Wrist injury sustained during vessel maintenance

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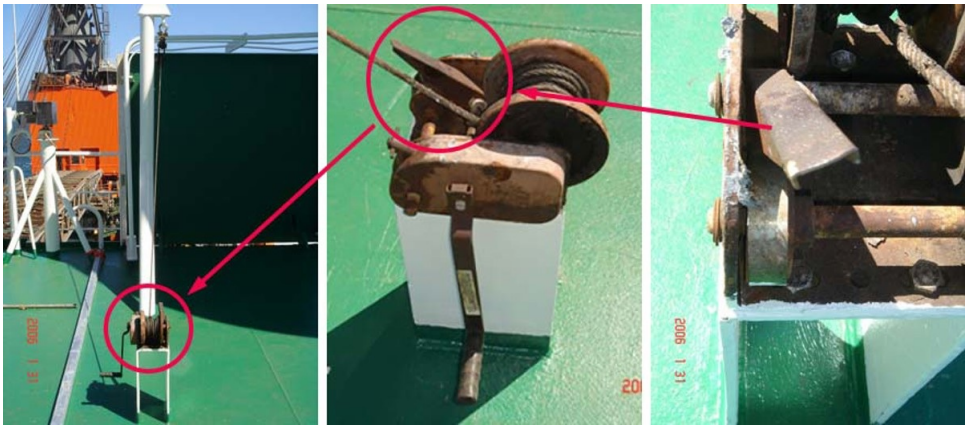
IMCA has received a report on an incident wherein a member of a vessel crew sustained wrist injuries during maintenance activities.

What happened?

Two crewmen were raising a small landing platform from one deck to another using a small hand driven winch. One was operating the hand-driven winch, turning the handle in a clockwise direction. As the handle approached the 2 o'clock position, the crewman's hand slipped off the handle. There being no ratchet mechanism fitted to the winch, the handle spun around in an anti-clockwise direction, striking the crewman hard on the left hand at the top of the forefinger and thumb. He suffered some bruising to the left wrist and was taken to hospital. Subsequent x-ray examination of the wrist revealed that no bones had been broken.



The company's investigation of the accident revealed the following causes:

- the winch handle was too small.
- the manual brake system was not fit for the purpose.
- the existing winch was primitive and overdue for replacement.
- the winch had been relocated due to accommodation installation and its proper use had not been tested.
- the other crewman, who had been operating the manual brake, had been unable to apply it immediately.

The company implemented the following corrective actions:

- order and fit a newer and better winch, more fit for purpose.
- appropriate pre-testing of equipment after relocation.
- perform job safety analysis before the specific operation.
- review configuration of winch wire set-up.
- as an interim measure, until the existing winch is replaced, lengthen winch handle on existing winch.

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