

## Life Raft Requirements and Considerations

### Class I and II Boats Only

#### Requirement

Life rafts and inflatable buoyant apparatuses (IBAs) must be purchased from an established manufacturer of marine lifesaving equipment. All rafts and IBAs must be designed for marine applications and intended for lifesaving use. The following manufacturers provide liferafts and IBA's suitable for NOAA use. If you locate a raft manufactured by a company not listed here, contact your LOSBO for review and approval by the Small Boat Safety Board.

- |               |                         |           |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| ➤ Crewsaver   | ➤ RFD                   | ➤ Switlik |
| ➤ Elliot      | ➤ SSP                   | ➤ Viking  |
| ➤ Oceanmaster | ➤ Survival Technologies | ➤ Winslow |
| ➤ Revere      |                         | ➤ Zodiac  |

#### Exposure and Risk Considerations

Make sure the raft or IBA is suitable for the intended environment and expected time to rescue. A canopy or additional water and food may be required if working in remote areas or the expected response time will be more than a couple of hours. Although entering the raft directly from the boat is best, ease of boarding should be evaluated if you must enter the water first.

A ditch bag should be included near the raft, since many small light weight rafts will include very limited safety gear. Ditch bag considerations include: flares, floating handheld VHF radio, rescue mirror, water, small first aid kit, EPIRB/PEPIRB, lights ...

#### Material Considerations

- Double urethane coated nylon or comparable
- Minimum thickness: .4 mm
- Single or double buoyancy tube/compartments
- Over pressure relief valve
- Color should be bright yellow or orange for visibility

#### Performance Considerations

- Auto-inflate 60 seconds or less
- Boarding stirrup or ladder
- Painter length 20 feet minimum
- Ballast pockets for stability
- 10-12 year service life
- Sea anchor included
- Hand pump included
- Strobe/locator light
- Bailing bucket
- Floating knife included
- Weight – able to deploy by one person
- For cold water operations a double layer bottom for insulation

#### Other considerations

In some cases it may be more beneficial and cost effective to rent a suitable raft. Check with local dealers to determine if this is an option. Before purchasing a raft make sure it can be serviced locally.