

Fall through open hatch in walkway

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A Member has reported an incident onboard an offshore construction vessel in which a crew member fell through an unprotected hatch on a walkway on to the deck below.

What happened?

The injuries sustained were only slight bruising and abrasions to left arm, upper chest and left knee. Whilst the injuries were light, the potential for serious injury was high.

The hatch, which had been installed along with an access ladder when an additional air conditioning (AC) unit was placed on top of the bridge, had been left tied open by another worker. The crew member fell through the hatch after raising a safety barrier on the walkway whilst going to inspect some heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) air ducts.

Following investigation, the following points were noted:

- The addition of the hatch in the walkway should have been risk assessed and a management of change (MoC) process followed.
- Following this incident the ladder access to HVAC air ducts was relocated to an area outside the walkway, thus eliminating the need for a hatch. The hatch was welded shut.
- Personnel were reminded never to leave a hatchway open without it being barricaded on all sides.
- Personnel were reminded never to raise a safety barrier in haste or to enter a danger zone without evaluating potential dangers.

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