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Lloyd's List

No.59,683

lloydslist.com

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Monday June 2, 2008

225p

Belize Registry launches yacht codes

THE Belize Registry's new standards codes for yachts were due to come into force yesterday, writes *Sandra Speares*.

The codes have been launched to attract new yacht owners to the Belize registry — a move that might ultimately result in owners moving their operations to the South American country.

Registry director-general Angelo Mouzouropoulos said that the codes, which have been lodged with the International Maritime Organization, have been introduced to address perceived gaps in the safety standards for yachts, in particular super yachts, where helicopters or submersibles may be deployed.

Three codes have been developed to encompass yachts of 24 m or over and 500

gt and over but less than 5,000 gt; yachts of 24 m and over but less than 500 gt and smaller yachts that are less than 24 m but bigger than 10 m.

The regime proposed by Belize essentially splits the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's Large Commercial Yacht Code (LY2) into two.

The new system, according to Mr Mouzouropoulos, provides an "enhancement to existing codes" which addresses guidelines for yacht-based helicopters and submersibles which are becoming an increasingly important part of the super-yacht mix.

The registry has deployed specialists across a wide range of disciplines to formulate the code, and Mr Mouzouropoulos

said they have worked closely with the MCA. The new codes will be phased in over a 24-month period. Aside from yacht-based sporting and leisure activities, the codes will provide a framework for implementing a safety management and ship security system which mirrors ISM and ISPS certification, which is not mandatory for yachts in these categories.

The registry is also conscious of the crossover between commercial and private yacht usage.

It therefore allows for a yacht in private use to be chartered for up to a total of 112 days in any consecutive 12-month period, providing that the yacht meets the relevant criteria for commercial usage during that period.

