



Unplugged and Unsafe

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Description

A crew member seriously injured his knee when he slipped on some oil on an exterior deck. He had to be medically evacuated from the vessel by helicopter and taken to a hospital.

The investigation determined that the drain plug in the containment around a hydraulic winch was not in place. Additionally, the drain hole was so heavily corroded that a plug would not fit securely even if it were there.

A quantity of hydraulic oil had leaked from a hydraulic hose connection on a winch. The oil floated on the water from the light rain that had fallen earlier that day. The containment would normally have limited the spread of the oil, but with the drain hole wide open, the oil traveled beyond the containment and further after on the deck.

The crew member was walking in the area to check on some lighting when he slipped on the “oiled” deck and was injured. He was able to use his radio to call the bridge for help. The responding crew members had to be very careful when they approached the injured crew member, as the area of the deck all around him was very slippery from the oil. They used a combination of sorbent pads and oil-absorbing sawdust granules to make the area safe for them to assist the injured crew member.



Actual Damage

The injured crew member was unable to rejoin the vessel and had to be repatriated home just one month into his eight-month assignment. The medical care involved surgery and several days in the hospital before the mariner could be flown home. The total cost of the claim exceeded \$230,000. That included: medical treatment for the mariner; travel arrangements to fly him home; an injury pay allowance for the injured mariner for several months while he was unable to work; and travel costs to fly his replacement to the vessel.

Potential Damage

The injury could have been worse. Head or face trauma, in addition to the knee injury, would have complicated the incident and medical treatment.

The company was fortunate that the injury happened while the vessel was near a port with a large, capable hospital that could provide full treatment. Had the hospital been small or the injuries more severe, an air ambulance would have been required to transport him to a large city for appropriate medical care. The air ambulance could have cost an additional \$120,000.

The mariner was fortunate to fully recover before his injury pay allowance ended. He potentially would have had no income if he needed more time to rehabilitate from the injury beyond the time period of his contractually stipulated sick leave allowance.

The company was also fortunate that none of the hydraulic oil went overboard. Although just a small quantity, any oil that gets in the water must be cleaned up. Thus, there would likely have also been an environmental spill claim, too.

What went wrong?

- ★ The drain plug for the coaming was missing.
- ★ The deck coaming around the hydraulic winch was not maintained appropriately. Even if the drain plug had been in place, the drain hole was so corroded that it would not have sealed properly.

What went right?

- ★ The injured crew member had with him the means to communicate with the bridge.
- ★ The crew's response to the injury was fast and professional.
- ★ The responding crew recognized the slippery deck conditions and quickly mitigated the risk of another injury and an oil spill.
- ★ The injured crew member was quickly transferred ashore for appropriate medical treatment.

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 coaming around hydraulic equipment and drain plugs are properly maintained...

that's a Good Catch, too!



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American Steamship Owners Mutual Protection & Indemnity Association, Inc.

American Steamship Owners Marine Insurance Company (Europe), Ltd

Shipowners Claims Bureau, Inc., Manager

New York

tel +1 212 847 4500 fax +1 212 847 4599
email info@american-club.com web www.american-club.com

Houston

tel +1 346 223 9900
email claims@american-club.com

Shipowners Claims Bureau (UK) Ltd.

London

tel +44 20 7709 1390
email claims@scb-uk.com

Shipowners Claims Bureau (Hellas), Inc.

Piraeus

tel +30 210 429 4990 fax +30 210 429 4187
email claims@scb-hellas.com

SCB Management Consulting Services, Ltd.

Hong Kong

tel +852 3905 2150
email hkinfo@scbmcs.com

SCB Management Consulting (China) Co., Ltd.

Shanghai

tel +86 21 3366 5000 fax +86 21 3366 6100
email claims@scbmcs.com