

## **MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 157 OF 2003**

(Cargo Handling Safety)

### **Safety Measures While Lifting Hatch cover**

The recent death of a stevedore working on an ocean going vessel was caused by his ankle becoming wrapped by the loose end of a tag line. This was attached to a hatch cover being lifted by the derrick of a dumb steel lighter. He was dragged along by the line to the open hatch of a cargo hold where he fell to his death at the bottom of the hold.

The Coroner has recommended the following measures for enhancing cargo operation safety and communication. Owners, operators, masters of vessels and lighters, stevedoring companies, employers and persons in charge are urged to take all reasonable and necessary precautions to ensure observance of these safety measures by their personnel engaged in shipboard cargo operation in order to prevent a recurrence of a similar accident:--

- (i) Surplus length of tag line should be well coiled to avoid trapping or entangling personnel in the vicinity.
- (ii) When shifting of pontoon hatch covers in midstream is required, shipboard cranes should be used as far as practicable.
- (iii) At least one supervisory staff per working gang should be arranged to be present at the workplace to exercise effective supervision control over the activities of the working gang.

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- (iv) To enhance the effectiveness of communications between the operator of a lifting appliance and the signaler through observance of the following ;-
- (a) The operator of a lifting appliance should have no other duties which might interfere with this primary task. He should be in a proper and protected position, facing controls and, so far as is practicable, with a clear view of the whole operation.
  - (b) Where the operator of the lifting appliance does not have a clear view of the whole of the path of travel of any load carried by that appliance, a competent and properly trained signaler should be assigned to give directional instructions to the operator of the lifting appliance. Such instructions may be achieved by a clear code of hand signals or by an effective radio system whichever is appropriate for that working environment.
  - (c) The operator of a lifting appliance should only obey signals from the assigned signaler and from no other person, except that every stop signal should be obeyed regardless of who gives it. He should under no circumstances carry out the cargo operation if he has not received a clear signal from the assigned signaler.
  - (d) The signaler should be stationed in a safe position and be clearly visible to the operator of the lifting appliance unless an effective radio system is in use.

- (e) The signaler should have a clear view of the path of travel of the load, and only give instructions when he is satisfied that the operation would not put any person at risk.
- (f) The signaler should follow a clear code of signals, agreed in advance with all concerned in the cargo operation.

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