

Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 08-30

Issued: 21 August 2008

Subject: Defective Blocks on Main Mast

Introduction

A recent safety observation from a Platform Supply Vessel in the North Sea has highlighted a potentially hazardous situation on board concerning the blocks fitted to the main mast for the flag halyards.

It has been recognised that this hazardous situation could have implications for other vessels. This Safety Alert has been compiled to highlight the potential hazard.

Defective Blocks

As it can be seen from the photograph below, the lugs on each of the 5 blocks for the flag halyards were almost completely sawn through and it was almost inevitable that, if unchecked, at least one of the blocks would have parted within a short period of time.



The effect of these blocks falling from their location on the main mast, as indicated on the following photograph, would have resulted in very serious implications to any personnel below.

Recommendation

To reduce the risk of injury to personnel it is recommended that the blocks fitted to the main mast for the flag halyards are given a thorough visual check on a 6 monthly basis and that any defective or worn blocks are replaced as necessary. In addition it is recommended that this task should be included within a vessel's planned maintenance system.