

Dropped object near-miss: Lifting

Safety Flash Published on 2 October 2015 Generated on 28 January 2026 IMCA SF 14/15

During the lifting of twelve lightweight steel plates (2m x 15-30cm) width from ground level to a vessel work platform at 35 m elevation, the load shifted during the transfer to the work platform causing the plates to fall into a barricaded area below. The barricaded area was free from workers at the time; there were no injuries.

What went wrong?

- Obstruction/cramped workspace: The receiving area was obstructed by a scaffold rail and ladder which restricted the work space and made handling of the load awkward.
- There was a lack of management support: The Mechanical Supervisor and Lifting Supervisor failed to ensure that the scaffold design at an early stage was such that it facilitated the delivery of loads.
- Complacency: the rigging foreman, despite being fully qualified and competent for his position, failed to investigate alternative options to transfer the load (platform/scaffold modification, separating the load out into various sizes, use of a material lifting basket etc.).
- Short cut taken: The riggers and rigging foreman had taken a short cut and combined mixed sizes of steel plates into one load instead of separating out the load into various sizes or utilizing a material basket or modifying the scaffold in the receiving area to receive the load.
- There was no proper risk assessment of movement of the mixed load during transfer.
- There had been no proper toolbox talk before the job started with a new crew, and one rigger falsely signed as having attended the safety task instruction with the crew.

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