

Bulletin 432 - 09/05 - Supervising Crew Activities - Worldwide

An incident recently occurred aboard a Member's ship when a crewmember suffered serious injury. Human error dominates the underlying causes of major claims and many of these claims could be prevented if crew are properly briefed and supervised in their work.

This particular incident occurred when two of the ships motormen prepared for work at the bottom of a ten metre vertical shaft that required painting. After having received a preliminary briefing, and on the Chief Engineer's instruction, the two motormen set about their work with paint from the paint store, and a cylinder for containing the paint. The cylinder was a disused fire extinguisher with the top part removed, modified by the crew on board.

After filling the cylinder with paint and securing it to a capron halyard of 8mm diameter, unsupervised, one of the motormen climbed down the shaft to the pit from where he instructed the second motorman to lower the cylinder of paint. As lowering was commenced, the halyard untied and the cylinder dropped onto on the motorman below. The extinguisher cylinder weighted 12kg when empty and 18kg when full of paint. It was later confirmed that the motorman suffered very severe head and spine injuries.

It was concluded that the main cause of the incident was the negligence of the injured motorman, and partially by the lack of experience of the motorman who lowered the cylinder. Whether or not it was necessary for a man to be lowered first, it was found that a safe area existed at the bottom of the shaft where the motorman was to stand clear of any falling objects. The seamanship skills of the motorman securing the lanyard were poor and the securing was not checked. The cylinder should not have been lowered with a man standing underneath it.

'Working Aloft or Overboard' permits, as well as other work permits, are put in place to encourage crew and officers to take into consideration the dangers that exist with the work at hand, and corrective measures put in place as necessary. Dangers should be discussed during the briefing and a sequence of events planned, in order that dangerous situations do not occur.



Source of information: Loss Prevention Department
UK P&I Club
www.ukpandi.com