



FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Sector Corpus Christi

March 4, 2021
Corpus Christi, TX

Findings of Concern 002 - 21

GANGWAY SAFETY: PROPER USE OF ACCOMMODATION LADDERS AND BROWS

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 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 and/or local regulations.

The Incident. On November 23, 2020, a crewmember was injured after losing his balance while disembarking a partially loaded U.S. flagged bulk carrier, twisting and falling on a dock-side bollard. As a result, the crewmember landed on his back, injuring his vertebrae. Due to the vessel's draft, the accommodation ladder used for embarkation and disembarkation was deployed alongside the skin of the ship and over the water. A portable brow was placed on the dock to access the accommodation ladder.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. When the accommodation ladder was deployed, it was vertically adjacent to the brow, with a slight gap between the two; however, due to tidal variations and other environmental factors, separation occurred between the accommodation ladder and brow. The aluminum brow was placed on top of a 1 x 1 foot timberhead as a ramp on the dock and only held in place by gravity. Ship procedures required that safety nets be placed under the accommodation ladder and brow, if applicable, but were not affixed in this case. The facility did not provide its own gangway nor was a rental gangway procured. Safety concerns from passing vessels, along with potential gangway damage, prevented the vessels accommodation ladder from a direct landing on the dock.





UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Findings of Concern. Coast Guard investigators have identified the following measures to enhance gangway safety:

- Ensure the vessel is spotted alongside the pier or dock to allow the accommodation ladder unrestricted pivoting in order to land the gangway directly on the dock or pier.
- Invest in shore side gangway resources and equipment to ensure best practices are followed, even if the facility does not provide them.
- If deploying an accommodation ladder along the side of the vessel, close the gap between the accommodation ladder and the brow, if deployed, by connecting the two together with lashings or by using a safety net between the two and eliminating the gaps.
- If using a brow, properly secure the brow to the dock to prevent tipping or toppling over.
- Maintain a prudent gangway watch in order to maintain minimal elevation gap and separation from the dock or pier.
- Establish and/or follow applicable safety management system (SMS) and/or policies relating to gangway access. Policies should provide, at a minimum, how gangways will be deployed in both ballast and non-ballast conditions, maximum deployment angles, securing of gangways, and how to properly deploy accommodation ladders and brows in tandem. If the gangway SMS is not followed, issue applicable deficiencies or, if an SMS does not exist, recommend that the vessel develop procedures to enhance marine safety.

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 Sector Corpus Christi Investigations Division by phone at: (361) 939-5140 or by email at CorpusChristiIO@uscg.mil.