

Safety Alert

Number: 22-04

Published: 23/02/2022

Subject: Man Overboard Incident

What Happened / Narrative

An MSF members vessel had just come alongside its allocated berth, the deck watch had changed and had not been involved in the previous berthing toolbox talk but had received a comprehensive hand over from the outgoing watch.

Backloaded deck cargo obscured the aft mooring activities from the bridge team. Both of the deck crew were involved in securing the aft of the vessel. One of the deck crew was making the aft spring secure, and was unable to see his fellow AB. This AB was preparing to send a heaving line ashore to the linesman to run stern lines.

This crewmember decided that he would throw the heaving line to the shoreside from a position leaning out between the stern bitts (Position X in the diagram). The heaving line should have been thrown from the top of the crash barrier walkway (Position A in the diagram), at the backspring bitts (Position B in the diagram) or leave the throwing to a watchmate, who is more comfortable with throwing from any position on the main deck. (Position C in the diagram). Both should work on the same rope until completely fast and then move on to the next rope. Unfortunately, the crew member concerned overbalanced and fell out between the bitts, quick reactions from the linesman and the AB's fellow watchmate, ensured that the casualty was safely retrieved from the water. The MOB was wearing safety Wellington boots, which slipped, which did not help in maintaining his balance, he was also not wearing a life jacket/work vest. This had the potential to be very serious, fortunately he only suffered a bruise to his face.

On previous berthing operations, fellow crew members had seen their fellow crew member, adopting this position between the bitts, to throw the heaving line ashore. This should have alerted them to "Stop the Job".

Corrective Actions Taken / Recommendations

The following actions and recommendations are from the submitting vessel owner for their own fleet and should be discussed / reviewed for applicability to your own vessel(s):

1. All crew involved physically in mooring or gangway operations are to wear life jackets/work vests, or a safety harness.
2. All vessels are to review their Risk Assessment for mooring and gangway operations.
3. Safety Chains at the bitts, or gangway should remain in place until after heaving lines have been thrown, or in the case of gangway operations, that it is ready to be sited in position.
4. Crew involved in mooring or gangway operations must not lean out between the bitts, or over the gangway opening.
5. Appropriate footwear should be evaluated and in use, providing both adequate traction and ankle support.
6. Toolbox talks must be completed with all parties involved in mooring or gangway operations.
7. All crew irrespective of their experience, should receive familiarisation to allow them to conduct their job safely.
8. "Stop the Job" is an important safety tool. All crew members are to ensure that they understand they are responsible and authorised to use it anytime they feel safety may be compromised.

Photographs / Supporting Information



Position X



Position A



Position C

Position B

The information contained within this Safety Alert and the associated MSF web site is provided in good faith for the benefit of our members and does not constitute and is not intended to constitute professional advice or any form of formal representation on behalf of any MSF member or officer. The text as provided by submitting organisations may be amended to ensure that it is brief, informative and readable but will as far as reasonably practicable remain as per the intent of the original submission. For the avoidance of doubt, no liability whatsoever shall be attached to any guidance, recommendation or statement contained therein. Contents should be reviewed individually by recipients who will determine relevance to their own operations.