



THE FUTURE OF CRUISE SAFETY

PIONEERING THE WAY IN MARINE EVACUATION SYSTEMS ↓



Such is the pace of innovation in today's society that it is easy to take for granted inventions that would have seemed mere fantasy a few years previously. Technological developments such as smartphones, the internet and email have revolutionised our daily lives beyond recognition, but also now feel routine and expected. Innovation isn't just about convenience either, it can improve and even save lives. Think of the daily journeys you make in your car, then muse again how different an experience it would be without seatbelts, airbags, shatter-proof windscreens and crumple zones.

When you're going on holiday, your focus is more likely to be on sun, sea and sand than safety and survival, but luckily there are companies such as ours whose obsession it is to ensure you are as protected as possible when you take to the water. With some of the aforementioned technological developments making the world seem smaller than ever (with Google Earth you can explore an island in the Maldives or a Norwegian fjord at the click of a button), so too has peoples' desire to see more of these far-flung corners.

Cruising is an ever-more popular way of fulfilling this trip of a lifetime and the latest statistics from Cruise Lines International Association show that there were almost 27 million cruise passengers globally in 2017, with 28 million expected in 2018. North Americans currently account for almost half of these passengers, with Europe around a quarter and Asia around 15%. It is in this final market where the largest growth is expected, with some commentators envisioning that the Chinese market alone could eventually account for 50-75% of the total market within the next few decades. To satisfy this burgeoning demand, new build capacity is growing by an average of 42,000 berths a year, with the established shipyards being joined by new players keen to get in on the action.



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A number of technological developments are helping enhance the cruise experience, from wearable credit cards to geo-location and navigation equipment, but perhaps the biggest transformation is happening behind the scenes (or below deck if you will). We're always looking for ways to push the envelope when it comes to safety innovation and we genuinely believe we're on the cusp of something so momentous it will go down in the record books as a significant step change in the same way that SOLAS first transformed Marine safety. We don't tend to make empty promises either – throughout our proud history we have pioneered products that have re-engineered the way people think about safety at sea, from the original flotation life preserver to the first submarine escape suit; the initial welded liferaft to the world's first marine evacuation system.

As excited as we are about this latest industry revolution, we don't want to let the cat entirely out of the bag until comprehensive testing and further development is complete. But what we do want you to imagine are four scenarios that we believe will be totally transformed by the introduction of our new system:

1. IMAGINE IF YOU COULD SAVE 85% OF YOUR CURRENT EVACUATION SYSTEMS' DECK SPACE

The ramifications of saving so much square footage are huge. As a cruise operator, this affords you huge potential to offer your passengers an enhanced experience through the provision of additional features such as more balconies. Freeing up more room also means more cabins and an increased capacity leads to additional revenues.

2. IMAGINE IF YOU COULD REDUCE THE RISK TO LIFE FOR YOUR PASSENGERS & CREW

Cruise ship evacuations are mercifully rare despite the huge volumes of passengers they entertain each year, but operators, Crew and passengers alike want total confidence in the systems during training exercises and that they will be trusting should everything not go to plan. Current Lifeboat & Davit systems are unsatisfactory and according to the current rules fit for purpose, but we wanted to go one step further and reduce the potential for user error, reduce the Human element, deployment failure and catastrophic loss of life. Which is why we're developing a system that completely eradicates the dangers associated with being lowered in a survival craft.

3. IMAGINE IF YOU COULD EVACUATE VIA A SLIDE-BASED SYSTEM RATHER THAN A TRADITIONAL CHUTE SYSTEM

Both systems have their merits and introducing a new concept is as much about giving operators – and their passengers – increased choice – increased confidence, as it is to help progress the cruise safety industry. But the benefits of a slide-based system are immediately apparent: intuitive use, improved visibility, family groups in maintained contact and greater access for those with mobility issues. Most of all it's about coming at the design process from a completely different angle and engineering something that hasn't been seen before rather than an upgrade on existing solutions.

4. IMAGINE IF YOU COULD AVOID RESCUE THROUGH AN INFLATABLE SELF-PROPELLED VESSEL

Lifeboats are already self-propelled so this isn't an impressive feat in its own right, but the addition of the inflatable hull brings additional advantages including a greater capacity, improved facilities (including toilets and fresh water production) and improved comfort. Ideally no-one wants to find themselves being evacuated from a cruise ship, but in the event they are, basic amenities can make a potentially traumatic experience more reassuring.

We are already in advanced discussions with some of the world's largest cruise operators regarding how they will integrate this concept into their vessels and there is a high level of demand from those wishing to pursue it as their primary evacuation means. As the eminent safety solutions provider we've never rested on our laurels and produced equipment that meets minimum requirements – we've led from the front and invested significant sums in research and development to ensure we are shaping the future ourselves. We look forward to sharing further progress with you as the official launch nears, but take our word for it that you'll never think about cruise ship safety the same.





GET IN TOUCH ↓

Email info@survitecgroup.com

www.survitecgroup.com

1-5 Beaufort Road, Birkenhead, CH41 1HQ, United Kingdom