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*Deformations of maximal representations in the real symplectic group.* Preliminary report.

We answer the following question: When can a maximal  $\mathrm{Sp}(4, \mathbf{R})$ -representation of a surface group be deformed to a representation which factors through a proper reductive subgroup of  $\mathrm{Sp}(4, \mathbf{R})$ ? (Received September 03, 2008)