

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 198 OF 2007

(Marine Industrial Safety)

Working at Height on Dumb Steel Lighters

A fatal accident occurred in May 2007 in which a mechanic, whilst carrying out routine maintenance work on a dumb steel lighter, fell to his death from the top landing of the anchor block for the slewing guy of the derrick to the hold bottom of the lighter 10 m below. The investigation into this accident revealed the deceased was working with another man in a confined area which only measured 1.02 m long by 0.36 m wide, the surface of which was, covered with oily lubricant residues and consequently very slippery. Neither of the two workers was wearing a safety harness and also there was no other safety measure, such as suitable staging or fencing, in place to prevent the workers from falling.

2. To avoid recurrence of similar accidents, owners, companies operating river trade vessels, stevedore companies, employers of dumb steel lighter workers, persons in charge of lighters and persons in charge of works are reminded to observe the following safe practices:

- (i) Paragraph 10.1.1 of the Code of Practice on Using Protective Clothing and Equipment for Works on Local Vessels, which states that “All persons employed who are working at height (aloft), outboard, below decks or in any other area where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of falling more than two metres, should wear a safety harness attached to a lifeline as far as reasonably practicable”;
- (ii) Paragraph (e) under heading “Working aloft” on page 54 of the Shipbuilding and Ship-Repairing Safety Guide, which states that “A safety harness, which is to be suitably anchored while in use, should be worn when working aloft”; and
- (iii) Alternatively, suitable staging or fencing serving the purpose of preventing fall of person from height should be instituted.

3. The abovementioned Code of Practice and Safety Guide is available on Marine Department website (address: http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/pub_services/ocean/miss.html), or at the Marine Industrial Safety Section, Harbour Building, 23/F, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong.

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