Lost time injury (LTI): Trip incident

Safety Flash Published on **7 August 2014** Generated on **28 January 2026** IMCA SF 14/14

A Member has reported an incident in which a crew member fell over a trip hazard on deck and broke both elbows as a result.

What happened?

The incident occurred on a vessel in dock. The injured person was walking towards the stern area to assist the other team members with the next task. En route, he attempted to step over a cargo strap. His foot caught on the strap; he tripped, lost balance and fell forwards, hitting the deck. He instinctively raised his arms in an attempt to lessen the impact of the fall, which resulted in him sustaining two broken elbows.

Our member's investigation revealed the following:

- There were no barriers in place or marker tape to highlight the hazard. Additionally, there was a safe route around the hazard which could have been taken.
- Although trip hazards, generally, were highlighted in the Risk Assessment and in the Toolbox Talk, this hazard was not highlighted individually.
- Notwithstanding the lack of barriers and with a safe alternative route available, this incident included behavioural based safety characteristics, with two crew members choosing to step over the cargo strap, rather than take the safe route. A second crew member stepped over the strap, just before the injured person did, and was uninjured. Lack of an accident/incident does not demonstrate adequate control.

Our Member drew the following lessons:

- There were numerous failures, omissions and deliberate actions that led to the incident:
  - Inadequate planning/risk assessment – without a cordon or other appropriate barriers/markers, this hazard presented an obvious risk, which was not specifically identified. Failure to adequately identify all hazards can result in accidents
  - Inadequate safety controls/warning signs
  - Lack of awareness/perception of risk
  - Lack of attention/due care/poor work practice
  - Poor decision-making/judgement
  - Lack of adequate Toolbox Talk, Risk Assessment and Hazard

Identification.

Crews should remember that even hazards that seem to present a trivial risk can result in serious injury, unless they are adequately controlled.

Deck and cargo strap

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