

## **MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE No. 119 OF 2001**

### **Miscellaneous Information**

#### **Fatal Fall into Cargo Hold**

A fatal accident occurred in the evening of 15 October 2000 onboard a coastal vessel. The Master of the vessel was reported to have fallen into the cargo hold of the vessel when the vessel was engaged in loading and unloading of containers at a container terminal. He was certified dead on arrival the hospital. At the time of the incident, the deceased was probably on his way climbing down by an adjacent container door after he attended the repair of a damaged container stowed at the second tier in the cargo hold. It appears that the fall of the deceased was resulted from the loss of his footing or balance caused by the motion of the vessel.

2. An investigation carried out after the accident revealed a number of irregularities and a Coroner's Court inquiry completed in September 2001 has produced some recommendations. To prevent such accident from re-occurring, the attention of the owners of vessels and their crew are drawn the importance of observance of the safety guidelines relating to the means of access and safe movement of personnel working on board as indicated in Appendix.

3. The recommended safety guidelines in [Appendix](#) are mainly extracted from the general safety and guidelines as laid down in Chapters 6 and 13 of the "Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen". The Chinese version of the Code is available for sale from the Mercantile Marine Office, Marine Department, 3/F Harbour Building, Central, Hong Kong.

4. Owners and operators of local and ocean-going cargo vessels are requested to bring the contents of this Notice to the attention of all crew members on board their vessels.

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Date : 29 October 2001

Action File Ref: MAI/S 901/ 088-2000

Means of Access and Movement of  
Personnel Working on Board – Safe Working Procedures

Owners of vessels and their crew are requested to observe the following safe working practices, extracted from Chapters 6 and 13 of the "Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen", relating to the means of access and safe movement of personnel working on board :-

- (i) To ensure that a safe means of access is provided and maintained to any place on the ship to which a person may be expected to go;
- (ii) To ensure that all deck surfaces used for transit about the ship and all passageways, walkways and stairs must be properly maintained and kept free from substances liable to cause a person to slip or fall;
- (iii) Areas used for the loading or unloading of cargo or for other work processes for transit should be adequately and appropriately illuminated;
- (iv) For areas used for loading or unloading of cargo or for other work processes a lighting level of at least 20 lux should be provided and for transit areas a level of at least 8 lux should be provided (measured at a height of 1 metre above the surface level) unless:-
  - (a) a higher level is required by other Regulations, e.g. the Crew Accommodation Regulations; or,
  - (b) provision of such levels of lighting would contravene other Regulations, e.g. the Collision Regulations and the Distress Signals Order.
- (v) Lighting should be reasonably constant and arranged to minimize glare and dazzle, the formation of deep shadows and sharp contrasts in the level of illumination between one area and another;
- (vi) Any opening, open hatchway or dangerous edge into, through or over which a person may fall shall be fitted with secure guards or fencing of adequate design and construction. Advice on guard-rails and safety fencing is given in Chapter 13. These requirements do not apply where the opening is a permanent access way, or where work is in progress which could not be carried out with the guards in place;
- (vii) All ship's ladders must be of good construction and sound material, strong enough for the purpose for which they are used, free from patent defect and

properly maintained. Ladders providing access to the hold must comply with the standards in Annex 6.1 of the Code;

(viii) Personnel are reminded to take care as they move about the ship. In particular, the following points, though obvious, are all too often overlooked:

- (a.) personnel should watch out for tripping hazards, and protrusions such as pipes, framing etc;
- (b.) the possibility of a sudden or heavy roll of the ship should always be borne in mind;
- (c.) suitable footwear should be worn which will protect toes against accidental stubbing and falling loads, and will afford a good hold on deck and give firm support while using ladders; extra care should be taken when using ladders whilst wearing sea boots;
- (d.) it is dangerous to swing on or vault over stair rails, guard-rails or pipes;
- (e.) injuries are often caused by jumping off hatches etc;
- (f.) manholes and other deck accesses should be kept closed when not being used; guard-rails should be erected and warning signs posted when they are open;
- (g.) spillage of oil, grease, soapy water etc. should be cleaned up as soon as practicable;
- (h.) areas made slippery by snow, ice or water should be treated with sand or some other suitable substance;
- (i.) the presence of temporary obstacles should be indicated by appropriate warning signs;
- (j.) litter and loose objects, e.g. tools, should be cleared up;
- (k.) wires and ropes should be coiled and stowed;
- (l.) lifelines should be rigged securely across open decks in rough weather;
- (m.) ladders should be secured and ladder steps kept in good condition; care should be taken when using ladders and gangways providing access to or about the vessel, particularly when wearing gloves;
- (n.) means of access to fire fighting equipment, emergency escape routes and watertight doors should never be obstructed.

(ix) When deck cargo is being lashed and secured, special measures may be needed to ensure safe access to the top of, and across, the cargo; and

(x) Hatchways open for handling cargo or stores, through which persons may fall or on which they may trip, should be closed as soon as work stops, except during short interruptions or where they cannot be closed without prejudice to safety or mechanical efficiency because of the heel or trim of the ship.