

Dropped object: unsecured cargo inside box broke loose and fell

Safety Flash Published on 31 July 2024 Generated on 16 March 2025 IMCA SF 15/24

Cargo weighing over 400kg fell approx. 5m onto the vessel deck.

What happened?

A load of cargo being lifted onto a vessel destabilised and the cargo, weighing over 400kg, fell approx. 5m from the load onto the vessel deck. This high potential near miss incident occurred when materials were being lifted from the quay onto a vessel alongside. A pallet containing two closed wooden crates with one piece inside each crate, was slinged and lifted. At around 5m off the deck, the crane started to turn the load into the vessel's deck. A hydraulic ram within the cargo moved and broke the wooden crate, causing the pallet assembly to destabilize and the two crates to fall to the vessel deck. There were crew members on deck within 3m of the impact. No-one was injured. There was some damage to deck equipment.

What went wrong?

- The cargo was not prepared properly: the wooden box in which the hydraulic ram was stored did not contain any support or cargo securing structure; the hydraulic ram was loose and could slide around the box due to inertia and the lack of support.
- The two boxes were placed onto the pallet but were not secured by any means as strapping or shrink-wrapped to the pallet. This allowed the boxes to move more freely around the pallet surface and change the balance and centre of gravity of the load.
- The pallet was loaded with two wooden boxes, one with the ram that weighed 365 kgs and the other box contained a pump weighed 93 kgs, so the pallet was unbalanced.
- There were several gusts of wind during the operation that could have swayed the load during lifting.

Actions

- Only trained and certified vessel crew should be involved in lifting operations.
- Cargo delivered to the vessel should be visually inspected by competent personnel to assess their condition before lifting. Any doubts as to their integrity should be reported to the vessel master and client as required, and the cargo rejected until safety is confirmed.
- Wooden pallets are not designed to be lifted. Pallets do not have a safe

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Line of fire



Safe mechanical lifting

working load and slings can cause the pallet to fail regardless of the type.

- Cargo should be properly secured and that securing should be assessed by competent personnel before the lift starts.
- Check the weather, particularly the wind, before and during lifting operations.

Members may wish to refer to:

IMCA HSS 019 Guidelines for lifting operations

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