

LIFE RAFT EMBARKATION LADDER WAS NOT READY FOR IMMEDIATE USE



- **RISQ 4.19:** Are life rafts in good order and are hydrostatic release units maintained and installed correctly?
- **SIRE 2.0:** Q 5.4.5 – “Were the Master and officers familiar with the operation of the liferafts, hydrostatic releases and liferaft launching appliances, where provided, and were they in good order with records available to demonstrate that they had been serviced, inspected and tested as required?”.
- **IMO:** SOLAS – Chapter III – Life-Saving appliances and arrangements – Regulation 20.2 – Operational Readiness.
- **IMO:** SOLAS – Chapter III – Life-Saving appliances and arrangements – Regulation 11.7 – Survival Craft Muster and Embarkation arrangements.

FINDING

During a pre-vetting (SIRE 2.0) inspection, the Prevention at Sea (PAS) Inspector raised a **negative observation** concerning the **embarkation arrangements adjacent to the life raft station**. Specifically, it was noted that the embarkation ladders had been modified with an additional rope secured above the original ladder ropes. a

IMPORTANCE

This modification compromised the ladder’s intended design and functionality, making it unsuitable for immediate deployment in an emergency. Such a condition does not align with regulatory requirements, which mandate that all life-saving appliances must remain fully accessible and immediately operational at all times to ensure the safety of personnel during abandonment situations.

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE VESSEL

- Keep embarkation ladders clear of obstructions, ropes, or unauthorized modifications.
- Check ladder condition and stowage during daily and pre-departure rounds.
- Follow manufacturer maintenance instructions.
- Post clear signage near ladders to guide use and prevent tampering.
- Ensure crew know how to correctly stow and deploy ladders.
- Include ladder use in abandon ship drills.
- Report and log any defects promptly.

ACTIONS FOR THE OFFICE

- Ensure Company procedures cover the correct stowage, access and regular inspection of ladders.
- Run a campaign/survey focused on liferaft ladder readiness to highlight importance and enhance awareness.
- Remind vessels to keep all ladders always clear of obstructions and ready for immediate deployment.
- Include specific checks on ladder condition and readiness as part of internal audits and superintendent visits.
- Provide toolbox talks focusing on SOLAS requirements and best practices.
- Ensure that current risk assessments consider ladder readiness.
- Regularly review defect reporting systems to track, follow up, and close out any issues related to ladder condition or deployment readiness.
- Communicate any related incidents/ near misses and the corresponding corrective/preventive actions across the fleet to promote continuous improvement and shared learning.