

Dropped load – water

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Riggers were attempting to lift a pallet of bottled water between decks of a vessel when the load hit an Intermediate Bulk Container (IBC), causing several packets of water bottles to fall from the load.

What happened?

The water bottles were in packs of 6 (weight per pack = 9 kg) and fell approx. 11 m. This was considered a potential fatality based on the DROPS calculator.

The deck area below the load had been secured and barriered off prior to the lift. There were no injuries.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls



What went wrong? What were the causes?

- The lift was arguably unnecessary; there were already two pallets of water bottles on the lower deck. Also, alternate means of conducting the lift were not considered.
- The risk assessment/lift plan did not specify a safe method of slinging the load to prevent water from dropping should it collide with vessel structure.

- The risk assessment/lift plan did not identify suitable control measures for the activity of lifting into this deck whilst at sea – there were numerous challenges for lifting operations due to restricted space and visibility, which were not taken into account.

What lessons were learned?

- Review task risk assessments and lift plans for lifting of stores, to ensure hazards, controls, slinging and securing methods are suitable, clear and specific, and with due consideration to the specific controls required to reduce the likely probability of the event reoccurring.
- Review the requirement for and positioning of stores to minimise lifts to be carried out at sea, e.g. sufficient stores loaded alongside or on main deck.

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