

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Office of the

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

11495 COMMERCE PARK DRIVE, RESTON, VIRGINIA 20191-1507

TELEPHONE: +1-703-620-4880 FAX: +1-703-476-8522

EMAIL: maritime@register-iri.com WEBSITE: www.register-iri.com

MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY NO. 18-19

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Nautical Inspectors, Recognized Organizations

Subject: IMMERSION SUIT DEFICIENCIES

Date: 1 July 2019

Improper maintenance will damage immersion suits and render them unusable.

In a recent case aboard a Republic of the Marshall Islands-flagged vessel, the damage to the zipper closures on multiple immersion suits was apparently the direct result of the crew's efforts to maintain them. Their application of petroleum jelly was intended to lubricate the zipper closures. Instead, it appears that the product caused the material to breakdown and resulted in the inability to use the zippers. It is very important to follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintaining immersion suits, including use of the **correct zipper lubricant**.

The periodic immersion suit inspection and testing must follow the requirements in your Safety Management System.

Any necessary repairs should be done by an approved service provider following the manufacturer's recommendations. Also refer to the RMI Marine Notice MN [2-011-5](#), *Life-Saving Appliances and Equipment*.

Port State Control Officers worldwide have issued deficiencies, and even vessel detentions for damaged immersion suits.

Owners/Operators, Masters, crew, Nautical Inspectors, and Recognized Organizations should ensure all immersion suits (including extras, if aboard) are properly fitting, well-maintained, and ready for use in an emergency.

