

Fall from height

Safety Flash Published on 1 February 2001 Generated on 18 February 2026 IMCA SF 02/01

One of our Members has reported a fatal accident that has recently occurred on board one of their vessels.

A rigger fell whilst undertaking maintenance activities in one of the vessel columns.

Before entering the column a Permit to Work (PTW) had been raised, and personnel carrying out the work had been briefed on the requirements of the generic risk assessment. Two employees had been assigned to the task in hand, one entered the column and the other remained in attendance at the top.

Fall arrest equipment was utilised to descend 15 metres onto an intermediate work platform. Upon arrival at the platform he disconnected the fall arrest equipment. He subsequently fell from a height of 3 metres sustaining fatal head injuries.

Lessons learnt

A full investigation is ongoing, however, in the meantime the company involved has issued the following instructions to its vessels:

Before any hazardous activities requiring a PTW for tank/confined space/column entry and working at height (over 2 metres) are commenced a task specific risk assessment shall be performed on board the vessel and submitted to the Safety Department and Operations Department for review.

When conducting a risk assessment the following shall be considered:

1. Designated Area Supervisor involved in all aspects of the work.
2. Suitability of personnel for task. (e.g. physical/medical condition, size constraints).
3. Atmospheric testing (prior to every entry and during work activities).
4. Type of harness and fall arrest capabilities (In all cases where egress is from above full body harness are preferred).
5. Access and egress (Inclusive of emergency egress).
6. Equipment required.
7. Emergency/Contingency Team to be assigned and briefed (BA sets stretcher etc. readily available).

8. Communications with sentry.
9. Number of personnel required to enter.
10. Environmental conditions (Lighting, temperature, surface conditions).
11. Full briefings (including emergency response teams).
12. Any Hazards not identified by generic risk assessment.

IMCA Safety Flashes summarise key safety matters and incidents, allowing lessons to be more easily learnt for the benefit of the entire offshore industry.

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