

IMCA Safety Flash 17/15

October 2015

These flashes summarise key safety matters and incidents, allowing wider dissemination of lessons learnt from them. The information below has been provided in good faith by members and should be reviewed individually by recipients, who will determine its relevance to their own operations.

The effectiveness of the IMCA safety flash system depends on receiving reports from members in order to pass on information and avoid repeat incidents. Please consider adding the IMCA secretariat (imca@imca-int.com) to your internal distribution list for safety alerts and/or manually submitting information on specific incidents you consider may be relevant. All information will be anonymised or sanitised, as appropriate.

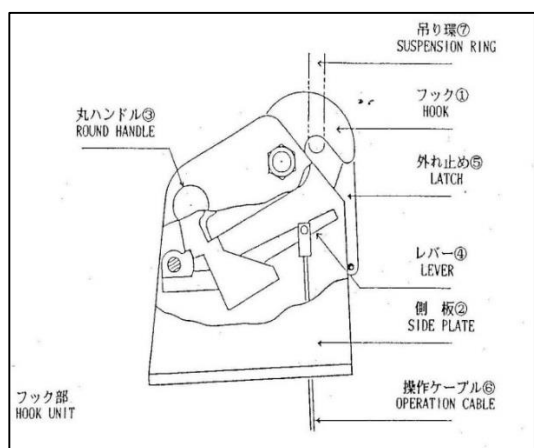
A number of other organisations issue safety flashes and similar documents which may be of interest to IMCA members. Where these are particularly relevant, these may be summarised or highlighted here. Links to known relevant websites are provided at www.imca-int.com/links. Additional links should be submitted to webmaster@imca-int.com

Focus: lifeboats

I High Potential Near Miss: Failure of Lifeboat Release Hook Mechanism

A member has reported a high potential near miss incident involving the failure of a lifeboat release hook mechanism. The incident occurred during post maintenance testing of the davit brake. The forward release hook opened resulting in the lifeboat being suspended partially on its fall preventer device.

The release hook system in place on board the vessel was of the Nishi-F Company on/off load release type. The basic overview of the system is shown in Figure 1 below, with the components noted.



Item	Component
1	Hook
2	Side Plate
3	Round Handle
4	Lever
5	Latch
6	Operation Cable
7	Suspension Ring

Figure 1: Basic overview of lifeboat release hook

Components

To release the lifeboat, a crew member in the lifeboat pulls a locking handle bar upwards and whilst holding the handle bar in the lifted position, operates the release. In consequence the hook units on the forward and aft are simultaneously released from the suspension rings as the operation cable manipulates the lever. See figure 2 below.

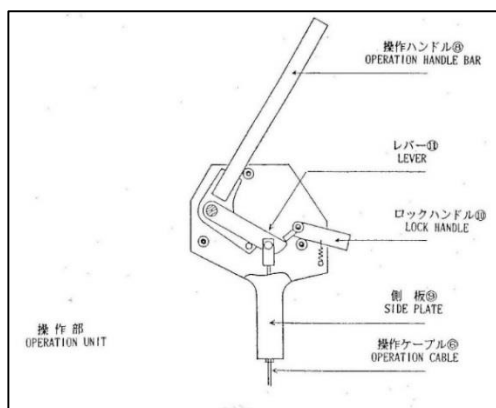


Figure 2: Showing operation unit

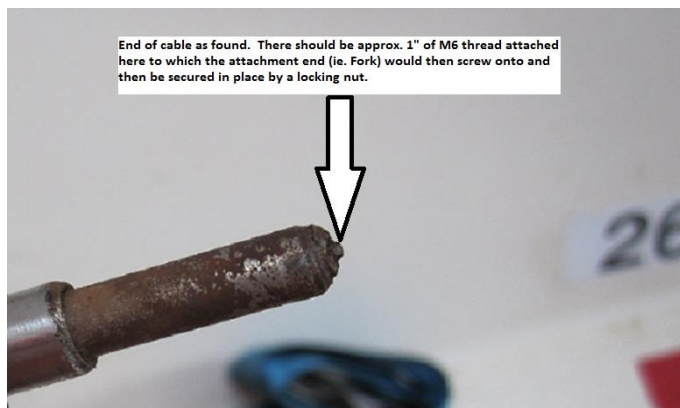


Figure 3: Showing end of failed cable

In this instance the boat was successfully released from the stowed position as per normal operating procedure, and lowered to the embarkation deck. The boat was sitting at the embarkation deck for approximately five seconds when the forward hook released, resulting in the boat dropping approximately 30 cm before coming to rest on the safety shackle (fall preventer device).

Our member's preliminary investigation noted the following:

- ◆ The operation cable was found to have failed at the forward end of the lifeboat. This was likely due to its age, in service use, and the inability to adequately monitor its condition. The cable terminates into a M6 thread; and the failure occurred directly at the locking nut – see Figure 3;
- ◆ With the condition of the operation cable it was unclear if the hook was not properly reset, or failed under load at this time;
- ◆ The vessel had not yet undergone the manufacturer's modification to the on-load release system in accordance with International Maritime Organization (IMO) MSC 1/Circ 1392 – *Guidelines for evaluation and replacement of lifeboat release and retrieval systems*.

Our member recommended the following actions:

- ◆ Check the arrangements on the remaining hooks;
- ◆ Examination of lifeboat hook release mechanisms, irrespective of design to check for integrity and potential damage;
- ◆ Ensure that procedures, toolbox talks, risk assessments relating to the launch, recovery, and routine inspection of lifeboats adequately ensured that routine checks were made of the hook release mechanism.

It should be noted that in this instance the fall preventer device reduced the consequence of the failure; this was a good reminder, not only of the importance of their use, but that they should also be inspected and maintained.

Members may wish to refer to the following incidents (search words: *release, hook*):

- ◆ [IMCA SF 13/14 Incident. 3 – Failure of lifeboat release hook mechanism.](#)

2 Free-Fall Lifeboat Safety

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has published **Marine Notice 15/2015** regarding two recent incidents involving the inadvertent or accidental release of free-fall lifeboats. The investigations conducted by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) and the New Zealand Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TIAC) have highlighted ongoing safety issues related to free-fall lifeboats and identified maintenance issues that may be of interest to members.

Click [here](#) to download the notice.

The following AMSA [presentation](#) on – *Operation of lifeboats and safety* would also be of interest.

Members may wish to review the following similar incidents (search words: *lifeboat*):

- ◆ [IMCA SF 10-11 Incident. 2 – Lifeboat drill – Near casualty;](#)
- ◆ [IMCA SF 09-12 Incident. 1 – Inadvertent lowering of lifeboat;](#)
- ◆ [IMCA SF 13-14 Incident. 3 – Failure of lifeboat release hook mechanism.](#)