Dropped object near-miss: Antenna parts worked loose and fell to deck

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A Member has reported a near miss incident in which part of a single side band (SSB) antenna fell off the mast to deck during bad weather.

What happened?

The antenna had three parts which were threaded and screwed together. The first part of the antenna was not fully screwed into the second part. In high winds, the antenna was waving back and forth in the wind which caused it to loosen and become detached. There were no injuries.

Our Member notes that this incident could have had a much more serious outcome had one of the base plates dropped from a height.

Our member took the following actions:

- Damaged antenna was removed from above bridge and replaced with new one.
- Ensured correct practices were used for securing all navigation/communication equipment at height and/or on masts.
- Thorough check of all existing equipment above bridge or at height and/or on masts, most especially after installation or maintenance by a third party.
- Crew ‘time out for safety’ carried out emphasizing hazards and risks of working at height and/or on masts, particularly the area above the vessel bridge (sometimes called the monkey island).

The following lessons were learnt:

- Continual vigilance is called for where there is even the potential for loose objects to fall from height.
- Visual inspections should be thorough and careful.
- Equipment at height that is exposed to the elements (for example on masts and on the monkey island above the bridge) should be regularly checked to ensure there is nothing working loose or any loose objects which may fall in bad weather conditions.

Members should refer to the following IMCA safety promotional material intended for use by vessel crews:

- Avoiding dropped objects

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