

Lifeboat davit failure

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Following a refit, sea trials were being conducted on a Member's vessel in preparation for a return to operations.

What happened?

Defects were discovered on the davit tilt arms on both the forward and aft legs of two lifeboat davits. Both tilt plates on each leg of the aft davits were found to be cracked and distorted. It was evident after inspection that the initial defects were historical and may have existed for some time unnoticed. The defects may have been compounded by load tests conducted during the recent refit, during which the davits had been upgraded to allow new lifeboats to be installed.

What were the causes?

Following further investigation with the close co-operation of the original equipment manufacturer it was concluded that the defects to the davit tilt arms were caused by the incorrect operation of the davits.

The davit arms had previously been brought inboard of the vessel without the required minimum 500kg weights attached to the davit hooks. A clear warning that this should not take place is included in this specific manufacturer's documentation.

Lessons learnt

The following actions were recommended:

- The original equipment manufacturer's documentation for the davits should be consulted and appropriate operating instructions verified to ensure existing practices do not deviate from manufacturer-recommended launching practices, nor compromise the safety and operational integrity of the equipment.
- Davit launch/recovery operators should ensure that the davit is operated in accordance with the guidance provided by the original equipment manufacturer.
- Warning notices should be posted adjacent to each lifeboat operating station (see the diagram below).
- A thorough inspection of tilt plates should be included in monthly planned

maintenance checks.

- Since the defects appear to have originated some time in the past, better quality control is required of bi-annual, annual and five-yearly inspections by specialist contractors to ensure that they are conducting the thorough examination of the equipment properly and to an appropriately high standard.

3.0 OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

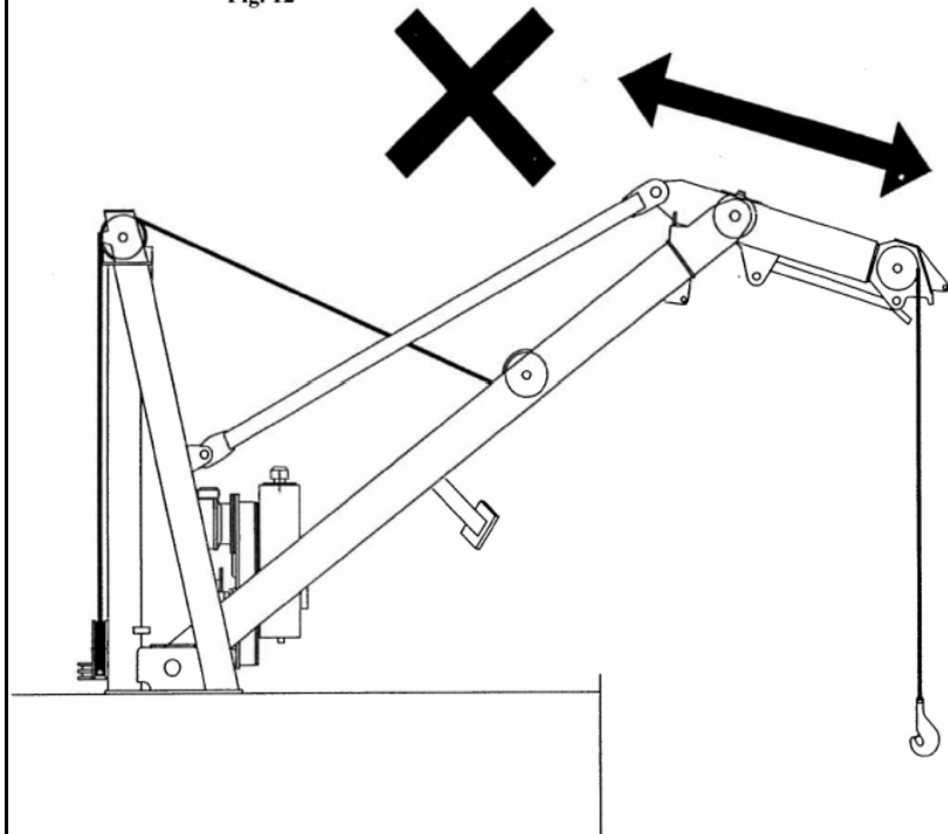
3.1 HOISTING AND LOWERING HOOK

WARNING :

NO movement of the DAVIT ARM is allowed without a minimum load of 500Kg on hook.

Hoisting and lowering of empty hook is allowed.
Serious damage can be caused if this warning is not followed.

Fig. 12



*Suggested warning placard to be placed near
lifeboat operating station*

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