

Accidental release of liferafts

The Norwegian Maritime Authority advises all vessels to check release lines and mooring arrangements for liferafts and ensure that these are protected and undamaged. If such an arrangement is installed on the side of the vessel, it must be ensured that the lines are adequately protected against any contact with quay installations. Furthermore, we encourage companies and suppliers of liferaft equipment to jointly consider measures to reduce the likelihood of accidental release incidents.

Background

The Norwegian Maritime Authority has received a report of an incident where a liferaft was accidentally released and fell to the quay. An accidental release of a liferaft may inflict great damage, cause injuries, and, in the worst-case scenario, fatalities. Similar incidents have been reported in the past.

Cause:

Liferafts used in MES often have the mooring arrangement attached along the side of the vessel. An accidental release of a liferaft may be caused by a release line and associated equipment getting caught in the quay or fendering. The liferaft winch and release line may have been torn off or detached from the attachment on the side of the vessel and suspended in the fendering or similar on the quay.

Potential indirect causes:

- design of a system with the release line on the side of the vessel
 - release lines or associated equipment located lower than the quay
 - insufficient protection arrangement for the line
- tide

Current requirements

The attachment of the lines is not regulated in detail, but the liferafts are required to be secured to the ship. SOLAS III/13.4.1: «Every liferaft shall be stowed with its painter permanently attached to the ship.»

Corrective measures

The following measures must be in place on board:



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- procedures to prevent undesirable incidents, including regular routines for checking lines, strips, etc.;
- check of arrangements to protect lines and attachments on the side of the vessel;
- regular maintenance;
- risk assessments related to manoeuvring to various quay installations.

References:

- Act of 16 February 2007 No. 9 relating to ship safety and security (Ship Safety and Security Act)
- Regulations of 1 January 2015 No. 1191 on a safety management system for Norwegian ships and mobile offshore units
- Regulations of 1 July 2014 No. 1019 on life-saving appliances on ships
- Regulations of 28 March 2000 No. 305 on surveys, construction and equipment of passenger ships engaged on domestic voyages
- Regulations of 30 August 2016 No. 1042 on marine equipment
- SOLAS chapter III, Life-Saving Appliances and Arrangements
- LSA Code (Life-Saving Appliance)

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