

Marine Department Notice No. 166 of 2004

(Miscellaneous Information)

Fencing of Openings on Deck

A fatal accident occurred recently on a Ro-Ro Ship where a stevedore fell from a height of 5.6m through a lifter opening on the upper deck of a cargo compartment while he was unlashng the chains secured to an excavator. The accident was attributed to the lack of fencing and also to the victim approaching too close to the edge of the deck opening beyond the caution line. The accident could have been avoided if the owner and the master of the vessel had provided fencing around the deck opening as required under section 37 (Fencing of Hatches) of the Shipping and Port Control (Cargo Handling) Regulations and the victim had observed the safe working practice of not to work beyond the caution line.

In the light of the accident, owners, masters, agents, stevedoring companies, and persons in charge of cargo handling work are reminded to ensure proper fencing of hatches and all other openings in a deck to avoid injuries of falling from height. Unauthorized removal of fencing which may expose personnel to the danger of fall from height must be at all times strictly prohibited. Failing to comply with the Shipping and Port Control (Cargo Handling) Regulations will lead to prosecution. Stevedores and persons in charge of works are therefore reminded to ensure :-

- (i) All stevedores should not be allowed to stay or work beyond the caution line of deck opening, in particular, where no proper fencing is provided;
- (ii) Caution line around deck openings should be kept conspicuous to give a sign of warning to all workers;
- (iii) The operator controlling the elevating and lowering of the lifter platform of a Ro-Ro ship should prohibit persons from staying beyond the caution line when the lifter platform is in motion;

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- (iv) A designated supervisor who has attended the works supervisor safety training course should oversee the cargo operation to improve safe management at work; and
- (v) There should be a pre-work brief at the commencement of cargo work between ship's crew and shore stevedores for the implementation of the necessary safety procedures.

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Director of Marine

Marine Department
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