

Oggetto: Lifeboat damaged by ruptured air cylinders

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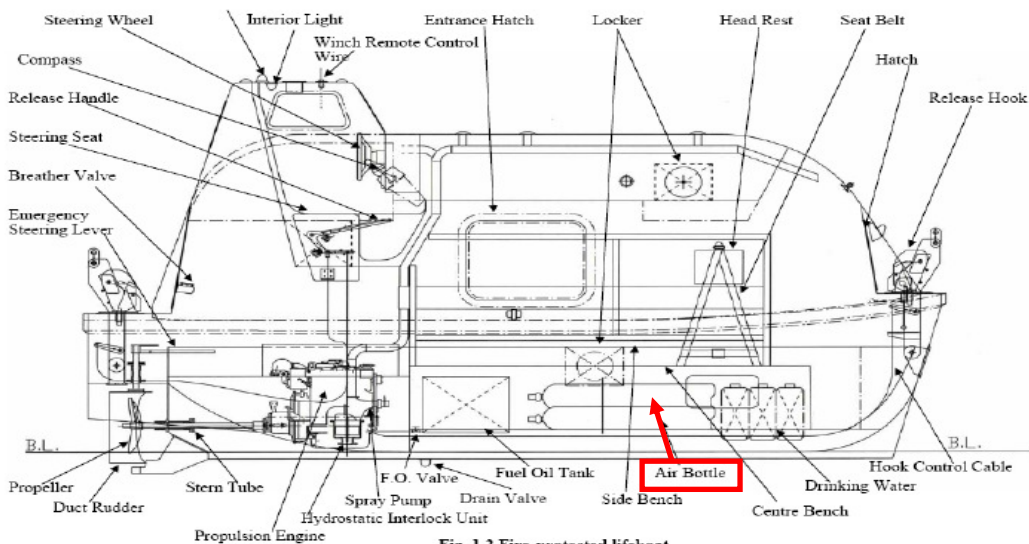
Al personale di competenza:

- **Service Managers & Direttori Filiale**
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Le scialuppe di salvataggio su navi tanker sono equipaggiate con sistema antincendio (sprinkler) e di alimentazione d'aria interna.



L'alimentazione d'aria è fornita da bombole di aria compressa con una capacità di autonomia di almeno 10 minuti.



Anche qualora non specificato nel manuale di istruzione del costruttore, tali bombole devono essere verificate annualmente e ogni 5 anni da personale specializzato ed autorizzato a farlo.

Annualmente occorre verificare visivamente le condizioni generali delle bombole, e sostituirle in caso di corrosione (misurare spessore in caso di dubbi).

Ogni 5 anni le bombole devono essere sottoposte a test di pressatura (idraulica). La data del test di pressatura deve essere stampinata sulla bombola.

Si allega bollettino MARS-201165 relativo allo scoppio di una bombola d'aria compressa su una scialuppa.

Lifeboats on tanker ships are equippe with firefighting system (sprinkler) and selfcontained air support system.

Cylinders may supply air for at least 10 minutes.

Air cylinders shall be periodically inspected by qualified and authorized personnel.

Air cylinders shall be annually visually inspected and substituted on case of wear or corrosion (use thickness measurement instrument if necessary).

Air cylinders shall be hydrostatically tested every 5 years. the hydrostatic test date must be permanently marked on the bottles.

Attached: bulletin "MARS-201165 Lifeboat damaged by ruptured air cylinders

MARS 201165 Lifeboat damaged by ruptured air cylinders

An oil tanker's totally enclosed fibreglass lifeboats were equipped with high-pressure air cylinders stowed beside the keel. One day at sea – shortly after the lifeboats had undergone a 5-yearly inspection by an accredited contractor – one of the compressed air cylinders suddenly and spontaneously burst, resulting in extensive damage to the lifeboat's keel and hull. Fortunately, no-one was injured. Once the vessel arrived in port, a local lifeboat service company was contracted to investigate the incident and assess the damage with a view to carrying out repairs. In the absence of supporting documents (certificates/ work reports etc.) and from the dates punched on the cylinders, it appeared that it was more than six years since the last hydraulic test of the air cylinders. (IACS Recommendation No.88: Air bottles for air supply in totally enclosed lifeboats should be hydraulic pressure tested by a competent service station recognised by a Recognised Organisation at intervals not exceeding 5 years and the hydrostatic test date must be permanently marked on the bottles.) The substantial corrosion of the cylinders' exteriors suggested that routine inspections and maintenance had also been seriously neglected. After the air cylinders were removed and closely examined, it was ascertained that the cylinder shells had suffered a 50% diminution in thickness in the corroded patches. After assessing the damage, the lifeboat was deemed to be beyond economical repair. It had to be scrapped and a replacement lifeboat obtained. The investigation report was forwarded to the fleet Head Office in order to instigate legal action against the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) for potential breach of code(s) in the material, design and construction of the cylinders, and against the authorised contractor who last serviced the lifeboats and equipment for negligence.



▲ View of localised corrosion on the exterior of air cylinders



▲ View of damaged hull and ruptured air cylinder



▲ Close-up view of damaged hull and ruptured air cylinder

Editor's note: As a consequence of this incident, it is presumed that all air cylinders in the other lifeboat were also renewed. This incident highlights the need for compressed air or gas cylinders, fire extinguishers and hydraulic systems to be regularly inspected, maintained and hydraulically tested at recommended intervals. They must be renewed if there are any signs of wastage or corrosion, which may be particularly serious in locations that are exposed or enclosed.