

CARE & MAINTENANCE OF IMMERSION SUITS

Your immersion suit's life span—or your own, if you find yourself in the water—depends greatly on how you care for and maintain your immersion suit. Your immersion suit is only as good as your care of it. Here are some points that should be checked whenever you inspect your suit (at least once a month).

Zipper:

Inspect closely for missing teeth and signs of corrosion. Lubricate teeth on the **outside** and **inside** of zipper with product recommended by the manufacturer. Do not use oil-based greases. Scrub zipper with a tooth brush to remove build up of residues. Run zipper up and down to check for smoothness.

Inflation Hose & Bladder:

Pull gently on tube to make sure the tip of tube or its attachment point on the bladder do not separate. Use plastic wire ties at these points if not present. Leave the silver knurled knob below mouth piece in the down position, ready for use (see figure 1). Once a year remove bladder, inflate overnight or soak under water to check for leaks. Make sure to reattach to suit when dry!

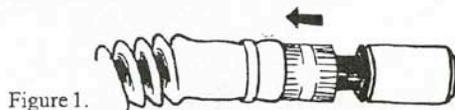


Figure 1.

Material:

Inspect closely for small holes, tears and compression wrinkles in suit. If dirty or used in pool or salt water, rinse thoroughly inside and out with fresh water. Turn suit completely inside out to dry in a well ventilated space. Do not dry in direct sun. One or two days later it will be ready to dry on the outside. If dirt or oil is present, wash with a **mild soap** and rinse. Do not dry clean.

Markings:

All immersion suits are required to be marked with the owner's name, vessel's name or the name of the person to whom the suit is assigned. (BEWARE—Paint may damage the material.)

Practice:

Don your suit. How long does it take? How well does your suit fit? With foul-weather gear on can it still be zipped up?

Stowage:

Leave the zipper open, but zipped up one-inch up from the bottom. Roll the suit legs up first, followed by hood and finally place arms over and place in bag (see figures 2 and 3). Make sure the neoprene flapper valve in foot



Figure 2.

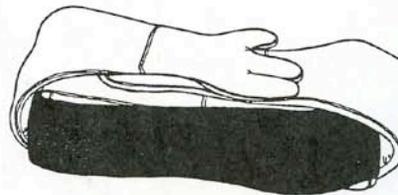


Figure 3.

is not creased. Otherwise, follow the manufacturers stowage recommendation. Lubricate snaps on bag. Store suits in their bags, not against each other without bags. Do not place heavy weights on bag as suit material will compress and may puncture or weaken. Place in an accessible location so it can be retrieved quickly in an emergency. Plastic bags kept with suit can be worn over shoes/boots to make donning quicker. For long term, off-season stowage, hang the suit in a dry place on a thick, padded hanger (like one designed for a dive suit—do not use wire hangers).

Accessories:

Suit should have 31 square inches of retro-reflective tape visible above the water in any stable position (as req'd by the F/V Safety Act), a zipper tab for ease in gripping with suit gloves on, a whistle, and USCG approved light. Additional recommendations include a personal survival kit, hand-held VHF radio, and personal EPIRB.