

Near-miss: Dropped object

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A member has reported an incident in which a pipe-wrench weighing 1.2kg fell 15m to the deck.

What happened?

The incident occurred when hand tools were being hoisted up for use by personnel working at height. Two workers at height were preparing to lift three tools at once from the deck to their working platform, using a low pressure air hoist. A tag line was attached to one of the tools to help guide and avoid entanglement. Once the load could no longer be controlled by the tag line a 'no go zone' was put in place and the DROPS zone directly below was cleared of personnel. As the tools came to the level of the working platform one of them got caught on the bottom of the platform, which tore the stitching of the single leg tether (rated at 30lbs breaking strain). The result was that the tool fell 15m back to the deck. There were no injuries. The workplace was made safe and a safety stand-down was held.

Our member's investigation noted the following:

- The crew had held a job safety analysis (JSA) meeting beforehand and identified and assembled the tools required for the job.
- The immediate cause of the incident was that the tool became caught during the lift, which caused the DROPS tether stitching to tear, allowing the pipe wrench to fall to the deck below.

Our member drew the following lessons:

- DROPS training plans should be continually emphasized.
- Care should be taken with the safe work load (SWL) of straps and tethers used for hoisting tools.
- Single leg tethers should not be used as lifting devices.
- Establish a pre-use inspection and regular inspection cycle for DROPS equipment.
- Carefully identify entanglement points on the lift route when hoisting tools aloft.

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