



# GOOD CATCH from The American Club

## Effective No Smoking Policy (Safety at Heights)

### Description

An operating company launched a new “No Smoking” campaign to improve the long-term health of mariners employed on their vessels. The company’s Director of Operations said, “We are taking this new campaign very seriously because we care about our mariners and their health. We have made this a priority and have painted “No Smoking” signs everywhere.”

Unfortunately, the desire to maintain the health of the mariners did not extend to mariners who were working at heights. In this case, two mariners were assisting to properly secure cargo that had been loaded on the vessel. The cargo consisted of a series of modularized industrial units. The mariners were standing on top of one of the units in the cargo hold. They were approximately 10 feet (3 meters) above a cargo hold tank top. They were not wearing safety harnesses and there had not been a safety meeting prior to the start of the work. While working, one of the mariners accidentally tripped and fell off the top of a modularized unit.



### Actual Damage

The mariner broke his right leg and his right wrist when he landed. He required surgery for both broken bones, was hospitalized for 2 weeks, and was unable to work for 4 months. During his time in the hospital, he was forced to stop smoking and he subsequently decided to quit permanently. But that was not the way the Director of Operations had envisioned the “No Smoking” campaign working.

## Potential Damages

A fall from that height could have been even more serious. A head or spine injury could have been catastrophic and could have resulted in a permanent injury.

## Prevention

- ★ Who should have recognized that there was a safety risk related to a fall from a height?
- ★ Is this a situation where “stop work” authority could have been used?
- ★ What are the permit requirements on your vessel when someone will be working aloft or working at a height above the deck?
- ★ What are your vessel’s safety requirements for working aloft or working at a height?

When you identify a hazard before something goes wrong...

**it's a Good Catch.**

When you stop an operation before something bad happens...

**it's a Good Catch.**

When you recognize that some work requires the use of a safety harness even when inside a cargo hold...

**that's a Good Catch, too!**



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