

Safety Alert

Number: 22-15

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Subject: Medical Emergency - Choking Incident

What Happened / Narrative

The intent of this safety alert is to raise awareness surrounding a choking incident whereby the IP subsequently lost consciousness. This type of incident could happen anywhere at any time to anybody.

A crewmember onboard a member's vessel which was alongside an offshore installation had just completed his lunch in the mess room. The IP stood up and started coughing heavily. The IP was observed to be choking with his face turning puce, unable to breath and holding his neck gasping. A fellow crewmember immediately approached the IP, recognised that he was choking and started following his First Aid training.

Although the obstruction was removed, the IP lost consciousness and was resuscitated via chest compressions. On the 8th compression the IP recovered consciousness.

Follow up radio-medical advice was sought by the vessel and the IP monitored over a number of hours and later that evening had made a full recovery.

Considerations

There is no doubt that the rapid response, quick thinking, and teamwork of the crew onboard the vessel that day saved the IP's life.

- Choking can happen anywhere and could affect anyone
- This incident reinforces the importance of the many training courses and drills that all seafarers have to participate in.
- "Genuinely caring for each other" – we are safer and stronger when everybody is looking out for each other. The crew onboard the vessel clearly demonstrated this.

Would you know how to react if you observed someone choking?