

Ref : DMA/AIFI/97/C 904

Date: 07/06/2018

Dear Captain
Good Day,

In its latest Safety [warning](#), the Swedish Club presents an accident where a stevedore lost his life after falling from a ladder.

The stevedore was climbing up the ladder using only one hand as he had a tea cup in the other, which could not fit in his boiler suit pocket.

The incident

The chief officer inspected the cargo tanks before starting loading without finding any problems. The vessel had a calm sea passage and arrived at the discharge port. The discharge took about 3 days. After the discharge was completed the Bosun and an AB cleaned the hatch coaming for one of the hatch covers. After they were done the Bosun stood by for the hatch cover to be closed.

In the mean time, two stevedores were in the cargo hold finishing their job. They had started their shift the previous evening and they had worked for more than 12 hours. When they were leaving they had to first climb up a vertical ladder, then a spiral staircase and for the last 2.5 meters climb up another vertical ladder to get out of the cargo hold.

The stevedores had a thermos and tea cup each with them, but the cup did not fit in the first stevedore's boiler suit pocket so he held it in his hand instead. He did not face any problem when he climbed up the spiral staircase. However, when he reached the last platform there was still the vertical ladder to climb up.

Climbing up the last ladder he only used one hand as he was holding the tea cup in the other, and he was not wearing a safety harness. When he was almost at the top he slipped and fell down more than 20m, landing at the bottom of the cargo hold.

The other stevedore called for help which the bosun heard. He could see the stevedore lying at the bottom of the cargo hold and instantly called the chief officer on the radio and

told him about the accident. The chief officer gathered a rescue team with a stretcher and gave the stevedore first aid. An ambulance arrived shortly after and he was lifted out of the cargo hold by a crane. Unfortunately, he was declared dead at the hospital.

Probable cause

The stevedore's lack of safety harness when climbing the ladder played an important role in the accident, as well as the fact that he did not use his both hands to climb the ladder. What is more, the stevedore had already worked for more than 12 hours, which is an important factor as well.

Moreover, it was found that a steel bar was missing from one of the lower railings at the beginning of the spiral ladder. The railing was probably damaged during the loading by one of the crane grabs, or an excavator as it was covered by the cargo when it arrived at the discharge port.

Lessons learned

- Monitor every person onboard is not possible. However, it would be beneficial to have a tool box meeting with the stevedores' supervisor to explain what is required of the stevedores when working onboard.
- Many ports require that stevedores wear a safety harness when climbing the cargo ladder.
- It is important that the chief officer emphasizes the importance of complying with this requirement. After both loading and discharging, the chief officer should inspect the ladders to ensure they have not been damaged during the cargo operation.
- This accident highlights the consequences and actual minimal effort it takes to do a job safely.

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

Best Regards,

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