



## Vanguard: Walking the Talk of Lifeboat Safety

Whilst certain quarters in the marine industry agonise over the criteria that constitute “poor and unstable design”, Vanguard Composite Engineering of Singapore has bitten the bullet and come up with a solution to halt lifeboat mishaps during drills and maintenance. Vanguard is of the opinion that release system and not lifeboat makers should be the focus of all matters relating to inspection, re-certification, and training.

Ship owners should not be cornered into replacing survival craft that are in good working condition and in compliance with current regulations. Not only is this unnecessary, but in today’s difficult economic climate such a burden is unfair to owners who are already lumbered with rising costs and contracting demand.

In response to the latest MSC 1327 guidelines, Vanguard Composite Engineering of Singapore has launched its latest SH series of On/off-Load Hook Release System with the built-in Fall Prevention Device (FPD) as recommended in IMO circular MSC 1327. The Vanguard SH50 is “Dacromet” plated versus galvanized, to enhance its anti-corrosion properties. “Dacromet” also acts as a self-repairing agent whereby the damaged areas fill with zinc oxides and carbonates.

Not only does the SH series comply with the latest IMO guidelines, but more critically it safeguards the lives of seafarers with the use of FPD pins during drills and maintenance. The FPD pin functions as an alternative load path to sustain the weight of the lifeboat in the event of failure of the hook system or its accidental release.

The incorporation of this simple, yet effective device serves to provide crew members with complete peace of mind when performing drills and maintenance. In addition, familiarity with drill procedures will also be enhanced as ship crews will be more willing and confident to participate in emergency evacuation training.

In recognition of the need to enhance lifeboat safety and overcome the financial challenges in the shipping industry, Vanguard has also unveiled its latest program. Vanguard is offering ship owners a chance to carryout fleet wide hook renewal programs, using its SH series of FPD incorporated systems on a credit lease financing arrangement.

The benefits of carrying out a fleet wide hook release change out program are far reaching. Firstly, it upgrades all existing lifeboat hook release systems to the very latest, meeting the MSC 1327 guidelines. i.e. systems with FPDs fitted. Secondly, it provides for a common and standardized operating, training and maintenance system throughout the fleet.

From a financial perspective, Vanguard can offer a finance package similar to an operating lease. The overall cost of a fleet-wide upgrade to the SH50 hook release system inclusive of installation and maintenance is calculated and amortised over a predetermined period of time. This amortised figure is the only single monthly expense incurred by the ship owner to manage their safety portfolio.

Choosing this option will enable ship owners to make their existing lifeboat fleets safer now with minimal outlay, hence freeing up their capital for other investments. It will also serve to streamline owners’ marine safety expenditure and give them control over the maintenance of their lifeboats.

There has been persistent debate about the criteria mentioned in DE52 and how a few key players in the industry are endeavouring to sideline the rest of the smaller, independent manufacturers. Vanguard argues that it is now time to go back to basics and remember the primary objective of the LSA industry – to save lives at sea. The more time that is being expended in arguing for the commercial benefits of a few interest groups, the more lives are being put in harm’s way at sea.

