IN FORCE | LIFE-SAVING

LSA Code amendments 2026: what changes, and for whom

Lifejackets, single fall hooks and lowering speed. New rules for equipment installed from 2026, and no retrofit for what is already on board.

ISSUED	APPLIES TO	REFERENCE
September 2026	Life-saving appliances installed on or after 1 January 2026	LSA Code · Res. MSC.554(108) · MSC.402(96) as amended by MSC.559(108)

AT A GLANCE

- Resolution MSC.554(108) amended the LSA Code with effect from 1 January 2026.
- It applies to appliances installed on or after 1 January 2026.
- Existing lifejackets, hooks and launching appliances do not have to be replaced because of these amendments.
- MSC.559(108) added the lifeboat ventilation system, where fitted, to the annual thorough examination from 1 January 2026.

01 The three changes

ITEM	LSA CODE	WHAT CHANGES
Lifejackets	Chapter II, 2.2.1	Revised in-water performance: the lifejacket turns an unconscious person face-up with nose and mouth clear of the water within a set time, and keeps its fitted position
Single fall and hook systems	Chapter IV, 4.4.7.6.8 and 4.4.7.6.17	The safeguards against accidental release that apply to twin fall systems now apply to single fall systems. A hook must not support load unless completely reset
Lowering speed	Chapter VI, 6.1.2.8 and 6.1.2.10	Revised lowering speed requirements for fully loaded survival craft and rescue boats, including a maximum of 1.3 m/s unless the Administration accepts otherwise

Who is affected. Only appliances installed on or after 1 January 2026. Existing equipment does not have to be replaced, re-approved or modified because of these amendments.

02 What this means in practice

For an existing ship the amendments matter at the next purchase, not the next survey. A lifejacket bought today should be approved to the amended Code, even though the ones it replaces were not. For a newbuilding, or when a davit, winch or hook is replaced, the maker's approval should cover the amended paragraphs.

The annual thorough examination under MSC.402(96) also changed on 1 January 2026: MSC.559(108) added the ventilation system of lifeboats, rescue boats and fast rescue boats, where fitted.

WHAT TO DO NOW

- Keep existing lifejackets in service while they pass inspection.
- Specify replacement lifejackets approved to the amended Code.
- For newbuildings and hook or davit replacements, check the maker's approval.
- Make sure the annual lifeboat examination includes the ventilation system.

HOW OZ MARITIME CAN HELP

- Lifejackets, lifebuoys and immersion suits from stock, with approval documents
- Annual thorough examination of lifeboats, davits, winches and release gear
- Advice on which appliances on a ship fall under the new provisions

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SOURCES

- IMO Res. MSC.554(108), amendments to the LSA Code, adopted 23 May 2024
- IMO Res. MSC.559(108), amendments to MSC.402(96)
- ABS, MSC 108 News Brief

This bulletin summarises the requirements as we read them on the date of issue. It is general technical information, not legal advice, and does not replace the text of the instruments, your flag Administration's notices, your classification society's rules or the equipment maker's instructions, which take precedence for your vessel. Check your flag, not a general claim.