



FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Sector Corpus Christi

March 18, 2025
Corpus Christi, TX

Findings of Concern 004-25

PARASAIL VESSEL EQUIPMENT INSTALLATION

Purpose. The U.S. Coast Guard issues findings of concern to disseminate information related to unsafe conditions that were identified as causal factors in a casualty and could contribute to future incidents. Findings of concern are intended to educate the public, state, or local agencies about the conditions discovered so they may address the findings with an appropriate voluntary action or highlight existing applicable company policies or state/local regulations.

The Incident. A Coast Guard inspected small passenger vessel was engaged in parasailing operations when it experienced a failure of a lower winch post 4-way roller which was retrofitted onto an existing winch post. This failure caused the parasail chute towline to break while passengers were actively in tow. As a result, the two passengers immediately descended into the water and the vessel's operator was able to safely recover them. If this failure had occurred at a higher altitude or speed, the outcome could have been much more severe.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The investigation revealed that the vessel was originally equipped with a knot breaker at the base of the parasail chute towline winch post. The vessel owner/operator replaced the original knot breaker with a lower winch post 4-way roller due to the harsh impact the original installation had on tow lines. The 4-way roller is designed to fit both old and new style winch posts, but the installation instructions from the company did not clearly explain the difference between the old style and new style winch posts. Additionally, the instructions only included detailed illustrations for the old-style winch post. As a result, the installation and adjustments were not made correctly causing the 4-way rollers to detach from the bottom of the winch post, which severed the parasail chute towline. Moreover, the vessel operator did not notify the Coast Guard about the installation of the modified winch post prior to the casualty.

Findings of Concern. Coast Guard Investigators have identified the following measures that may mitigate risk posed by these contributing factors:

- All parasail equipment companies should ensure their instructions clearly define and illustrate their installation procedures when new configurations are required for replacement equipment.
- Owners and operators of parasailing vessels should consult with part manufacturers if questions arise prior to making any modification or installation of new equipment not clearly outlined in manufacturer's instructions.
- As a reminder, 46 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §176.700 requires owners and operators of inspected small passenger vessels to notify their cognizant Office in Charge, Marine Inspection when making any modifications to their vessel that affects its safety.

Closing. These findings of concern are provided for informational purpose only and do not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. For any questions or comments, please contact Sector Corpus Christi Investigations Division by phone at (361) 939-5140 or by email at CorpusChristiIO@uscg.mil.