

ABS REGULATORY NEWS

No. 15/2026



FREE-FALL LIFEBOAT PASSAGE WIDTH ISSUE

This notice highlights a recent Port State Control (PSC) finding concerning a passage-width issue of which the industry should be aware of. Liberia [Marine Advisory 18/2026 Rev.1](#) also advises owners, operators and masters of vessels with dimensional shortfalls in certain Nishi-F FF-65 (25-person) freefall lifeboats and draws attention to PSC practice concerning the passage between the seats.

REQUIREMENT

IMO Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code paragraph 4.7.2.1 requires *the passage between seats to have a clear width of at least 480 mm from the deck to the top of the seats, be free of any obstruction and provided with an anti-slip surface with suitable footholds to allow safe embarkation in the ready-to-launch position*. The amendments adopted by [IMO Resolution MSC.272\(85\)](#) entered into force on **1 July 2010**.

FINDINGS FROM PSC OFFICER

Recently, Port State Control Authorities raised a deficiency concerning the clear passage width inside the freefall lifeboat, as certain locations were found to be less than the minimum width of 480 mm stipulated in LSA Code 4.7.2.1.

KEY NOTES

Applicable requirement:
LSA Code 4.7.2.1 & amendment
[MSC.272\(85\)](#)

Entry into force:
1 July 2010

Liberia Advisory :
By 1 October 2026 — rectification for
affected FF- 65 lifeboats
By 1 October 2027 — RO verification

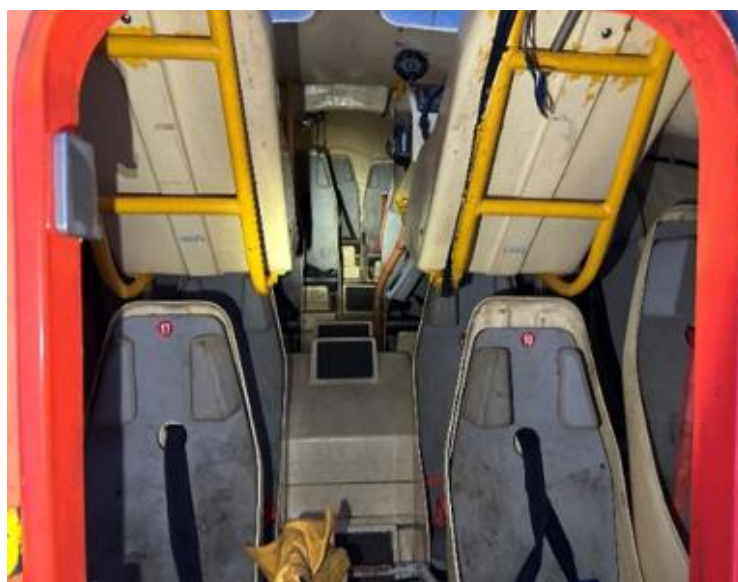
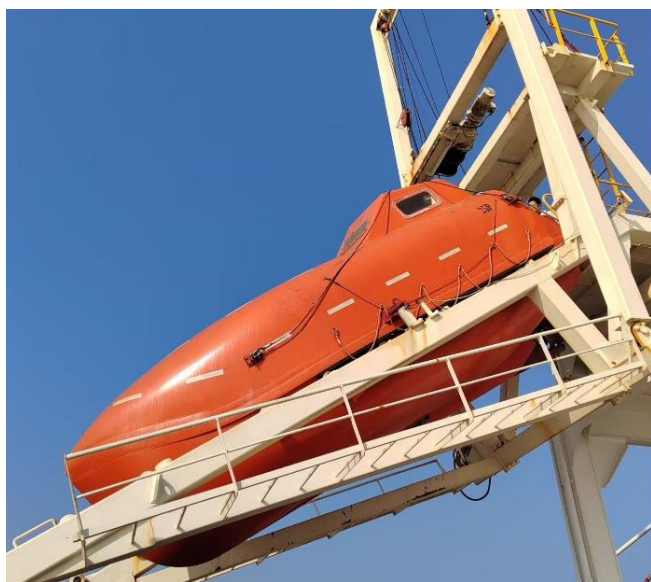
References:
– [MSC.272\(85\)](#)
– [Marine Advisory 18/2026](#)
– [Marine Advisory 18/2026 Rev.1](#)

11101

THE PASSAGE WIDTH BETWEEN THE SEATS
FROM THE DECK TO THE TOP OF THE SEATS
NOT AT LEAST 480 MM(ONLY 370 MM)

LSAC/N4.7.2

30



Example of freefall lifeboat & passage width inside

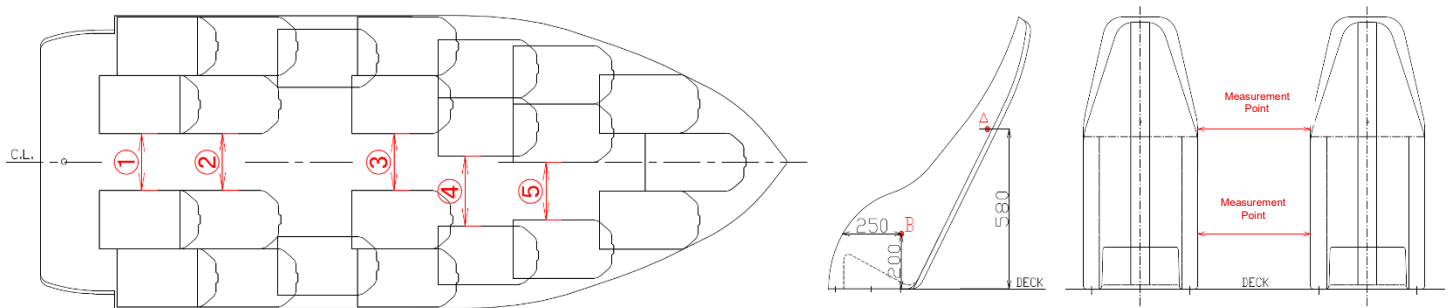
FLAG ADMINISTRATION MARINE ADVISORY

The Liberia Flag Administration issued the [Marine Advisory 18/2026](#) in July 2026, alerting shipowners, operators and masters that certain Nishi-F FF-65 freefall lifeboats have been found not to comply with the internal passage width (480mm) requirements specified in IMO LSA Code 4.7.2.1.

Affected FF-65 lifeboats. The equipment-specific recommendation applies to Nishi-F FF-65 freefall lifeboats with a capacity of 25 persons.

Manufacturer-identified dimensional shortfalls. Manufacturer technical information referenced by Liberia Marine Advisory 18/2026 Rev.1 indicates that the issue was confirmed in some products and identifies the following shortfalls:

- positions 1 and 2: approximately 5–10 mm below 480 mm; and
- position 5: approximately 70–90 mm below 480 mm.



FF-65 passage-width measurement locations identified in the manufacturer technical information. Source: Marine Advisory 18/2026 Rev.1, 7 Aug. 2026.

In August 2026, Liberia issued advisory [Marine Advisory 18/2026 Rev.1](#) providing further clarification that the 480 mm passage width requirement is also being applied by some Port State Control (PSC) authorities to space between the pilot seats.



Per the Marine Advisory and administration requirements, including Nishi-F Co., Ltd.'s passageway-width adjustment instructions, vessels with affected Nishi-F FF-65 freefall lifeboats shall verify installation, obtain the manufacturer's approved rectification plan, and complete seat-passage clear-width rectification to meet the LSA Code by 1 October 2026, with the Recognized Organization that issued the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment

Certificate confirming implementation and full compliance at the next annual, periodical or renewal survey no later than 1 October 2027.

ABS RECOMMENDATION

1. **Obtain the Approved Rectification Plan**
For affected vessels, contact Nishi-F Co., Ltd. at nfas@nishi-f.com to obtain the approved rectification plan, the adjustment kit (seat adjusters, spacers, liners, bolts/nuts/washers), and the installation instructions.
2. **Complete Rectification Promptly**
Rectification should be carried out at the earliest opportunity. Vessels with affected Nishi-F FF-65 freefall lifeboats should complete rectification by 1 October 2026 (Liberia-flag vessels) other flags to follow their Administration's requirements.
3. **Verify before PSC Inspection**
Owners and Masters are advised to verify that any required rectification has been completed and retain on board documentary evidence including approved plan, service report, and measurement records demonstrating a minimum clear passage width of 480 mm. Such documentation should be readily available for presentation to PSC authorities, particularly in light of the interpretation adopted by some PSC authorities that the 480 mm requirement applies not only to the passageway between passenger seats but also to the space between the driver/pilot's seats.
4. **Other Makes/Models**
For freefall lifeboats of other makes and models, it is recommended that the operators measure the clear passage width between seats and arrange an approved rectification plan with the manufacturer if the measured width is less than 480 mm (vessel keels laid on or after 1 July 2010), in accordance with LSA Code 4.7.2.1.
5. **Formal Extension Requests**
Where additional time is required to carry out modifications, Owners should contact the flag administrations for a formal/vessel-specific authorization letter and notify ABS so that the vessel's records and survey status can be properly updated.

REFERENCES

Document	Title
IMO Resolution MSC.272(85)	Adoption of Amendments to the International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code
Liberia Marine Advisory 18/2026	Nishi-F Co., Ltd Freefall Lifeboat Model: FF-65 (Capacity: 25 persons) - 20 July 2026
Liberia Marine Advisory 18/2026 Rev.1	Nishi-F Co., Ltd Freefall Lifeboat Model: FF-65 (Capacity: 25 persons) - 7 August 2026