

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

COMMANDANT (MMT-3)  
U.S. COAST GUARD  
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NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 4-68

Subj: Protective equipment required for fireman's outfits

Ref: (a) 46 CFR, Subchapter U, Rules and Regulations for Passenger Vessels  
(b) 46 CFR, Subchapter I, Rules and Regulations for Cargo and Miscellaneous Vessels  
(c) 46 CFR, Subchapter D, Rules and Regulations for Tank Vessels

1. Purpose. This circular establishes guidelines indicating what types of protective clothing are intended for inclusion in fireman's outfits required on merchant vessels.
2. Background. Amendments to Regulations 63 and 63 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1960 were adopted in 1966 by the intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization General Assembly to require that the fireman's outfits on passenger, cargo, and tank ships include protective clothing, rigid protective helmets, and electrically non-conductive boots and gloves in addition to the items previously required. These and several other amendments are being circulated to the signatory Governments for adoption. These amendments have not come into force internationally; however, adoption by the appropriate number of countries is expected. A Resolution was adopted at the 1966 Assembly recommending that all Governments put these measures into effect without awaiting their entry into force. Public Law 89-?? requires this equipment to be carried on passenger ships. Reference (a) was amended on 20 December 1967 to include these items. subsequently, an additional Convention amendment has been proposed by IMCO which would require two fireman's outfits for each cargo and tank vessel. This proposal will be considered at the next regular IMCO Assembly. Favorable action is expected. Amendment of references (b) and (c) to incorporate both of these changes will be necessary.
3. Discussion. Specific approval requirements are not made for these additional items since it is believed desirable to accept such equipment of a type commonly used on vessels and by shoreside firemen which is readily available from safety equipment suppliers. Several types of each of the items are commonly available and are suitable for the intended purpose. This approach has been satisfactory for fire axes. Items of the following types are considered acceptable:
  - i. Protective clothing of water resistant material covering the body and extending to the neck, wrists and ankles. This could be a regular fireman's raincoat and pants (turnout clothes) or a ¾ length sea-man's foul weather jacket with pants of a tight woven material. NOTE: Asbestos suits are not required nor recommended. Such equipment can only be used properly by highly trained professional fire-fighting teams. Experience indicates that the untrained wearer will advance too closely upon a fire and be subjected to possible scalding by a misdirected hose stream.
  - ii. Calf length electrically non-conductive boots commonly on board or of a type used by the fire service.

- iii. Any electrically non-conductive gloves providing wrist protection.
  - iv. Electrically non-conductive protective helmets of the "hard hat" type commonly found on board or the fireman's helmet.
4. Action. This information should be disseminated to all appropriate Coast Guard personnel and the marine industry.



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Dist: (SDL No. 86)

A: None  
B: n(45); c(10); q(6); eg(3); bdp(1)  
C: m(4)  
V: i(2); k(1)  
E: None  
F: None  
Lists 112-155