



United States Coast Guard

Marine Safety Alert

Assistant Commandant for Prevention

Department of Homeland Security

September 26, 2007
Washington, DC

Alert 4-07

Hammar Manual Remote Release System Pneumatic Pump Units

An investigation into the circumstances surrounding a recent passenger ship grounding revealed difficulties the crew had in manually deploying the vessel's liferafts from their mounting cradles. The liferafts were fitted with individual Hammar Manual Remote Release System (MRRS) pneumatic vacuum pump units. When the pumps are manually operated a vacuum is quickly and easily created that actuates a corresponding Hammar H2O hydrostatic release unit. In this case a large number of those pumps failed to activate the hydrostatic release units and, ultimately, the crew had to manually cut the liferaft canister lashings. The crew was able to launch all of the vessel's liferafts successfully in this manner.

The casualty investigation is not complete and additional recommendations are likely to follow. However, in the interim, the United States Coast Guard strongly recommends that Hammar MRRS pneumatic pump units, as well as all other survival equipment, be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedules.



MRRS pump units are clearly marked in black letters on a yellow background on the cylinder housing, "Lubricate piston every second year." The pumps that failed had not been lubricated as required. The malfunctioning MRRS pumps were replaced in kind with new units; USCG inspection showed that the new units operated properly. Owners, operators, port engineers, inspectors and others involved in vessel safety should ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to properly maintain survival equipment.

Questions or comments regarding this safety alert may be addressed to Mr. George Grills of the U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters Lifesaving and Fire Safety Standards Division at 202.372.1385 or george.g.grills@uscg.mil. This safety alert is provided for informational purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational or material requirement.