

Safety Alert

Number: 21-10

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Subject: Cut Hand Whilst Cleaning / Hand Safety

What Happened / Narrative

Whilst cleaning cabinets in the galley area, a vessels crew member sustained a bad cut to the hand from a sharp edge. This resulted in a section of skin being sliced off.

This was yet another preventable injury caused during a routine job.

During our work and daily lives, we use our hands continuously, our hands are valuable and need proper care. When it comes to protecting different parts of the body from lacerations, hands are the most important. Hand injuries are difficult to repair because of the complexity of the hand.

Most hand injuries can be associated with:

- Working with machinery or equipment
- The materials being used or the job process being hazardous
- Hand tools or powered hand tools may be faulty or improperly used

The most common causes of hand injuries are:

- Sharp edges
- Lack of awareness
- Disregard for safety procedures
- Distractions

Why Did it Happen / Cause

- Poor assessment of task
- Lack of appropriate hand protection

Corrective Actions Taken / Recommendations

- Whilst cleaning always be aware of sharp edges
- Ensure safety checks in the galley are performed and if sharp edges are discovered they are removed, or a warning sign is put in place
- Use most appropriate type of safety gloves for task being performed and check equipment used for cleaning
- Hand and finger safety to be added to the risk assessments

Before Starting a Job:

1. Identify the hazard
2. Asses the risk
3. Reduce the likelihood

Some control measures for this type of job:

- Carry out sufficient checks before starting the job
- Check for sharp edges, pinch points, and crush zones
- Use correct tools for the job
- Check correct hand position
- Remove jewellery and loose items
- Use correct / well-fitting gloves

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Photographs / Supporting Information



A variety of other Hand Injury Safety Alerts can be found on the MSF website:

- [21-03](#) – Finger injury during rescue boat launch drill
- [20-07](#) – Finger injury during wire transfer operations
- [18-24](#) – Squeezed thumb
- [18-10](#) – Lost Time Injury; Cut to hand
- [15-05](#) – Cut finger changing mop head

IMCA statistics on hand and finger injuries:

- **2018**
136 incidents reported, 7% hand/finger injuries
- **2019**
160 incidents reported, 10% hand/finger injuries
- **2020**
174 incidents reported, 10% hand/finger injuries

Links below to IMCA materials on hand safety available in a variety of languages:

Pocket card series: [06 – Watch your hands](#)

Poster: [IMCA SPP 011 – Hand Safety](#)

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