

**Extracts from
The United Kingdom
Merchant Shipping
(Accident Reporting and
Investigation) Regulations
2012**

Regulation 5:

"The sole objective of a safety investigation into an accident under these Regulations shall be the prevention of future accidents through the ascertainment of its causes and circumstances. It shall not be the purpose of such an investigation to determine liability nor, except so far as is necessary to achieve its objective, to apportion blame."

Regulation 16(1):

"The Chief Inspector may at any time make recommendations as to how future accidents may be prevented."

Press Enquiries:

01932 440015

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020 7944 4292

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NOTE

This bulletin is not written with litigation in mind and, pursuant to Regulation 14(14) of the Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012, shall be inadmissible in any judicial proceedings whose purpose, or one of whose purposes is to attribute or apportion liability or blame.

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Failure of a throw bag rescue line during a boat capsizing rescue drill

24 March 2018



MAIB SAFETY BULLETIN 2/2018

This document, containing safety lessons, has been produced for marine safety purposes only, on the basis of information available to date.

The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2012 provide for the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents to make recommendations at any time during the course of an investigation if, in his opinion, it is necessary or desirable to do so.

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch was informed of the failure of a RIBER throw bag rescue line during a recent manoverboard rescue exercise. Further enquiries revealed that throw bag rescue lines made by other manufacturers have been found defective in the past. The purpose of this bulletin is to recommend, as a matter of urgency, that owners of throw bag rescue lines take steps to verify that the rescue lines are fit for their intended purpose.



Steve Clinch
Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

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This bulletin is also available on our website: www.gov.uk/maib

Press Enquiries: 01932 440015; Out of hours: 020 7944 4292

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BACKGROUND

A defective throw bag rescue line was discovered while Warrington Rowing Club was conducting boat capsizing drills for new rowers at Halton Baths in Cheshire, UK. A 15m long polypropylene rescue line in a throw bag, supplied by Riber Products Limited (RIBER), parted (**Figure 1**) while a young person in the water was being pulled to the side of the pool during a simulated rescue. There were no injuries. The rowing club safety advisor subsequently found another throw bag with a defective rescue line that had been purchased from the same supplier. RIBER was informed and the company contacted its customers after identifying a batch of 208 throw bags that could be at risk. A further three defective rescue lines have been identified as a consequence of the customer warning notice posted on Facebook (**Figure 2**).

Considering the potentially serious consequences of a throw bag rescue line failing in a real lifesaving situation, the MAIB is conducting a safety investigation.



Figure 1: RIBER 15m throw bag rescue line

Reproduced from Riber Products Ltd



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

PLEASE READ IF YOU HAVE RECENTLY PURCHASED A THROW ROPE

It has recently come to our attention that a customer has received a throw rope which was not continuous and was in fact two ropes welded together. We are investigating how this could have slipped through our strict quality control procedures.

Whilst we investigate the issue we can assure you that additional quality control procedures have been put in place so that this issue can never arise in the future and you can once again buy with confidence.

We have not been asked by anyone to raise this issue with you, we do it to be open and honest with our customers and after learning of this 24 hours ago we felt it important to ensure our customers are safe.

We ask any customer who has one of our throw ropes to:

- A) Inspect their throw ropes to ensure that there are no flaws in the rope.
- B) If there is any doubt or question over the product you have received from us then please contact us immediately so we can arrange a refund or replacement.

We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience. Customer safety is our primary concern and whilst this appears to be an isolated incident relating to a specific batch, we endeavour to be straightforward in our communication with our customers and to resolve all issues promptly.

PLEASE CONTACT
info@riberproducts.com
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

Figure 2: RIBER Customer Warning Notice on Facebook

INITIAL FINDINGS

On inspection, the defective RIBER throw bag rescue lines identified by Warrington Rowing Club were found to have been made up of sections of polypropylene rope fused together, which broke easily at the joint when put under tension. One line was constructed of two sections of rope fused together, the other was constructed of four sections of rope, resulting in three fused joints in its 15m length (**Figure 3**). Intact and joined sections of one of the defective rescue lines were tested to determine the line's minimum breaking load. The intact section failed at 256 kgf (kilogramme force) and the joined sections failed between 19 and 23 kgf.

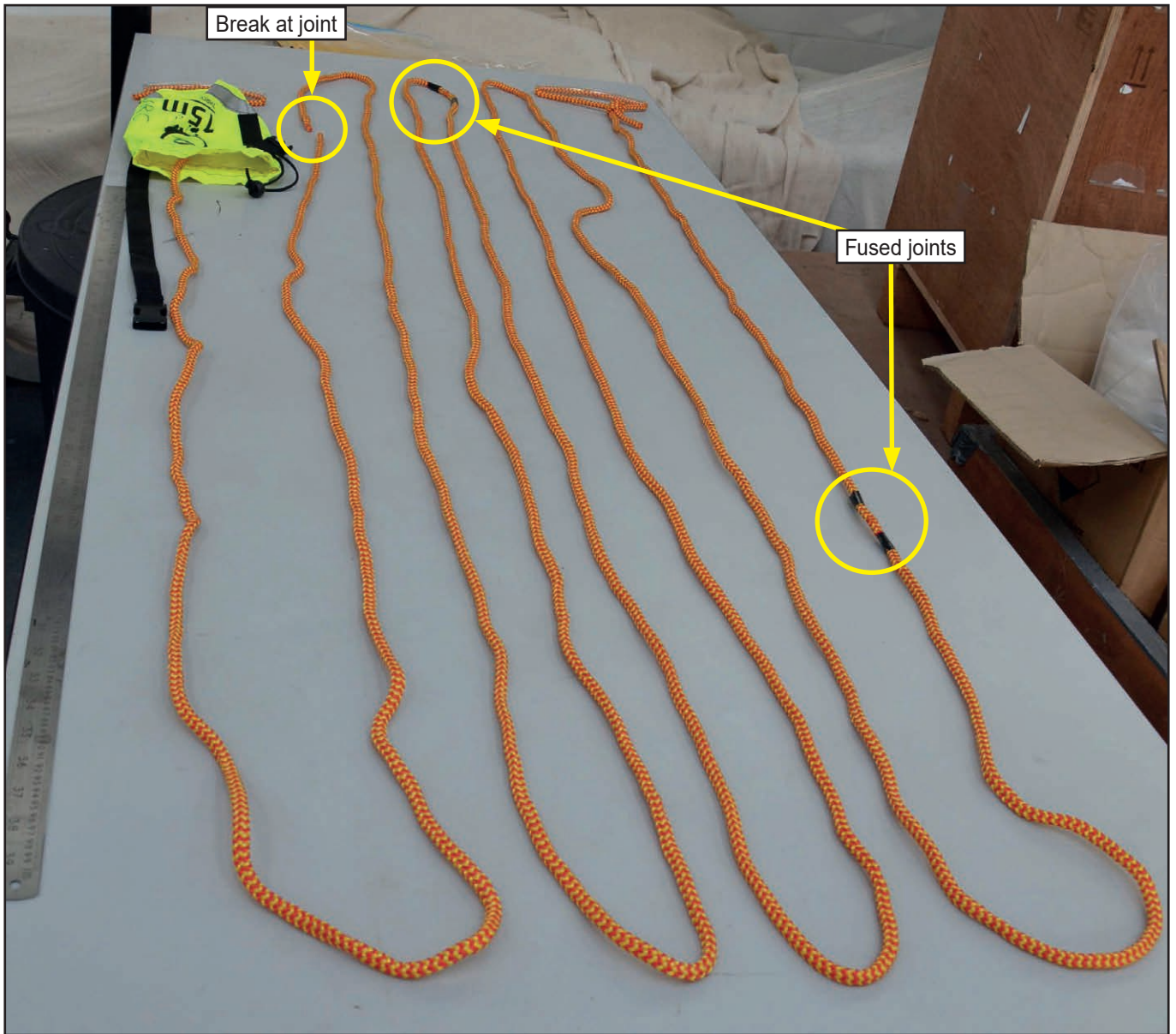


Figure 3: 15m rescue line with three joints

RIBER, and several other suppliers of throw bag rescue lines, import the complete manufactured product pre-branded with their company's logo. The foreign suppliers identified so far assemble the throw bags using components from further suppliers. As the rope used for rescue lines in throw bags is not classified as lifesaving or safety equipment, there is no requirement for it to conform to any recognised safety or quality standards other than the General Product Safety Directive 2001/95/EC.

SAFETY LESSONS

Many commercial craft and recreational vessels carry throw bag rescue lines as part of their safety equipment, and it is estimated that there are tens of thousands in circulation in the UK alone. It is likely that many of these throw bags will lie dormant in a cupboard or locker until they are required to be deployed in an emergency.

To ensure that throw bag rescue lines are fit for purpose they should be opened and checked. In particular:

- The entire length of the rescue line should be examined for joins or other discontinuities. This can best be done by feeling along the length of the line with bare hands to identify rough patches or lumps.
- Any knots, splices or other methods of securing the ends of the line to handles, quoits or other parts of the equipment should also be checked for integrity.
- The throw bag should be inspected and tried at regular intervals and repacked according to the manufacturer's instructions, as otherwise the line may not deploy freely from the bag when required.

Any throw bag rescue lines found to have joins or discontinuities should be removed from service and the original manufacturer /supplier informed.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

To assist this investigation, it is requested that full details of any defective throw bag rescue lines discovered are also passed to the MAIB via throwbags@maib.gov.uk.

Issued June 2018