

(k) Immersion suits are required on all units, except those operating between the 32 degrees north and 32 degrees south latitude in accordance with §108.580(c).

(1) All abandonment drills conducted on units carrying immersion suits must include immersion suits.

**§ 108.510 Application.**

(a) For the purposes of this subpart—

(1) *Similar stage of construction* means the stage at which—

(i) Construction identifiable with a specific unit begins; and

(ii) Assembly of that unit comprising at least 50 metric tons (55.1 U.S. tons) or 1 percent of the estimated mass of all structural material, whichever is less, has been achieved.

(2) *Unit constructed* means a unit, the keel of which is laid or which is at a similar stage of construction.

(b) Subject to §108.515, each unit constructed before October 1, 1996, must meet the requirements of this subpart, except for the number, type, and arrangement of lifeboats (including survival capsules), lifeboat davits, winches, inflatable liferafts, liferaft launching equipment, and rescue boats.

(c)(1) If a District Commander determines that the overall safety of the persons on board a unit will not be significantly reduced, the District Commander may grant an exemption from compliance with a provision of this part to a specific unit for a specified geographic area within the boundaries of the Coast Guard District. This exemption may be limited to certain periods of the year.

(2) Requests for exemption under this paragraph must be in writing to the OCMI for transmission to the District Commander in the area in which the unit is in service or will be in service.

(3) If the exemption is granted by the District Commander, the OCMI will endorse the unit's Certificate of Inspection with a statement describing the exemption.

**§ 108.515 Requirements for units built before October 1, 1996.**

(a) Units which were constructed prior to October 1, 1996, must—

(1) By October 1, 1997, have either—

(i) Lifeboats and liferafts that meet §108.525; or

(ii) Totally enclosed fire-protected lifeboats of sufficient capacity to accommodate 100 percent of the persons permitted on board, plus additional totally enclosed lifeboats or davit-launched liferafts of sufficient capacity to accommodate 100 percent of the persons permitted on board the unit. The following exceptions apply:

(A) An open lifeboat may be used instead of davit-launched liferafts as long as it is in good working order. An open lifeboat requiring extensive repairs must be replaced with either a totally enclosed fire-protected lifeboat, or davit-launched liferafts.

(B) A submersible unit constructed before January 3, 1979, may continue to use the lifesaving arrangements described on the units Certificate of Inspection in effect on October 1, 1996.

(2) By October 1, 1997, fit retro-reflective material on all floating appliances, lifejackets, and immersion suits.

(3) Except for the requirements in paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section, units may retain the arrangement of lifesaving appliances previously required and approved for the unit, as long as the arrangement or appliance is maintained in good condition to the satisfaction of the OCMI.

(b) When any lifesaving appliance or arrangement on a unit subject to this part is replaced, or when the unit undergoes repairs, alterations or modifications of a major character involving replacement of, or any addition to, the existing lifesaving appliances or arrangements, each new lifesaving appliance and arrangement must meet the requirements of this part, unless the OCMI determines that the unit cannot accommodate the new appliance or arrangement, except that—

(1) A survival craft is not required to meet the requirements of this part if it is replaced without replacing its davit and winch; and

(2) A davit and its winch are not required to meet the requirements of this part if one or both are replaced without replacing the survival craft.