

Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 15-21

Issued: 03.07.2015

Subject: Incorrect Fitting of Hydrostatic Release Units

Event Description

Some of our vessels have been supplied with Thanner 4 Year Hydrostatic Release Units (HRU). A recent internal inspection on one of our vessels has highlighted that they have been fitted incorrectly. Therefore all vessels are requested to review this Safety Flash and check all HRU's onboard.

The Thanner units comprise of a hydrostatic bolt within a frame. When the release operates, the bracket comes free of the bolt, allowing the raft to float free. At this point the painter should remain attached to the ship via a small wire weak link; the same would apply if the raft had been released manually.

If the release unit has been fitted upside down, as has been found recently as shown below left, the weak link is not connected to the ship. Therefore, upon release, the raft would be allowed to float free without inflating.



Incorrect

Correct



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Further confusion may arise from the labelling on the units. Normally on our vessels the label is upside down when the units are correctly fitted, i.e. if the label reads the right way up, the unit is the wrong way up.

However, all vessels must be aware that this may be dependent upon how the unit was labelled at the manufacture, and therefore cannot be a trusted indication of being fitted correctly.

N.B; The above problem was identified onboard a company vessel only two days after a flag state Safety Equipment survey!

Actions / Recommendations:

Vessels having this type of HRU are requested to check that they are correctly rigged. Instructions for this were supplied with the units and should be inserted in the ship's SOLAS manual; it is recommended that copies of the instructions are also posted near the life rafts.



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