



SAFETY ALERT - TECHNICAL No.30

Life-Saving appliances: REPACKING INFLATABLE LIFE RAFTS

The text below is re-printed from an article published by the Swedish Transport Agency (SFu Safety Alert 2009-07-09 <http://www.san-nytt.se/english/2009/shortcut-when-repacking-rafts-can-cause-mortal-danger>).

“It has been noted a number of times previously that shortcuts are sometimes made when inflatable life rafts are repacked. It appears to be commonplace that the bushing located between the two halves of the shell through which the release line runs is cut. The reason is that when repacking almost the whole line must be pulled through the bushing, which involves an amount of work. By making a cut in the bushing and pushing the line through the cut, the work is made easier. This leads to an increased safety risk since the line, when pulled out, may exit through the cut instead of running through the bushing.

The function of the bushing is specifically to prevent the line being pulled between the halves of the shell, where it may easily fasten. If the bushing is damaged or cut this risk increases, and it will not be possible to inflate the raft either manually or automatically.

There has been a rather large number of events in which rafts have not functioned as intended, including one incident in Sweden in which three people died. Faulty bushings may have been a contributing factor in these accidents.

If damaged or cut bushings on rafts are noticed, the company that packed them should be contacted and the fault must be rectified.”

The MCA would be grateful if your organisation could take note of the above and provide MCA (jonathan.assael@mcga.gov.uk) with all relevant information about any similar cases that come to your attention..