

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY No. 19-20

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Nautical Inspectors, Recognized Organizations

Subject: FREEFALL LIFEBOAT SLING ARRANGEMENTS

Date: 04 May 2020

This Marine Safety Advisory (MSA) supersedes MSA No. 18-15.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) was recently notified of an incident involving the failure of a freefall lifeboat sling during lowering of the lifeboat to the water. The wire failed at a crimp while under load, causing the lifeboat to fall uncontrolled to the water. While this incident did not result in any injuries, it highlights the need to maintain vigilance when inspecting and utilizing slings for the secondary means of launching and recovery of freefall lifeboats.

A review of other incidents involving the failure of slings used to launch and recover freefall lifeboats that have been reported to the Administrator in the past six months has identified the following similarities:

- Inadequate in-service inspection of slings by ship’s crew;
- Inadequate assessment of risks prior to conducting freefall lifeboat drills;
- Inadequate initial inspection of slings prior to being put into service;
- Inadequate assessment and selection of manufacturers and suppliers of slings; and
- Use of plastic encased wire.

Plastic casing of wire slings inhibits the proper inspection of slings and can conceal defects in the underlying wire rope. To raise awareness of this issue, the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Asia-Pacific Region (Tokyo MoU) has issued [Safety Bulletin 01/20](#), *Safety risks of lifting slings encased in plastic sheathing on freefall lifeboats*.

The Administrator strongly recommends that owners and operators of RMI-registered ships review and, as necessary, revise the relevant procedures in their Safety Management and Preventive Maintenance Systems, considering the information provided in this MSA. The requirements of RMI Marine Notice [7-041-4](#), which provides an outline of essential procedural steps to safely carry out simulated launching drills of freefall lifeboats, and RMI Marine Notice [2-011-37](#), §8.0 which provides an outline for vessel operational readiness, maintenance and inspections, should be reviewed. Owners and operators are also encouraged to assess whether wire slings with plastic casings should be used.

Masters of RMI-registered ships are also encouraged to review this MSA, RMI Marine Notice 7-041-4, RMI Marine Notice 2-011-37, and Tokyo MoU Safety Bulletin 01/20, as relevant, during a regular shipboard safety meeting.

This MSA expires one (1) year after its issuance, unless otherwise noted, extended, superseded, or revoked.