



GOOD CATCH from **The American Club**

The Pain of Not Doing Maintenance

Description

While transiting through a standard steel watertight door with manual dogs, a mariner seriously injured his hand. The dogs on the door had swiveling steel handles operable from both the inside and outside. The steel wedges located inside the door on the frame are designed to catch the inside dog handle when it is turned to secure the door tightly. In port, only the dog nearest the handle was secured to keep the door closed.

As the mariner exited the door onto the main deck, he closed it behind him and used the dog nearest the door's handle to secure the door in the closed position just like he had done many times before. However, this time when the mariner gave it a hearty twist, the inside handle rotated beyond the wedge, crushing and trapping his little finger between the dog and the handle of the door. He was unable to rotate the handle because it had gone past the end of the wedge and would not budge.



After minutes, his yelling was heard and other crewmembers responded. It took several of them and a pry bar to pull the door closed enough to rotate the handle back past the wedge and free the mariner's finger.

The investigation identified some inconsistencies about the incident, but initially, it was suggested that the injured mariner had just been too strong for his own good and had shown too much enthusiasm in dogging the door. However, on closer examination, it was found that

the door was not being maintained and that the dogs were in need of adjustment to ensure they fit snugly against the wedges. Over time, the wedges had slowly worn down and the dogs had never been adjusted to account for that.

Actual Injury

The mariner's little finger was crushed and broken in several places. He had to be signed off the ship and sent ashore for medical treatment that included surgery that saved his finger.

Potential Risks

Even without an injury, had this happened during an emergency, the door could have been stuck closed creating confusion and necessitating alternate routes into or out of the accommodation spaces.

Prevention

★ If one mariner would have recognized that the dog was becoming loose and not catching the wedge properly, it could have been adjusted before someone was injured.

- ★ Also, if there had been a required periodic inspection of all watertight doors and dogs to ensure they were properly adjusted and not worn, this injury could have been prevented.
- ★ As a mariner, you should be aware and speak up if you see something is broken or out of adjustment. Do not assume that someone else will do so. Do not just brush it off as someone else's responsibility. The person who gets injured may be a close friend of yours or it may be you.

When you identify a hazard before someone gets hurt...

it's a Good Catch.

When you fix a problem before something bad happens...

it's a Good Catch.

When you take responsibility for your own safety...

that's a Good Catch, too!



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