

Marine Safety Flash

A16-23 (15th July)

Parted Rope Embarkation Ladder

Incident Overview

An employee was boarding the ship via an accommodation ladder at anchorage. As he accessed the ladder, third step from the bottom to make his way up the ladder, one of the side ropes parted leaving him on the ladder with only one rope.

The other side rope held and he moved safely back to the launch. Subsequently, the other side of the rope parted due to the heaving of the vessel and was left hanging on a few strands of rope. The Master checked the damaged ladder and reported that, while the ladder generally appeared to be in good condition, the rope condition had deteriorated.

The Master was able to confirm that the monthly inspections were completed, however this includes only a visual inspection.

SOLAS requires that an annual examination and 5 yearly load test be included in the maintenance regime for pilot and embarkation ladders.

Recommendations

Vessels to thoroughly examine the condition of the rope ladders on board and report back on their condition.

Examination must include:

- Ladder steps friction characteristics are in good condition;
- Each step of the embarkation ladder must be free from knots and no noticeable frayed ropes;
- Ladders are not stored on rusty or corroded metal surface and are kept dry at all times;
- Each embarkation ladder must be capable of being rolled up for storage and must be able to unroll freely and hang vertically;
- Static loads are applied while the ladder is hanged vertically during inspection to ensure the ropes condition has not deteriorated;
- Monthly inspections recorded in the log book and maintained for verification purposes.
- Embarkation ladders must be inspected and maintained in a suitable condition for their intended purpose, taking into account any restrictions related to safe loading;
- (Ref: SOLAS II-1/3-9.3; SOLAS III/20.4; SOLAS III/20.7.2; MSC.1/Circ.1331, Annex para. 4)
- Any ladders not fit for use must be taken out of service and replaced/repaired