



GOOD CATCH from **The American Club**

One step backward and...

(Falls From Height)

Description

A crew member on a general cargo vessel was performing maintenance on a crane platform when he nearly fell through an access opening in the platform. Another crew member saw what was about to happen and immediately stopped the job. A near miss report was written and procedures were changed to require platform openings to be closed when workers are in proximity. Procedures were further changed to require those working on platforms to wear safety harnesses. The near miss report was also shared throughout the company.



Actual Damage

There were no injuries, just a very scary moment for the mariner who almost fell and for the mariner that stopped him.

Potential Damages

Falls from heights can lead to serious injuries to the head, thorax, abdomen/pelvis, vertebrae and extremities as well as fatalities. Additionally, people over the age of 45 who fall from a height are statistically several times more likely to suffer a more serious or a fatal injury. Examples of the types of injuries that can occur based on the height of the fall include:

Fall Height	Injury
2 meters (6.5 feet)	Possible knee dislocation; spinal or cranial injury
5 meters (16.4 feet)	At least one broken bone in the foot or leg possible
7.5 meters (24.6 feet)	Likely head injury; likely illness due to severe trauma to internal organs
9 meters (29.5 feet)	Broken spine likely
14.6 meters (47.9 feet)	Fatal for 50% of people; survivors will likely have serious injuries to 2-3 major organs
18 meters (59 feet)	Survivors will likely be crippled for life



Photos are from a published Marshall Islands investigation report from 2020.



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April 2024

Prevention

- ★ When work is to be done where there is a risk of falling 6 feet (2.7 meters) or greater, a Working Aloft Permit (WAP) is normally required and should be reviewed and signed by a senior officer as specified in the vessel's safety management system (SMS).
- ★ The SMS should identify procedures for completing and documenting a WAP. The SMS should also specify when various fall arrest systems are required such as full-body harnesses, shock-absorbing lanyards, self-retracting lanyards, safety lines, safety nets, and the minimum requirements for anchoring points.
- ★ A risk assessment should be conducted as part of the WAP process. It should evaluate the specific work to be done as well as the training and experience of the mariners working aloft. Before starting the work, a toolbox meeting should be held with everyone involved, and all safety and lifting gear should be inspected. The bridge should be notified before starting the work aloft and when the work is completed.
- ★ While the work itself may be simple, working aloft can be especially hazardous due to the fall risk. The WAP is vitally important for mariner safety and the requirements in it should always be followed closely.

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 falls from heights can be very serious and use the Working Aloft Permit (WAP) process...

that's a Good Catch, too!



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