

MARINE DEPARTMENT NOTICE NO. 21 OF 2013

(Marine Industrial Safety)

Safe Mid-Stream Container Handling Operation

A fatal accident occurred last year onboard a river trade vessel while undertaking mid-stream container handling operation in which a crewmember acted as a slinger was crushed by a container being loaded onto the vessel.

2. The investigation into this accident revealed that, at the time of accident, the deceased was at the top of a container stack to remove stacking cones after a 40-ft laden container had just been lifted away by the derrick crane of a lighter moored abreast of the river trade vessel. However, the lifted laden container was slewed back and lowered back to its original position on the container stack. The deceased was crushed under the laden container 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:-

- The works supervisor assigned to supervise works safety on a vessel should always be vigilant in monitoring the movement of cargoes and the working environment of the workplace and promptly raise alert to the workers engaged in cargo operation when any potential hazard is observed.
- The crane operator should have an unrestricted view of the position where containers are to be loaded or unloaded. Otherwise, he should wait for the signal from the signaller to lower or lift a container or he should alert the signaller of his intention.
- The close co-operation of a signaller with a crane operator is essential in maintaining of cargo operation. The crane operator should always have a clear view of the assigned signaller at all times during cargo handling operations and should maintain good communication with him. A loud-hailer or other verbal communication equipment can be used if the situation warrants.
- In a past inquest into an accident resulting in the death of a stevedoring worker

engaged in shipboard container handling operation, the Coroner had recommended that when engaged in such operations:

- (i) a work shift should never exceed 12 hours; and
- (ii) a rest break of minimum half hour should be provided after every 6 hours of working schedule.

Francis H. P. LIU
Director of Marine

Marine Department
Government of the HKSAR
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