

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 153 OF 2012

(Marine Industrial Safety)

Safe Means of Access to the Top of Container Stacks in Mid-Stream Operation

A fatal accident occurred this year onboard a coastal-going vessel undertaking mid-stream container handling operation in which a crewmember acted as a slinger was crushed and fell while the container he was climbing was being lifted and knocked against an adjacent container stack.

2. The investigation into the accident is still in progress. Preliminary findings revealed that, at the time of accident, the deceased was climbed up a container stack by stepping and gripping the hinges and attachments to the container doors without using a proper safe means of access. His access to the container top was not easily seen by others engaged in the operation as he was in a narrow gap between two rows of container stacks. When the deceased was climbing up the container, the container was suddenly hoisted up and it appeared that the swinging of the container caused the deceased to be crushed against the adjacent container stack, causing him to fall from aloft and sustained fatal injury.

3. To prevent the recurrence of similar accident, owners and masters of vessels, cargo operators, stevedore companies and persons in charge of works are reminded to observe the following safety precautions in shipboard container handling operations:-

- Established effective liaison among all parties concerned before commencement of work to ensure effective communication is maintained throughout the work process.
- Ensure the responsible works supervisor should effectively supervise workers to carry out their works safely. More attention and instructions should be given to the inexperienced workers.
- Ensure that only a safe means of access is used by workers in gaining access to or from the top of containers.
- Ensure that no one in the working area would be brought into danger by the lifting or lowering of a container before any signal is given to the crane operator to hoist or lower the container.

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