



***FINDINGS OF CONCERN***

**Marine Safety Unit Duluth**

March 26, 2020  
Duluth, MN

Findings of Concern 001-20

**LACK OF FALL PREVENTION HARNESS SYSTEM ON GREAT LAKES BULK CARGO VESSELS**

Purpose. The U.S. Coast Guard issues findings of concern to disseminate information related to unsafe conditions that were identified as causal factors in a marine casualty and could contribute to future incidents. Findings of concern are intended to educate the public, state, or local agencies about the conditions discovered so they may address the findings with an appropriate voluntary action or highlight existing applicable company policies or state/local regulations.

The Incident. As a Great Lakes Bulk Cargo vessel was preparing to conduct mooring operations at a facility in the Port of Duluth-Superior and, with fine weather and calm seas, the cargo hold hatch covers were removed. As the vessel approached the facility, a crewmember on deck preparing to assist in mooring operations tripped and fell into an open cargo hold suffering serious injuries.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The investigation identified that the vessel did not require crewmembers utilize fall protection systems when operating around or near open cargo holds. Other vessels in similar service on the Great Lakes have fall protection programs in place that require the use of harness systems that have been proven to be effective in preventing crewmembers from falling into open cargo holds.

Findings of Concern. Coast Guard investigators have identified the following measures implemented by owners/operators of vessels in similar service to mitigate the risks associated with the above identified contributing factor:

- Provide a fall protection system that can be worn by crewmembers whenever work is being conducted in the vicinity of open cargo holds.
- Require applicable training for all crewmembers to increase the usability of the aforementioned fall protection system and ensure supervisors monitor for use of system when work is being completed in the vicinity of open cargo holds.
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Closing. These findings of concern are provided for informational purpose only and do not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. For any questions or comments please contact MSU Duluth Investigations Division by phone at (218) 725-3832 or by email at [DuluthIO@uscg.mil](mailto:DuluthIO@uscg.mil).