

Safety Alert 14

Fast Rescue Craft Safety

What happened?

A temporary arrangement observed during a recent NOPSA inspection has highlighted the importance of making sure a fast rescue craft (FRC) is suitable for its intended purpose.

Following the failure of the platform's original FRC, a replacement FRC was brought in from a nearby facility as a temporary measure. A Job Safety Analysis (JSA) was performed by the platform workforce on the use of the replacement FRC and a number of hazards were identified, including:

- The location of the lifting point directly above the Coxswain's head without the provision of any over-head protection;
- The potential for snatching of the chains once at sea level (in rough seas); and
- No quick-release hook – potential for hand/finger injuries whilst attempting to connect to, or disconnect from, the hook.



The risk control measures identified during the JSA to address the identified hazards were limited to procedural controls and awareness of the hazards. As a result, the work party had safety concerns with the temporary arrangements and it was decided that the FRC was not safe to launch. Given that the FRC had not been taken out of service at the time of the inspection, and based on the JSA's reliance on procedural controls and hazard awareness, it was considered that the use of the FRC would present an imminent threat to safety.

Consequently, a Prohibition Notice was issued to prevent use of the FRC in its current configuration. Work restrictions were also introduced by the operator to minimise the man overboard risk.

What went wrong?

The review conducted under the Management of Change (MoC) process did not adequately identify the potential for new risks to be introduced during launching and retrieval of the FRC. These new risks were only identified during a subsequent JSA after the FRC was put in place on the facility.

When changes are made quickly to fulfil an immediate need, those changes are often not subjected to adequate scrutiny prior to the change being made.

Key Lessons:

- The use of temporary replacements for safety-critical equipment, such as an FRC, should be thoroughly reviewed through a MoC process prior to the change being made to ensure new hazards, resulting in unacceptable risks, are not introduced.
- A single layer of risk controls is generally not sufficient to adequately address identified hazards, especially when the controls are either procedural or awareness-based in nature. Preferably, there should be several layers of risk controls in place so that if one control measure fails, there are others in place to prevent the undesired consequences being realised.
- The hierarchy of controls should be considered when making changes with controls selected from as high as possible on the following list, where practicable:
 - ⇒ Eliminate
 - ⇒ Substitute
 - ⇒ Engineering Controls
 - ⇒ Administrative Controls
 - ⇒ Personal Protective Equipment

Where elimination or substitution is not practicable, good design is the barrier most likely to succeed to prevent accidents. For these systems to operate safely and with the confidence of those required to use them, they must be designed consistent with industry good practice.

Contact

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