



SAFETY ALERT - TECHNICAL No.54

LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES

FAST RESCUE CRAFT (FRC) – Launching and Recovery Operation

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has recently become aware of a number of incidents where human error or mechanical failure has caused the premature release of the FRC painter lines

During the routine recovery of the FRC the painter became detached from the bow of the FRC. This caused load to transfer onto the davit hook, preventing it from opening. The FRC was turned 90 degrees to the direction of travel and the forward speed of the ship then caused the FRC to be towed sideways which led to a partial capsize of the FRC. The FRC crew were tipped into the water.

The UK Ship operator carried out an investigation and brought this to MCA attention.

The MCA has been informed that the manufacturer has already identified and contacted ship/ships' operators who have been supplied with FRC fitted with the problematic painter release mechanism.

As the painter performs a critical role in maintaining the position and directional stability of the FRC during launch and recovery it needs to be fit for purpose and only release when activated by the crew of the FRC as part of their practised launch or recovery procedure.

Therefore, it is recommended that all operators and Masters should ensure that the painter release system on the FRC is inspected and the following checks are carried out:

1. excessive play in the local release handle (check fwd/aft and sideways movement);
2. the release handle, when opened, returns to fully upright and secure position and that the spring mechanism is not loose;
3. the painter line length is correctly adjusted to ensure the FRC lifting frame sit directly under the davit wire and the hook; and
4. ensure that the boat's crew understand the correct use of the painter.