



Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 09/15

Issued: 1st June 2009

Subject: Failure to Recognise Working at Heights Conditions

Summary:

Below are details of a recently experienced accident on the main deck which had very high potential to cause permanent injury.

A work team comprising an officer, two engineers and three GPCs were tasked with removing an unserviceable boiler from the mud tank room. There was some discussion regarding the best method for removing the boiler and the team decided to move it to the bow thruster compartment and then hoist onto main deck via the emergency escape trunk.

The boiler was positioned as required for the hoist and then the team took a coffee break. Returning from break, the engineers and officer left the work area to continue with other tasks leaving the 3 GPCs to raise the boiler.

The GPCs set about removing the grill on the main deck (which was in three sections). In so doing, the structural integrity of the platform was weakened and it gave way. The GPC standing on the grill at the time fell 4.5 metres into the Thruster Compartment, first striking the water boiler. He suffered a 7.5 cm cut to the back of his thigh and a fractured bone in his left wrist.

Although the investigation is continuing, the following contributing factors have been identified:

- Despite a discussion regarding *how* the job should be done, none of the six team members identified the issue of Working at Heights.
- There was no formal process of Safe Job Analysis or Permit to Work, as is required for tasks involving Working at Heights.
- At no stage was any person named in charge of the work, particularly when the officer and engineers left the work site.

Please raise this incident with your crews at the next Safety Meeting and reiterate:

- The importance of looking beyond the immediate task at hand to take in the work environment more broadly.
- The need to have nominated a person in charge when working in teams.

