

Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 12-17

Issued: 28th March 2012

Subject: Grinder

Onboard a vessel, positioned offshore in stand-by position close to a local platform, an AB seaman suffered an injury to his right leg – just above the knee – resulting in a 5cm cut.

While waiting instructions from the platform, the AB Seaman has been ordered to brush the upper stern part of the crash-bar (starboard side) with an electric grinding machine. While performing the above mentioned activity, on top of a ladder, the seaman lost his balance and the control of the electric tool, dropping it on the deck. The “uncontrolled” grinder reached the body of the seaman (just above the right knee) causing the cut.

The seaman was given medical assistance from crew members. The platform Doctor was invited onboard to assist the injured person. The doctor, after performing his examination, recommended sending the injured person to an onshore hospital. The vessel then proceeded to disembark the injured seaman whom was directed to the emergency room of the local hospital for medical assistance.



Technical Findings

- The grinder even if built in conformity to European Legislation (CE Marked) has no emergency stop system in place. The grinder continued its rotational movement once it was not under the control of the AB Seaman, resulting in cutting the seafarer and the wood deck;
- Improper position to perform the activity (on top of a ladder) and ladder not properly secured;
- Deck space not sufficient to perform maintenance activity and reported slippery;
- The status of the crash-bar and the planned activity for the future do not justify the urgency to perform the specific maintenance activity during the stand-by position.



Procedural and/or Organisational Findings

- No evidence of Planning the Activity/Toolbox Talk;
- No evidence of Permit to Work issued (Hot work Permit/Working at Heights);
- The two seafarers working on deck (AB Seaman and Bosun) were working independently (not as per PTW requirements – supervisory needs);
- No evidence of Task Risk Assessment performed;
- General RA Document/Manual available onboard. The document incorporates a general RA sheet pertaining to surface preparation for painting.

Human Factor Findings

- The AB Seaman have been trained in accordance to the SMS system in place and competent in the using of the specific tool;
- The Captain and Crew have proper knowledge of the SMS in place and of safety law requirements;
- No enforcement of Company rules by the crew;
- Lack of Risk Awareness & Judgement by the crew.

Other information

- The sea-state has been officially reported as calm; during investigation has been reported a long dead swell resulting in vessel slow rolling, compatible with unpredictable/anomalous sea movements. The weather was recovering from previous adverse conditions.

Corrective actions

- Inventory of the portable power tools available onboard vessels and replacement of the ones without emergency stop system;
- Issue instruction/circular aimed to rule certain maintenance activities on deck with lack of urgency in particular circumstances (e.g. potential vessel instability/unpredictable movements);
- Reinforce the personnel about the Stop the Job Authority;
- Reinforce personnel about the importance of Permit To Work, Risk Assessment and Toolbox Talk system to identify risk and become aware and reduce them;
- Issue instruction/circular aimed to limit the use of electrical tool under particular circumstances and to reinforce the proper use of support equipment (e.g. Ladder to be secured).

Preventive actions

- Reinforce the core of the SMS and Company Values to crewmembers and Captains;
- Review of the PTW / RA and Toolbox Procedures.