

## Dropped object hazard: access hatch to the communication dome

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During a routine scheduled safety inspection of the main mast, it was discovered that the access hatch to one of the communication domes had fallen off.

### What happened?

An access hatch cover to the communication dome was found to have dropped off. During a routine scheduled safety inspection of the main mast, it was discovered that the access hatch to one of the communication domes had fallen off. Further examination revealed that the secondary means of securing the hatch was severely compromised. This posed a significant risk, as the next high wind or squall could have resulted in a dropped object with the potential to cause injury or damage.

### What went wrong?

- The hatch securing devices were inadequately designed, with the primary securing mechanism having failed.
- The secondary means of securing the hatch (a lanyard) was found to be insufficient for the size and weight of the hatch.
- The lanyard was attached using adhesive pads, which detached when the hatch fell.

### What are the actions?

- Immediate Inspection: Conduct a thorough inspection of all communication dome hatch securing mechanisms. Ensure that the access hatches on all domes are properly secured.
- Enhance Primary Securing: Verify that the primary securing mechanisms, such as mounting bolts and nuts, are fitted with spring washers or an alternative method to prevent self-loosening.
- Improve Secondary Securing:
  - Install robust and appropriately rated secondary securing devices (e.g., wire lanyards or chains) to prevent hatches from falling if the primary mechanism fails.
  - Ensure that the secondary securing devices are not reliant on adhesive pads but are mechanically fixed to withstand the hatch's weight and

anticipated environmental forces.

- Hold a thorough dropped object prevention survey and ensure that access hatches for communication domes are included in planned maintenance schedules. Pay particular attention to areas with potential exposure to high winds or vibrations.
- Update work procedures such that there is a double check that access hatches are secured properly after work is completed, whether by ship's crew or third-party technicians.

## Members may wish to refer to:

- [Dropped Object - Satellite Antenna — Marine Safety Forum](#)

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