FAKE EMERGENCY ESCAPE BREATHING DEVICES

The Marine Safety Forum (a group of shipping, logistics, energy, regulatory and other interests) issued its Safety Flash (11-09) on 8 March 2011 to warn the industry of the discovery of fake emergency escape breathing devices (EEBDs). The fake EEBDs were identified as copies of the Unitor/MSA type Uniscape 15H. The imitation sets do not work properly, and it is vital that shipowners ensure that their EEBDs are genuine and in good working order. The consequences of having fake devices on-board could be deadly: anyone using them will be unable to breathe and possibly unable to escape from an emergency situation.

Fake EEBDs may be identified by the following:

- bag material is different
  - original Unitor: shiny PVC material
  - fake Unitor: dull canvas-like material

^ Original and fake EEBD

- mask hood will not fit over user's head. Neck-tightening rubber membrane is not flexible enough for a normal head size, and is sewn to the hood with a single seam – not welded as in an original Unitor hood

^ Mask hood and neck-tightening rubber membrane inadequate

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- the zipper is opened in a way which casts doubt on the functionality of the automatic release mechanism but like the original, the bag has UNITOR UNISCAPE 15H and Safety by MSA printed on the front, together with four sketches of how to use it

Any EEBDs found to be forgeries should be taken out of service, and replaced immediately with genuine articles. The counterfeit EEBDs must be returned ashore so they cannot be used again.

^ 2cm opening on original EEBD above

ORIGINAL UNITOR EEBD:

- zipper has 2cm opening on the teeth
- zipper closes from right to left

COPIED DEVICE:

- zipper has no opening
- zipper closes from left to right. Air release cannot be activated automatically

KEY POINTS

- ensure EEBDs are genuine and are in good working order
- take great care when ordering or servicing any life-saving or fire-fighting appliances. Always ensure genuine parts for fire and safety equipment by going to known service providers
- carry out periodic inspections of life-saving or fire-fighting appliances as per the on-board planned maintenance system (PMS). Retain records of these inspections
- check that life saving and fire fighting equipment is operational

^ Example of a genuine EEBD in good working order

REFERENCE

A copy of the Marine Safety Forum safety flash (11-09) can be found at: **http://www.marinesafetyforum.org/upload-files//safetyalerts/msf-safety-flash-11.09.pdf**

OVERWEIGHT RESCUE BOATS

^ Weighing of overweight boat manufactured by Watercraft Hellas SA

The UK's Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) in its safety bulletin 1/2011 highlighted the dangers of rescue boats becoming overweight as a result of water penetration into void spaces. This problem caused a serious accident on a UK-flagged car carrier. During a routine drill, the fall wire attached to the rescue boat parted while it was being hoisted to its stowed position. The rescue boat and its four occupants fell nearly 29m into the water. One of the crew members died and two others were taken to hospital.

The rescue boat was identified as a Watercraft WHFRB 6.50 and had a certified weight of 980kg. During the accident investigation, it was weighed and found to be 1450kg. Seven rescue boats of the same model used on sister ships were also inspected and found to be significantly heavier than when supplied. It was determined that the rescue boats' weights when un-laden were close to or exceeded the safe working load (SWL) of their davits; with the addition of crew, fuel and equipment on-board, the SWL of the davits were exceeded. The MAIB stated in its safety bulletin that the weight of the rescue boat '*by itself should not have resulted in the failure of its fall wire due to the safety margins in place. Investigation into the failure of the wire remains on-going*.'

The rescue boat model WHFRB 6.50 was certified to meet SOLAS requirements, the Life Saving Appliance Code and the Marine Equipment Directive. The construction of the rescue boat included an inner and outer hull. The void space below deck was divided into 16 compartments, of which 15 were filled with rigid polyurethane foam to provide a watertight, buoyant volume.

The MAIB found that 14 of the 15 foam-filled compartments in the rescue boat had been penetrated by water as well as lower sections of the hull containing cavities and voids between the foam and hull. The polyurethane foam was found in these areas to be of varying colour and consistency.