

Ref : DMA/AIFI/96/C 861
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Dear Captain
Good Day,

Please find an informative document titled " Serious leg injury during un-mooring operations" for your kind attention and necessary precaution measures.

You are requested to confirm receipt, discuss the contents in the next consolidated meeting on board & keep a copy in the file DA-11 .

Best Regards,

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(Note: This e-mail has been sent as BCC <blind carbon copy to : All R.O.D.-SMC Vessels, to eliminate the lengthy list that would result if this e-mail is printed)

Serious leg injury during un-mooring operations

Vessel Type: Bulk Carrier

Incident description:

Whilst the vessel was alongside, the wind increased to BF 8 resulting in the suspension of cargo discharge operations. The vessel's master was then directed by the harbor master to vacate the berth and anchor off the port until weather conditions abated. By the time the pilot was on board for un-berthing, the vessel was ranging forward and aft alongside the berth under the influence of the strong wind and a swell entering the port, causing the mooring ropes alternately to slacken and then come under high tension loading. With tugs made fast, the crew commenced singling up the mooring ropes under the direction of the master and pilot. During this operation, an AB working aft stood astride a slackened spring rope which suddenly came under tension, striking his leg with considerable force. After being landed ashore, the AB was hospitalized with a broken thigh bone (femur) requiring a period of rehabilitation of almost one year.

Analysis:

Despite modern advances in technology, ships continue to rely on fiber and wire mooring ropes to remain safely alongside a berth and for towing operations as they have done for millennia. The combination of increased ship size and decreasing manning levels means that mooring operations can be one of the most challenging and potentially dangerous tasks required of seafarers today. Under normal, controlled circumstances, a well trained and experienced crew can expect to perform these operations efficiently and safely. However, in conditions of high wind and swell, difficulties in controlling the movement of a vessel alongside can result in mooring ropes coming under excessive strain very suddenly. Such shock loading may damage or part ropes and can expose crew on mooring decks to serious danger due to a whip lash effect or limbs becoming trapped between tensioned ropes, between ropes and adjacent structures or in bights.

Lessons Learnt:

- Crew must be fully familiarized with the vessel mooring arrangements and to be aware of the potential dangers associated with ropes and wires coming under excessive strain
- In advance of forecast bad weather or where berths are exposed to swell, the master should consider actions to avoid a dangerous situation developing, including vacating a berth in good time if necessary
- Crew should be trained to stand well clear of ropes which may come under heavy loading and to observe the golden rule of never standing in the bight of a rope during operations