

The subject of the Board of Trade rules regarding lifeboats in 1912 is arcane. It requires considerable study to put it all together. This explanation will not even attempt to do that. I am just going to address how the Board of Trade (BoT) arrived at their total of 1178 capacity for Titanic's 20 lifeboats. Below is the BoT document showing the capacities of Titanic's lifeboats.

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## REPORT OF SURVEY

OF  
AN EMIGRANT SHIP

No. 1912

MARINE SHIP.

BOARD OF TRADE, SURVEYOR GENERAL  
 No. 417  
 11 APR 1912  
 QUEENSWATER

Name and official number.	Port of registry.	Tonnage. Gross. Net.	Length, beam, depth or tonnage measurement.	Where and when built.
*Titanic 1314 Z	Liverpool	4235 2035	Triple screw	Belfast 6-5-12 1912
Date of expiration of passenger certificate.	Mean draught of water and forward.	Name and address of owner or agent.		Intended voyage.
2-4-13	34' 0" 31' 11"	Oceanic Steam Navigation Co Ltd James White Liverpool		Foreign

**MASTER AND OFFICERS.**

Rank	Name in full.	Number of certificates.	Grade.
Master	Edward John Smith	14,102	1st class
First Mate	Wm. Murdoch	12,540	1st class
Second Mate	Thos. Herbert	12,571	1st class
Third Mate	Joseph Sill	19,324	1st class
Fourth Mate	Wm. Edward Fitzgerald	12,572	1st class

**LIFE SAVING APPLIANCES.**

Description of boats and rafts.	No.	Gross capacity in tons.	Net capacity in tons.	Material.	Number under cover.	Are they so placed as to be ready for use in emergencies?	Are they provided with the appliances required by the rules?
Boats, Section A	14	9172	910	Wood	14	Yes	Yes
Boats, B	✓						
Boats, C	✓						
Boats, D	2	648	20	Wood	2	Yes	Yes
Boats, E	4	✓	188	Wood with same material.	✓	Yes	Yes
Life Rafts	✓						
Number of life boats		Number of life rafts		Is the ship supplied with all the life-saving appliances required by the rules?			
3560		48		Yes			

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In the left column under “Life Saving Appliances” you see that the boats are classified by “Sections” A through E. Lifeboats in any particular section were subject to regulations regarding their construction, capacities, and what proportion of the total lifeboat capacity the number of lifeboats in each section could comprise.

The 30 ft. boats were Section A boats. These were built to the highest standards and had to comprise the majority of the lifeboat complement. These boats had nominal measurements of 30 ft. length, 9 ft. breadth, and 4 ft. depth. These were “nominal” measurements. That means that these were the building specifications for these boats. In actual practice the “as measured” dimensions would be slightly larger by a few inches. In measuring lifeboats for BoT purposes they used “as measured” dimensions. The nominal cubic foot capacity would have been 648 cubic ft. The “as measured” cubic foot capacity for Titanic’s 30 ft. boat was 655 cubic ft. For a Section A boat the allowable capacity of persons was 10 cubic ft. per person. So Titanic’s worked out to 65 persons per 30 ft. boat. This figure was just for Board of Trade purposes. It was up to the officer in charge to determine acceptable safe loading when necessary.

The 25 ft. emergency cutters were Section D boats. There were lower requirements for their construction and their numbers were limited to, I believe, two out of the total complement of boats, if I remember correctly. They had lower requirements because they were primarily work boats which were designed to be used by the crew. As such, when determining loading capacity, 8 cubic ft. were allowed for each occupant rather than the 10 cubic ft. for the Section A boats. The “as measured” BoT capacity of each of these boats was 324 cu. ft. Dividing this by 8 we get an occupant capacity of 40 persons for this boat.

The Engelhardt collapsible boats were Section E boats. Since these were beyond the required boats for Titanic, the number of these boats was not regulated. Collapsible “decked” boats used an altogether different method for determining their capacity. A somewhat complex formula was used to determine the square foot area of the deck of one of these boats. Once determined, 3.8 square ft. were allotted to each occupant to determine occupant capacity. The Bot document doesn’t give us all the measurements. They just give us the final occupant capacity result for each boat which is 47.

There are discrepancies between the figures seen in this BoT report and those seen in the Andrews Notebook figures. Those in the notebook reflected changes in the regulations regarding individual lifeboat capacity enacted by the BoT in the wake of the Titanic disaster.