

LTI: fall from height during anchor chain handling operation

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A worker fell through an opening from one deck to another, and was injured as a result.

What happened?

A worker fell through an opening from one deck to another, and was injured as a result. The incident occurred on an AHTS (Anchor Handling Tug Supply) vessel preparing for a pre-lay operation offshore. Three crew members were involved in the operation: the bosun (who was injured) and two ABs. An AB passed the tugger wire to the bosun, who was then supposed to hand it to the other AB standing on the chain road, for him to attach it to the end of the anchor chain.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



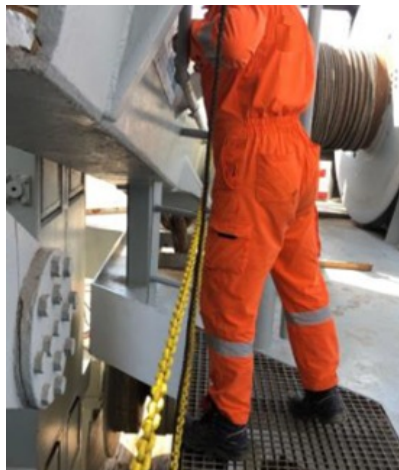
Bypassing safety controls



Working at height



“A” deck – the place from which the bosun fell, illustrating the chain he potentially stepped on



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According to the CCTV footage reviewed, the bosun put one foot on the chain barrier while passing the wire over. However, as he attempted to move his second leg, he fell through an opening between two chain barriers and landed 2.75m below on the main deck. First aid was administered onboard, and a vessel doctor called for further assessment. The bosun was subsequently transferred to shore for further medical evaluation. He suffered multiple fractures to his right leg and broke a rib.

What went wrong?

- The injured person placed his foot on an unstable surface (the chain barrier), which led to the fall;

- There was a lack of proper planning and risk assessment: The specific activities involved were not covered under the anchor handling risk assessment, meaning important considerations, such as safe access to the chain road, were not properly evaluated;
- There was a lack of focus and hazard perception: The potential risk of falling while stepping over an unstable chain was not understood.

What can be learned?

Our member suggests that this incident highlights several critical areas for improvement in planning and implementation of high-risk activities.

- Greater care when accessing locations at height – only correct, proper, secure, stable, and purpose-designed platforms and equipment should be used.
- Better identify potential fall hazards, particularly in areas with open spaces, such as around chain barriers.
- A more thorough and detailed risk assessment should be made for each step of the operation, thoroughly evaluating all associated risks. All identified hazards and corresponding control measures should be clearly communicated to the crew and verified to be in place before starting work.
- Better supervision of high risk tasks, particularly when working at height.

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