

Periodic Service

Your liferaft is one of the most important pieces of safety equipment on your vessel. It is designed, manufactured and equipped to save your life in the event you have to abandon ship.

Annual servicing will assure that your liferaft will operate and perform as designed and expected. You will also increase the life expectancy of your liferaft with your annual inspections. Each year your liferaft is subjected to a wide range of elements that will accelerate the natural aging process of the raft and its components.

The only way to determine if your liferaft is in optimum condition is to have it inspected by a manufacturer authorized service facility annually.

USMSA Service Facilities

What should you look for when choosing a service facility?

- Technicians trained by your liferaft manufacturer to service your model of liferaft and that the training certification is current. Most training certificates are only valid for three years. You should ask to see these certificates.
- In addition, if your liferaft is USCG approved, the facility must meet USCG approval. You should ask to see these certificates.
- Depending on the service station location, season and workload, servicing can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, so planning ahead is essential.

USMSA Service Facilities Continued...

- Prompt attention to your needs ~ Liferaft servicing by nature is a prompt turnaround business. Many service stations will allow you to see your liferaft when it is opened if arranged for in advance. (Some companies have insurance issues that only allow employees into their facility.)

What Information Your Service Facility Needs From You

- The make, size, date of manufacturing and date your liferaft was last serviced. This will allow the service facility to make an initial estimate of the fee to service your liferaft. This will determine if the service facility is properly approved to service your make and model liferaft.
- Your actual time requirements. "As soon as possible" is a phrase service facilities hear every day and does not inform the service facility when you really need your liferaft.
- A way to promptly contact you should there be a problem with your liferaft.
- If the service facility is providing pick up or delivery service, make every effort to keep your appointment.

USMSA members strive to maintain a high level of quality and professionalism.

Visit www.usmsa.org for manufacturers' listings of authorized service facilities.



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LIFERAFT

PERIODIC
SERVICING
WHAT TO EXPECT



Cost of Service

The total fee to service your liferaft includes:

- Base service fee
- Items replaced or serviced
- Required documentation

Only after opening the liferaft, evaluating its general condition and identifying the replacement items can we estimate your total service fee.

Checklist of Dated Items

Listed below are items that may add to the total inspection fee.

- Hand flares – 3 years
- Parachute flares – 3 years
- Smoke Signals – 3 years
- Repair cement – 1 year
- Batteries, flashlight – 1 year
- Batteries, interior/exterior lights
- First aid kit
- Food rations – 5 years
- Drinking water – 5 years

Other Possible Fees

- Manufacturer's certificates
- Gaskets and seals
- Bursting straps
- Vacuum bags
- CO₂ cylinder testing and refilling
- Hydrostatic releases
- Labels
- Five-year tests
- Necessary Additional Pressure Test
- Floor seam test

This is a general guide and may or may not apply to your liferaft. Ask for a more detailed description of the service performed if you have any questions.

Typical Inspection Procedures

- The container or valise is visually inspected for damage.
- The container is opened and the liferaft is removed for inspection.
- The high pressure inflation gas cylinder is removed for later inspection and weighing.
- A detailed inspection is performed while unfolding the liferaft to identify any damage or deterioration of fabric or adhesive.
- The liferaft is filled with dry compressed air to its proper inflation pressure. The pressure relief valves are tested at this time to confirm proper operation.
- The liferaft is further inflated to stretch the fabric prior to commencing the specified leak test on each tube. During the pre-stretch, the fabric and seams are again inspected for any signs of deterioration. All attachments are also inspected at this time.
- The air chambers are then pressure tested for the specified time. The pressure is recorded at the beginning of the test and checked again at the end of the specified time. The end pressure is adjusted for temperature change. The end pressure is recorded and checked for loss.
- The equipment packs are checked during the pressure test period. Dated items are replaced only if they have reached their stamped expiration dates. The inflation gas cylinder is inspected at this time for damage, hydrostatic test date and is then weighed. The lighting system and raft attachments are checked during the pressure testing period.

- USCG/SOLAS commercial liferafts must undergo additional testing after ten years of service. These tests include a Necessary Additional Pressure Test (NAP) and a floor seam test. At five year intervals, liferafts must also undergo a Gas Inflation Test which is an operational test of the liferaft's inflation system.
- The liferaft is then reassembled and repacked according to manufacturer specifications. The firing cable for the inflation system is attached to the painter line, making the life raft fully operational.
- Container gaskets or seals are replaced and container straps are installed. Valises are sealed or laced. All labels are inspected and replaced as required.
- All test results, repairs and renewals are recorded on the service inspection report. Documentation is kept on file at the service facility as required. Government and manufacturer certificates are issued and the owner is notified that the liferaft is ready to return to service.

Additional equipment may be packed in your liferaft - such as an EPIRB or small personal necessities - if space permits. Consult with your service technician.