

NATF Redacted Operating Experience Report

Faulty Safety Rope Discovered During Training

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Topic

Faulty Safety Rope Discovered During Training

Description

This report pertains to a safety rope that was removed from service due to being modified in-house. The rope, discovered during training, had been modified in such a manner that it gave the appearance of a factory termination. The rope had been cut to a custom length, looped into an eye, and shrink tubed. The rope did not have any stitching and did not have the approved knot to secure the eye. The loop was only held in place by the glue in the shrink tube. This could have resulted in a serious incident.



This type of rope comes from the manufacturer with a factory termination as shown in the picture below. The factory termination will always come with a clear shrink tube to allow for inspection of the termination stitching. In addition, the tag placed under the shrink tube contains the manufacture date, size, length, strength, and lot number.



Lessons Learned

Many factors could result in a rope being removed from service. If there is any question about the condition of a rope during inspection, it needs to be replaced. Items to look for include:

1. Any cuts in the eye or along the length of the rope
2. Damage to the termination stitching or shrink tube, including a missing label
3. Hard or soft spots in the rope, which can indicate damage to the core* of the rope
4. Friction burns*
5. Age (rope should be replaced regardless of use every five years)
6. Mold or mildew (ropes can be washed with mild soap and water but must be allowed to fully dry before stowing)
7. Non-factory terminations (all kits must have ropes with factory terminations; if a specific length of rope is needed, a special order can be placed)

*The rope has a protective sheath and a braided core. Both the sheath and core are constructed of heat- and abrasion-resistant materials.

Actions Taken

A safety alert was issued with the expectation that the alert will be reviewed at the next safety meeting and inspections of like equipment will be performed prior to the next use.

Extent of Condition

This type of rope is present throughout the system. The company has approximately 200 or more units in use today.