



FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Sector Honolulu

March 15, 2024
Honolulu, HI

Findings of Concern 006-24

CRANE OPERATIONS SUPPORTING CARGO HOLD CLEANING ON BULK CARRIERS

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/local regulations.

The Incident. Recently, the Coast Guard completed an investigation into a crewmember fatality aboard a foreign flagged bulk carrier while moored pier side in Oahu, HI. The death occurred during cargo hold cleaning operations of cement residues. The operation involved hoisting a man-basket, carrying two crewmembers, with the ship's crane along the interior of the cargo hold as they swept and knocked down the cargo residues. Upon completion of the shift, as the man-basket was being hoisted out of the cargo hold, the basket's railing caught on the lower hatch coaming. Several attempts were made by the crew to free the basket; however, it broke free under tension and swung directly back into the coaming. One of the crewmembers in the basket was struck directly in the head by the coaming, which resulted in the individual's death.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The Coast Guard's investigation determined that five contributing factors led to this casualty. Of note, lack of supervision over the cleaning operations was identified as a primary factor to the incident. At the time of the casualty, the cleaning crew was left unattended by the "designated" safety observer, due in part to their multi-tasking between gangway security and safety duties. The ship's safety management system (SMS) and the charterer's standard operating procedures (SOP) were implemented for the operations; however, neither dictated a requirement for a safety observer / spotter. The inadequate SMS and SOP likely contributed to the vessel's failure to assign a dedicated safety observer. Additionally, the Coast Guard identified the limited line of sight into the cargo hold from the main deck, an unstable working platform, and a loss of situational awareness as additional contributing factors.

Findings of Concern. The Coast Guard recommends the following measures to mitigate the risks associated with the contributing factors identified above.

- Owners and operators of bulk carrier vessels involved in cargo hold knock down and cleaning operations should review and consider updating current policies to implement mandatory requirements for all crane operations stipulating that a deck person-in-charge (PIC), or safety supervisor be designated and positioned in a manner that provides an unobstructed view of the operation at all times.



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- Owners and operators of bulk carrier vessels involved in knock down and cleaning operations should prioritize performing tasks during daylight hours when possible.
- Owners and operators of vessels that conduct crane operations should consider providing recurring training to crewmembers involved in crane operations with an emphasis on safety hazards, manning requirements, and the importance of adequate supervision.

Closing. These findings of concern are provided for informational purposes only and do not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. For any questions or comments please contact the Sector Honolulu Investigations Division by phone at (808) 522-8251 or by email at D14-SMB-SecHono-Investigations@uscg.mil.