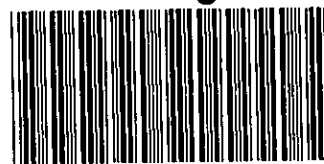
Issued to:

County Councils
County Borough Councils and
Combined Fire Authorities in England and Wales

Copies to be sent to:

The County Councils Association
The Association of Municipal Corporations

The Fire Service
College



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4. As regards other, smaller, craft operated by fire authorities, the Secretary of State recommends, on the advice of the Board of Trade, that they too be provided with the partial inherent buoyancy type of lifejacket referred to above.

5. According to information received from the British Standards Institution, four firms are at present licensed to manufacture lifejackets to British Standard No. 3595:1963. Enquiry of these firms has established that all are currently producing jackets of the partial inherent buoyancy type. Names and addresses of these firms are given in the Appendix. Due possibly to the nature of the materials used for their lifejackets, some manufacturers have deemed it necessary to provide, as an optional extra, a detachable, lace-up cover which they recommend should be fitted where the jacket may be subjected to hard or continuous use.

6. The position regarding the lifejackets provided for use with Emergency Fire Service Transportable Water Units is receiving attention and a further circular will be sent to fire authorities about this in due course.

7. Additional copies of this circular are attached for the information of the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Fire Officer.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

Stanley.

Firms currently producing lifejackets of the partial inherent
buoyancy type conforming to British Standard No.3595:1963

Beaufort (Air-Sea) Equipment Ltd.
Beaufort Road
Birkenhead
Cheshire.

Ottersports Ltd.
8-10, Broad Street
Northampton.

R.F.D. Company Ltd.
Catteshall Lane
Godalming
Surrey.

Vacuum Reflex Ltd.
Prestige House
Coombe Road
New Malden
Surrey.