

Testing and certification of lifting appliances

Lifting operations on board ships are critical in nature and have the potential to give rise to claims, owing to the failure of the lifting appliances. These can result in injury and/or fatality of the persons involved.

During the course of the [Condition Survey Programme \(CSP\)](#), whereby the Club carries out inspections on its entered vessels, an increased number of deficiencies related to the standard of lifting equipment on board is becoming apparent, particularly in relation to inadequate testing methods and lack of certification.

Periodic testing of lifting equipment is essential in order to ensure that the planned load can be safely lifted and sustained throughout the operation. Whilst the frequency of load testing and certification would be overseen by the Flag State Administration's regulations, it is recommended that the on board maintenance should include regular (at least annually) examinations by a '*Competent Person*¹'. The scope of these annual examinations should ideally also include looking out for material defects or wear and tear which could affect the Safe Working Load (SWL) and safe performance of the equipment.

It is important to note that on some occasions these testing services are outsourced to private contractors by the Flag Administration. Due care must be taken by Members to ensure that the load applied for the testing is commensurate with the SWL for which the lifting gear is designed and certified to carry.

The Club's concerns were further enforced by a recent [Marine Accident Investigation Branch \(MAIB\)](#) investigation report regarding an accident caused by a workboat's lifting gear which led to a fatality.

The Club would like to take this opportunity to remind Members to pay particular attention to the maintenance, periodic inspection and testing procedures for the lifting equipment on board their vessels. A proper risk assessment of the planned operation including tool box meetings and appropriate training of the personnel involved should also be incorporated into their on board management systems. The Club has published an article on [Implementing Risk Assessments](#) which Members may find beneficial in incorporating and implementing risk management in their operating procedures. Further guidance can be obtained from chapter 19 of the [Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers](#).

If further assistance is required, please contact the [Loss Prevention team](#).

¹[The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers](#) defines a *competent person* as someone who has sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities that allow them to carry out the work in hand effectively and safely. The level of competence required will depend on the complexity of the situation and the particular work involved.