

Crewman falls down open hatchway during simultaneous operations

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A Member has reported an incident in which a crewman was slightly injured when he fell down an open engine hatch on an offshore renewables industry Crew Transfer Vessel (CTV).

What happened?

The incident occurred whilst the vessel was in port and the crew were conducting maintenance activities on board. The Master and crewman of the CTV were both working on the back deck. The crewman was sanding the transom of the vessel in preparation for painting; the Master was working in the opposite engine bay conducting monthly maintenance and cleaning activities. As the crewman worked towards the open hatchway sanding the bulwark, he turned around without looking and misplaced his foot. He positioned his foot over the open hatchway and as a result fell down the open engine hatch landing on his ankle causing it to twist. The twist was minor and after a short break and a personnel assessment of the injury, he was able to continue working.

Subsequently, the crewman found that the pain had not eased, and sought professional medical advice. He underwent an X-ray and a medical assessment, both of which confirmed that the injury was in fact minor. The crewman was able to continue working as normal and expected some bruising.

Our member drew the following conclusions regarding the cause of the incident:

Simultaneous operations combined with a lack of situational awareness allowed the incident to occur. The Master and crewman should have better organised themselves such that there was no need to work so close to the open hatchway. The crewman should have been paying more attention to his work surroundings, knowing that he was working close to an open hatchway.

Our member reiterated the importance of proper preparation:

Before starting any maintenance activities, especially simultaneous operations, always hold a toolbox talk and briefly explain to everyone involved

exactly what works are to be carried out, and what hazards will be created as a result. A work plan should be confirmed and agreed to avoid unnecessary exposure to the new risks. If it is believed that there may be new or unknown risks – a risk assessment should be made before starting work.

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