



GOOD CATCH from **The American Club**

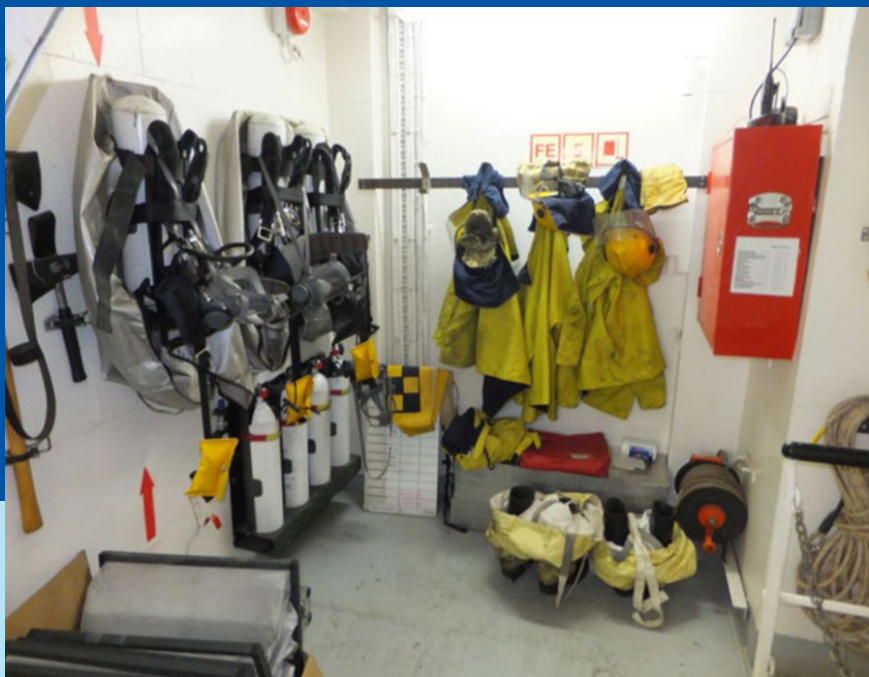
Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Inspection by a Young Third Officer

Description

A young Third Officer on a general cargo vessel was tasked with conducting a routine periodic safety inspection of the equipment in the fire muster station. The Third Officer was new to the vessel but had training on testing the low-pressure alarm, gauges, and valves and was enthusiastic about the task.

The Third Officer took the assignment seriously and was thorough in her inspection. Each piece of equipment was inspected closely per the checklist provided. One of the SCBAs was found with a faulty low-pressure alarm. The remote pressure gauge on another SCBA showed a significant discrepancy between the cylinder and remote pressure gauges. When these issues were reported to the Chief Officer, the Chief Officer was dismissive of the Third Officer's findings. He indicated that there had never been a problem with any of the SCBAs and that the issues were probably due to a lack of experience of the Third Officer to properly inspect SCBAs.

Three weeks later, the Chief Officer rotated off the ship and the replacement Chief Officer arrived. The Third Officer approached the replacement Chief Officer with the previously identified concern about the SCBAs based on the prior inspection. Together, the Chief Officer and Third Officer investigated further and found that the identified SCBA's pressure gauge deficiency was legitimate. Arrangements were made for the two SCBAs to be checked and serviced at the next port.



The best time to identify any issue with SCBAs

Actual Injuries and Damage

There were no actual injuries or damages because no incident occurred requiring the use of the SCBAs prior to them being checked and serviced.

Potential Damages

This vessel avoided a potentially serious incident if the SCBA had been needed for use. Like all safety equipment, when there is an emergency, safety equipment is both expected and relied on to be fully functioning and in proper condition. Further, mariner training and firefighting practices depend on firefighting equipment being fully functional. Deficiencies in SCBA units could put the mariner wearing those SCBA units at risk during a real incident. Furthermore, it may delay the crew's response to a fire if a faulty SCBA must be swapped for a fully charged and properly functioning SCBA.

Prevention

- ★ Periodic inspections of emergency equipment should be taken seriously and done diligently including checking the low-pressure alarm, gauges, and both the cylinder and bypass valves on SCBAs.
- ★ Every report of an issue with any emergency equipment should be taken seriously and prompt action should be taken to verify and correct the issue.
- ★ Every mariner was young and inexperienced at one time in their career. However, a mariner's age and lack of experience should not be used as a reason to dismiss their observations, concerns, or the results from their work.
- ★ Inexperienced mariners should be given opportunities to gain experience and should be mentored by senior mariners to make them better at their jobs through positive reinforcement of "safety first" principles.

When you identify a hazard before something goes wrong...

it's a Good Catch.

When you stop an operation before something bad happens...

it's a Good Catch.

When you identify an issue with emergency equipment and it gets corrected...

that's a Good Catch, too!



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