

Fatality: Fall from height arising from a failure to use personal protective equipment

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We have received the following incident report, involving a fall from height from an offshore platform.

What happened?

A contractor was working on the skimmer level of an offshore platform, approximately 10.5 metres above the water, to wrap a light fixture in preparation for sandblasting operations.

He had been told by his supervisor in their safety meeting to use a 'spider' (a lifting device), safety harness and work vest to get to the fixture, as it extended outward from the walkway. However, the contractor chose to lean out from the walkway and through the handrails, instead of using his PPE.

While attempting to wrap plastic around the light, the fixture broke off of its pedestal and the contractor, who had the majority of his weight shifted outward, fell, striking his head on the way down and entering the water unconscious. He was retrieved from the water, but never regained consciousness.

Our member drew the following conclusions:

The company involved has reiterated the importance of never taking shortcuts and the need for job safety analyses and understanding of all of the potential hazards. It has circulated information on this incident to be included in all of its safety meetings and site orientations, to underline the consequences of taking shortcuts. It is also reviewing the fall protection section of its relevant handbook.

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

The effectiveness of the IMCA Safety Flash system depends on the industry sharing information and so avoiding repeat incidents. Incidents are classified according to IOGP's Life Saving Rules.

All information is anonymised or sanitised, as appropriate, and warnings for graphic content included where possible.

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