



Freefall makes merchant ships safer

Press release

Merchant ship crews will soon have higher safety levels when the new Schat-Harding FF750/LA750 new fully integrated freefall lifeboat and davit system is specially designed as a unit for tankers and bulk carriers. With a capacity of up to 32 persons the FF750/LA750 was designed and tested in Norway and has entered production in Qingdao, China. First deliveries are scheduled for early summer 2008, with both boat and davit manufactured in China for delivery to yards across Asia.

The FF750 boat and the matching LA750 davit have been designed from scratch using all Schat-Harding's accumulated experience with freefall. The system has a skid angle of 45 degrees, saving almost one metre in length for the installation compared to older designs with similar capacity. Inside, the seating has been reconfigured to be more spacious, allowing for the fact that today's seafarers are bigger than the standard size and weight set down in international regulations. It has specially adapted the seats and seatbelts to make boarding easier and so that they will better protect people over a range of heights and weights.

The FF750 boat is constructed in FRP (Fibreglas Reinforced Polyester) and has a length of 8.97 m. It will weigh 4820 kg fully equipped and 7700 kg fully loaded. Although it has been safely tested to 30 m drop heights its normal certified drop height will be 23 m, more than sufficient for the merchant ship applications it is designed for. The bow design on the boat has been configured to give a soft water entry and reduce g-forces on the occupants and at the same time give optimum surfacing speed for the typical merchant ship drop heights, allowing the boat to speed clear of the ship under its drop momentum.

Particular attention has been paid to the design of the safe and efficient retrieval system, and also to a free fall simulator system which allows crews to train in safety.

Schat-Harding is the world's leading supplier of lifeboat and evacuation systems for the cruise, offshore and shipping industries. It aims to be a FIRST in safety for all its customers. With factories and offices in Norway, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Singapore, Spain, Canada, the Czech Republic, the USA, Panama and China, and agents in thirty other countries, Schat-Harding provides a global service and supply network. Brands now supported by Schat-Harding include Watercraft, Viking Marine, Waterman, Fiskars, Davit-Company, MASECO, Watercraft America, William Mills Marine, Schat, Harding, Mulder & Rijke and the Beiyang Boatbuilding Co.

More information:

Per Einar Gjerding
Director Sales & Marketing
Umoe Schat-Harding AS
Ph +47 5348 3682
Mob. +47 91663575
per.einar.gjerding@schat-harding.com

Issued by:

John Guy
Merlin Corporate
Communications
Ph +44 1903 50 20 50
john@merlinco.com



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