

Incidents involving poor crane operations

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A few recent examples are:

- Vessel bulwark damaged by a crane hook – installation signalman not paying attention.
- Vessel attempting to abort crane operations and withdraw from installation due to weather deterioration – installation crane driver lowered cargo container despite instructions to cease, resulting in asset damage and spill of methanol cargo.
- Unexplained delays from an installation crane in releasing mooring ropes when vessel attempting to leave due to weather deterioration – deck team exposed to hazard as mooring rope parted.
- Backload cargo found to be incorrectly slung when landed on deck – near miss from dropped objects (3t cargo unit).
- Crash rail damaged due to poor crane driving and ignoring deck crew instructions.
- Crane driver ignored directions, resulting in cargo catching vessel's dry cargo line and rupturing pipe.
- During backload with the cargo container above deck, the container door opened – door had not been secured on-board installation.
- Crane driver ignored direct instructions on where to place a cargo unit, and subsequently lowered the unit onto a rack of gas cylinders which fell over.
- During bulk cargo operations close to a fixed platform, the crane driver simply left his cabin with no notification or warning to deck crew. The response from the support vessel was to withdraw from the safety zone.
- Tubular cargo package was loaded from shore – when landed on deck, it was noticed that the cargo slings were twisted around each other.
- Crane driver ignored directions and swung a load into the remote control stand

for the vessel's crane – expensive cost of repairs and vessel crane inoperable for several days.

Example near miss: Crew member almost struck by a crane hook

A crew member was almost struck by a swinging crane hook. The incident occurred during cargo operations with an accommodation barge. The barge's crane operator was attempting to lower the hook of the crane to pick up some cargo from the deck of a support vessel.

Whilst lowering the crane hook, the crane operator lost control of the operation and the crane hook began to swing in an uncontrolled manner. During this uncontrolled movement the crane hook almost struck a crew member who was on deck holding a tag line attached to the crane hook, in an effort to try and minimise its movement.

What went wrong?

- The crane operator on the accommodation barge was being complacent and rushing the operation; this contributed to the uncontrolled manner in which the crane hook was swinging.
- Although he acted with good intentions, the crew member holding the tag line put himself in harm's way by trying to control the movement of the crane hook by using the tag line.
- There were failures to enforce both the stop work policy and the clear deck policy during the operation.

Actions

Our Member took the following actions:

- On noticing the swinging of the crane hook, the Master instructed the deck crew to move to a safe area until the crane hook was stabilised.
- The Master contacted the accommodation barge crane operator and instructed him to take his time and be more diligent during cargo operations.

Lessons learnt

- A clear deck policy should be effectively complied before all lifting operations.
- All employees are empowered to exercise the stop work policy if unsafe conditions arise.
- Where taglines are to be used, they should allow crew members to stand

clear of hazards. If taglines are not effective, crew members should wait until hooks/cargo are grounded or completely heaved away from the work site, to bring them under control.

- Assets and equipment can always be replaced but someone's life cannot; eliminate risk by not putting yourself in harm's way.

Members are referred to [Guidelines for lifting operations](#).

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