

UK MAIB: A slip into the hold

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A crew person slipped and fell to the bottom of the hold, resulting in an open fracture to the upper arm.

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch has published Safety Digest 1/2024, consisting of lessons from recent Marine Accident Reports. IMCA has reviewed the report and passes on to members some of the incidents which we consider to be of interest. This is one of them.

What happened?

A crew person was working on a bulkhead locking bolt at the forward end of a hold on a cargo vessel and slipped and fell to the bottom of the hold, resulting in an open fracture to the upper arm. The incident occurred after dark in rainy conditions.

Wearing a safety harness with a lanyard and safety hook, the crew person used the recessed footholds in the side of the cargo hold to climb about 2.5m to access one of the bulkhead locking bolts, and attached the safety hook.

The crew person was unable to reach the locking bolt and, using one hand to hold on, disconnected the safety hook and attempted to move it to another position. But instead, they slipped from the foothold and their hand slipped from the single handhold before the safety hook could be attached to a securing point, causing the fall.

Owing to difficulties in lifting a casualty out of the hold bottom, medical attention was administered at the scene for over an hour before the crew person could be transferred to hospital for further treatment.

What went wrong?

- The safety harness worn in this case was equipped with only one lanyard and hook, limiting the ability of the wearer to move around safely at height.
- There was insufficient illumination: the crew person was working at height in the dark and in the rain.
- The vessel's Working at Height risk assessments were not sufficiently comprehensive.
- The vessel had neither the procedures nor the equipment to recover an injured person from the cargo hold. Without suitable crew training and recovery equipment, it is possible for a survivable injury to become a fatality.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls

Lessons

- Think about what could go wrong and then plan and be prepared to respond in the event that it does; it could be you lying at the bottom of the hold in serious pain.

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.

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