



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

FINDINGS OF CONCERN

Sector Lower Mississippi

December 1, 2021
Memphis, TN

Findings of Concern 009 - 21

SAFE TRANSITING BETWEEN 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 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. A mariner died as he attempted to use a portable ladder to transfer between a deck barge and a towing vessel. The mariner, along with an unauthorized visitor, were conducting a safety round of a tow. As the mariner used the ladder to climb aboard the towboat, it was not properly secured. While the mariner was on the top rung of the ladder and holding on to it with one hand, the ladder fell. The mariner followed and hit their head on an adjacent deck fitting, before falling overboard between the barge and towing vessel. The mariner, who was not wearing a personal flotation (PFD) device or life vest at the time of the incident, was never recovered.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The Coast Guard investigation determined that the following factors contributed to the incident:

- (1) Failure to properly secure a portable ladder;
- (2) Failure to use a PFD or work vest while working on deck;
- (3) Conducting a safety round with an unauthorized visitor to the vessel.

Recommendations. Coast Guard investigators have identified the following measures to mitigate the risks associated with the above identified contributing factors:

- Ensure portable ladders used to transit between vessels are in accordance with 29 CFR 1915.74(c) and mechanisms to secure the ladder are used;
- Adhere to company policies regarding the use of life vests while performing work on deck, especially at night or near the water's edge;
- Adhere to policies regarding vessel visitors and guests.

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 Lower Mississippi by phone at (901) 521-4846 or by email at seclmr2692@uscg.mil.