

Let's Take Care of Our People and Equipment

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Ship after ship, survey after survey, we continue to find life-threatening shortcomings with shipboard equipment. What is particularly frustrating is that these equipment problems result from simple neglect. Following are especially noteworthy problems:

Life jackets. The MRC outlines PMS procedures—all you have to do is read the card and follow those procedures! Common discrepancies include Mk-1 chemical-pill actuators not indicating green (green means “good,” while red means “dead”); actuator-assembly wires (on CO₂ or pill-type jackets) too thick to break; oral-inflation tubes not glued in bladders; and actuator assemblies and CO₂ bottles missing or the wrong type.

Meanwhile, on the Mk-5s, actuator-assembly wires again are too thick to break, and oral-inflation tubes are not glued in the bladders. Also with the Mk-5, modification straps on each side of the bladder often are missing, and, as with the Mk-2s, actuator assemblies and CO₂ bottles are missing or are the wrong type.

Boats. Although designed to save lives in case someone falls overboard, many boats have the wrong or missing man overboard and rescue signs, running lights are missing or are not working, and even life jackets are in disrepair or are missing.

Boat davits. Too often, davit wires are not maintained accord-

ing to PMS; they appear neglected and exposed to saltwater for long periods. These wires are critical to small-boat and RHIB operations, since they lower, hoist, and suspend the craft. Lubrication fittings on davits are gummed with paint, and, in some cases, the fittings are so badly corroded, grease couldn't pass through them. Protective guards and covers aren't in place, and applicable operating instructions aren't posted so the davit operator or an assistant can read and follow them during davit operation.

Anchors and associated gear. Gauges often are out of calibration—not by a week or month but by years!

Life rafts. They often are not stowed according to PMS. We routinely find an incorrect number of turns on the lashings to securing harnesses, missing rubber pads, and painted or corroded securing harnesses.

Distress marker lights. They often are not maintained and not marked with two-inch reflective tape, as required by NSTM 077, Personnel Protection Equipment.

Had NSTM guidelines and PMS requirements been followed, all these problems would have been avoided. Workcenter supervisors must get back to basics and read about their gear so they understand its preventive- and corrective-maintenance requirements. Ⓢ



This life vest is missing its CO₂ cartridge.



The anti-sabotage compound is missing from this life preserver.



Here's a different life preserver from the one at the top of the page, but with the same problem: no CO₂ cartridge.



The CO₂ cartridge in this preserver indicates red at the bottom, meaning it is not screwed in tightly. When screwed in properly, the cartridge's bottom shows green.