

## **Lifeboats - Routine Inspection and Maintenance**

### **What happened?**

Recent inspections conducted by NOPSA and information provided to NOPSA have raised concerns regarding the general condition of some Totally Enclosed Motor Propelled Survival Craft (TEMPSC) currently in use in the offshore regime.

Inspection findings have resulted in nine enforcement actions on facility operators in the past four months.

The enforcement actions focused primarily on the lack of effective routine maintenance and inspections being conducted on facility TEMPSC.

TEMPSC were identified with damaged or broken safety harnesses, unsecured and loose items, and illegible safety and operating instructions. A shortfall in the competencies of personnel assigned to essential lifeboat duties was also noted.

NOPSA is particularly concerned that some facilities' induction processes do not provide personnel with suitable familiarisation of assigned lifeboat locations and procedures. The expectations of and by personnel during preparation for the boarding process, for example, is also not always clearly illustrated in the induction.

### **What could go wrong?**

For many facilities currently in service, the TEMPSC are the primary source of evacuation from an uncontrolled or escalating major event, while other facilities list the TEMPSC as the secondary means of evacuating personnel. It has been well established however, that major accident events may not afford the time or the conditions for helicopters to be employed as the primary means of evacuation, leaving TEMPSC as the preferred alternative.

Delays in the launching of TEMPSC due to a lack of familiarisation with location or procedures could be the difference between a successful controlled departure and an uncontrolled abandonment. The ability by personnel to understand and observe boarding arrangements, secure the craft for launch and progress the launching of the TEMPSC itself are all critical to a successful evacuation.

TEMPSC are designed to provide for the protection of personnel in extreme weather conditions and rough seas, however this protection is negated if seat belts or harnesses cannot secure occupants during adverse movement or roll. Equally, items within the craft should be securely stowed to prevent damage to people or equipment.

### **Key lessons:**

Operators are encouraged to review their current procedures concerning TEMPSC and ensure that the following issues are suitably addressed:

- Ensure the personnel induction process includes a visit to the assigned lifeboat, an overview of the preparation and boarding procedures and a general familiarisation of **your specific facility's** TEMPSC and contents.



- Ensure personnel assigned to lifeboat duties (coxswains, bowmen, etc.) have the required training and competencies to effectively and efficiently board, launch and operate **your specific facility's** TEMPSC in all conditions including during the hours of darkness and/or inclement weather.
- Assign accountability and responsibility for TEMPSC maintenance and inspections to a suitable position to ensure ownership of the procedures and processes.

### Contact

For further information email [alerts@nopsa.gov.au](mailto:alerts@nopsa.gov.au) and quote **Safety Alert 47**.