

LTI – person fell from step ladder

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A worker fell off a 2-step ladder/hop up and was injured resulting in an LTI.

What happened?

A tool required some maintenance before going into storage after use. To gain access to the tool and comfortably carry out the task, the worker needed to stand on a 2-step ladder/hop up.

While the worker was on the 2-step ladder/hop up, the vessel hit a wave and pitched, and this caused the worker to lose balance and fall. The step ladder/hop up went to the right and the person fell to the left struck their ribs on the frame of the tool and then fell to deck. In pain, the worker went to see the vessel medic, who after assessing the situation, transferred the worker ashore for further assessment and treatment. The diagnosis was a fractured rib. The worker was unable to return to work and went on sick leave.

The height from deck to the tool was 1.6m and the step ladder was 0.5m in height to the top step. At the time of the incident, the sea state was 2 m significant wave height, and the deck planks were wet.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls



What went wrong?

- The ladder/hop up was not secured to a fixed point as required in procedures.
- The hazard/risk of using the two-step ladder had been identified in the risk assessment, but the mitigating actions were not satisfactory. The equipment was not robust enough.

Lessons and actions

- Even falls from low heights can result in serious injuries.
- Could the work have been done when the sea was calmer?
- Ensure such equipment is properly secured before use.
- An engineered solution was to be prepared, for a fabricated access point on the tool frame, to negate the use of a temporary step ladder.

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