

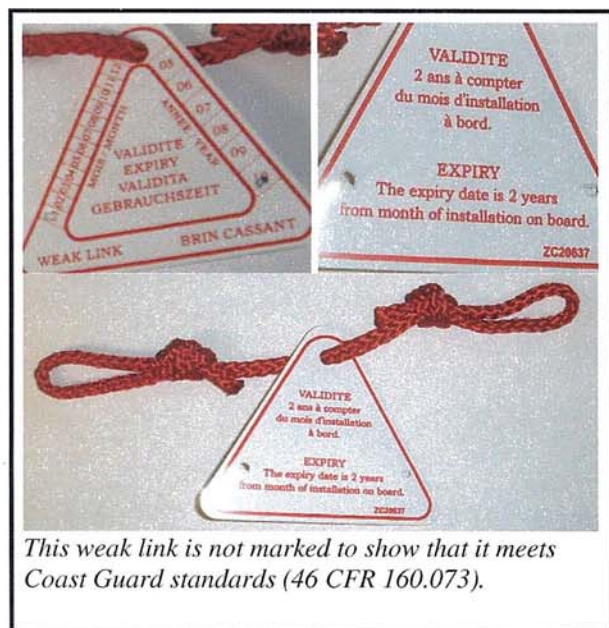


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January 24, 2008

**SECTOR JUNEAU SAFETY ALERT:
IMPROPER WEAK LINKS FOR LIFE FLOATS AND BUOYANT APPARATUSES**

Recently, a Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiner from Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment Sitka identified an improper weak link used to attach a local fishing vessel's life float to the vessel. The weak link did not meet Coast Guard standards; furthermore, it was designed for use with an inflatable buoyant apparatus, not with a life float. A life float with a capacity of fewer than ten people should be attached by a weak link designed to be broken by a force of between 100lbs and 134lbs. The weak link in question was made to break at 450lbs. If the vessel had sunk, the weak link would not have broken, and the life float would have been dragged down with the vessel.



This weak link is not marked to show that it meets Coast Guard standards (46 CFR 160.073).

The fisherman obtained the weak link from Murray Pacific. Murray Pacific has sold approximately twenty of these weak links in the past two years. Coast Guard Sector Juneau strongly urges fishermen to check the weak links installed on their life floats or buoyant apparatus to ensure that they are sized correctly and marked to show that they were manufactured to meet Coast Guard standards. A weak link that meets the standards detailed in 46 Code of Federal Regulations 160.073 will be made of wire and have markings that says the item is a "float free link for life floats and buoyant apparatus" and that it "meets US Coast Guard requirements." The marking will also note the capacity of life float or buoyant apparatus for which the link is designed, the normal breaking strength, the name of the manufacturer, and the date the link was made.

Coast Guard Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiners welcome any questions fishermen might have about their lifesaving equipment. For more information, contact my Commercial Fishing Vessel Coordinator Tim Clepper in Ketchikan at 907-225-4406 or Larry Snyder in Juneau at 907-463-2448.

Sincerely,

S. W. BORNEMANN
Commander, U. S. Coast Guard
Officer in Charge, Marine Inspections
Southeast Alaska