



# UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

## **MARINE SAFETY ALERT**

### **Inspections and Compliance Directorate**

May 16, 2014  
Washington, DC

Alert 06-14

### **Don't let UNPREPARED SAFETY EQUIPMENT determine your fate!**

Recently while performing several Port State Control examinations Coast Guard Sector Hampton Roads inspectors discovered numerous SABRE Emergency Escape Breath Devices (EEBD) / Emergency Life Support Apparatus (ELSA) in an unprepared status. The "Quick Fire" functionality that puts the EEBD into operation when the bag is opened up and hood is worn was not in its "Primed" state. Such a circumstance can have fatal consequences when time is of the essence to escape a hazardous atmosphere.

When purchased or returned from servicing this equipment will have a small removable label viewable through a window on the bag that states "QUICK-FIRE NOT PRIMED ANTI-TAMPER DEVICE AND FITTING INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE." The unit is not ready. Once delivered to a vessel a technician or competent ship's employee should have opened the bottom left corner flap, attached the "Quick Fire" cord and removed the label. The device will operate correctly and begin to supply air to the hood when the flap is properly connected and later opened.



With the concern that insufficient preparation of critical life saving equipment could contribute to unintended fatalities, the Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that owners and operators of vessels using this or similar devices **carefully inspect their own EEBDs/ELSAs ensuring they are ready for use.**

**Routinely confirm that all other safety and firefighting equipment, systems and components are maintained and serviced as per applicable requirements and ready for proper operation.**

During your inspection of this equipment be aware of the information presented in the attachments regarding counterfeit EEBDs. This issue was reported as a USCG Safety Alert in 2008 and in 2011 reported as a Marine Safety Forum Safety Flash.

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# UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

## MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Stewardship

September 19, 2008  
Washington, DC

Alert 6-08

### COUNTERFEIT EMERGENCY ESCAPE BREATHING DEVICES (EEBDs)

The U.S. Coast Guard has recently learned that counterfeit Unitor model UNISCAPE 15H EEBD Emergency Escape Breathing Devices (EEBDs) are being sold to ship operators and placed onboard commercial vessels. The U.S. Coast Guard **strongly encourages** that all vessel owners and operators with EEBDs onboard carefully and thoroughly inspect them for authenticity. If any doubt exists as to the authenticity, they should immediately contact their emergency equipment vendors and / or the manufacturer for verification or replacement.

The number of fake units sold and currently onboard vessels is unknown and could be substantial. The fake reproduction will not fit over an individual's head and the automatic air release valve will not open. A crisis situation requiring the use of an EEBD will be severely compounded, potentially leading to death, should a crewmember inadvertently rely on a fake reproduction.

Differentiating factors:

An authentic Unitor UNISCAPE 15H is contained in a shiny PVC bag. When viewed from the front with the instruction icons upside down, the zipper opens from left to right, and at the most left section of the zipper is a two centimeter gap covered by a clear tab that has a button closure.

The **fake reproduction** is contained within a **dull canvas-like** material bag. When viewed from the front with the instruction icons upside down, the **zipper opens from right to left**, and at the most left section of the zipper there is no opening, although a tab made of what appears to be the same material of the bag is present with a button closure. This unit will not automatically activate.



Note: Authentic Unitor UNISCAPE 15H EEBDs are not permitted on U.S. flag vessels because they are not National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health certified.

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## Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 11-09

Issued: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Subject: Fake EEBD-set – useless and dangerous

The purpose of this notification is to warn potential users of EEBD-sets. (Emergency Escape Breathing Device) against accidents and loss of life.

WSS Safety service station in Stavanger, Norway received EEBD-sets for annual inspection from one of our regular customers. The service engineer discovered that the bags and the EEBD-sets were fake copies of the Unitor/MSA type Uniscape 15H – and of the same type (copy) as previously discovered and informed.

**IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT THESE FAKE SETS ARE TAKEN OUT OF SERVICE WHENEVER DISCOVERED – AND THE OWNERS ARE SERIOUSLY INFORMED. THESE FAKE COPIES DO NOT WORK AS THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO, AND WILL CREATE AN EXTREMELY DANGEROUS SITUATION FOR THE USER WHEN IT IS NEEDED FOR ESCAPE.**

- **The mask hood is impossible to get over your head.** This is the most serious identification; The neck tightening rubber membrane is not flexible enough to be able to pass a normal head size, and it is sewed to the hood with one single seam – not welded as an original Unitor hood.
- The bag has similar print as the WSS original: “UNITOR UNISCAPE 15H” and “Safety by MSA” is printed on the frontside (together with 4 sketches of how to use).
- The bag material is different; Unitor: shiny PVC. Fake: Dull canvas-like material.
- The zipper is opened from right to left, which means that we evaluate the **functionality of the automatic release mechanism to be doubtful**. When the zipper is opened, it moves towards the cylinder valve – not away from it/pulling also the air release line.
- All sets that are discovered per now has a company label/service tag, with the following information:

UNIScan Marine Products & Services  
Uniscan Middle East L.L.C.  
Shed No.: 71, Al Jadaf Dry Docking Yard  
P.O.Box 62487, Dubai, U.A.E.



## Unitor EEBD copies in circulation



**Upper:**  
Original Unitor EEBD with  
shiny PVC bag

**Lower:**  
Copied equipment, with  
dull canvas-like material



**Original Unitor EEBD:**  
Zipper has 2 cm opening on the teeth  
Zipper closes from right to left  
**Copied equipment:**  
Zipper has no opening  
Zipper closes from left to right. Air-release  
cannot be activated automatically.