



Ship Type: All Trade Area: Worldwide

Bulletin 346 - 02/04 - Timber Cargo - Stevedore Deaths

Further to [LP Bulletin 074 12/98](#) which detailed an incident where a stevedore died due to lack of oxygen in a hold full of fresh sawn timber, we have been advised of a similar case where four stevedores lost their lives whilst entering a cargo hold of logs.

The accident occurred when the stevedores began to enter the fully laden hold, just after the hatches were opened. One of the stevedores slipped and fell into a gap between the logs and disappeared. On witnessing the fall three other stevedores attempted to rescue him but also became trapped within the cargo. As a result all four stevedores were brought out with great difficulty from the narrow spaces within the stow, which were four to five meters deep, with the assistance of shore firefighters. In this case the men were brought up unconscious, almost one hour after the fall, and were declared 'dead on arrival' at the local hospital.

Logs are one of several cargoes that have oxygen-depleting properties and it is important that ship and shore personnel are adequately warned of the consequences. The guidelines in Appendix B, Paragraph 5.3 of the Code of Safe Practice for Ships Carrying Timber Deck Cargoes 1991 should be followed and it is imperative that forced ventilation or adequate natural ventilation must be carried out prior to admitting any personnel into cargo holds carrying logs. It should also be noted that Chapter 5.1 of the same code expressly provides for suitable protective clothing and equipment, including footwear to be worn.

Failure to observe simple precautions can lead to people being unexpectedly overcome when entering enclosed spaces. Whilst ship's staff are quite aware of such dangers and observe sufficient precautions, it is also obligatory on the part of the ship to ensure that cargo holds are well ventilated and that the stevedoring company are warned of inherent dangers with the cargo onboard prior to commencing cargo work.

We advise members to be fully aware of the above and to inform their ships' masters and operations departments of the above.

Source of information: International Marine Accident Reporting Scheme (MARS)
Report Number 200404
[The Nautical Institute](#)