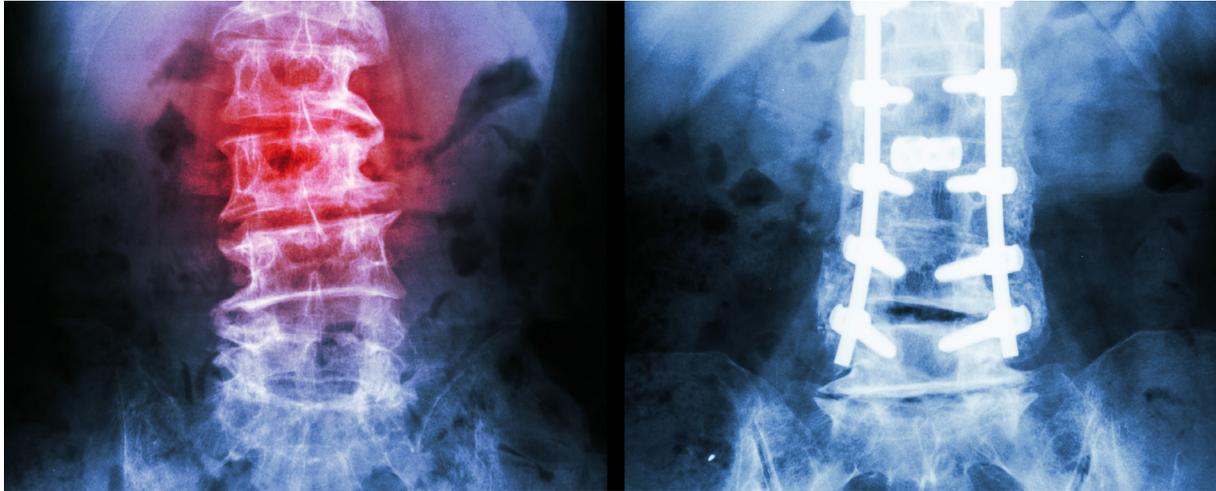


Fall during cargo operation caused serious back injuries



The general cargo vessel was about to discharge packaged sawn timber in a small Caribbean port. Before discharging commenced the master told the crew the importance of slinging each timber package at equal distances to maintain its centre of gravity.

Discharge started in the evening. This chief officer had turned on the cargo floodlights and all crew members were wearing proper PPE such as boiler suits, high visibility vests, safety shoes and hard hats. The 3rd officer and an AB were in cargo hold 1. The chief officer and an AB were in cargo hold 2.

The vessel's cargo cranes were operated by the bosun and an AB. On the quay were three stevedores. The crew connected the slings to the cargo in the cargo holds. Just before midnight there were some issues with the slings in hold 1 so the 3rd officer called the bosun on the VHF and told him that the slings needed to be repositioned. For some reason the 3rd officer climbed onto the timber package and grabbed one of the slack slings. He told the bosun on the radio to take up the slack and start hoisting slowly. The AB held the slings on the inboard side to prevent the timber from moving out of position.

As the slings tensioned and the timber was hoisted, one of the slings snapped and caused the entire timber package to start swinging. The package was about 4m above the tanktop and

the 3rd officer lost his balance and fell straight down onto it.

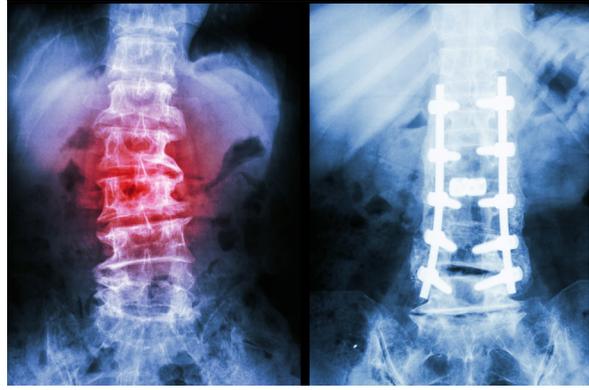
The AB in hold 1 called the bosun and master on the radio. The cargo operation was immediately stopped. The chief officer climbed quickly into the cargo hold. The 3rd officer was lying on his back with his right leg bent at an unnatural angle, he was semi-conscious. The master arranged for an ambulance while the chief officer gave first aid. The 3rd officer complained about severe pain in his back and leg. He also had difficulty breathing. A stretcher was arranged by the crew and the 3rd officer was lifted onto the quay by the crane.

It took about 30 minutes for the ambulance to arrive. At the hospital the 3rd officer was found to have a broken leg and serious back injuries. He was not able to continue working at sea. ■

Discussion

Go to the "File" menu and select "Save as..." to save the pdf-file on your computer.

You can place the marker below each question to write the answer directly into the file.



When discussing this case please consider that the actions taken at the time made sense for all involved. Do not only judge, but also ask why you think these actions were taken and could this happen on your vessel?

1. What were the immediate causes of this accident?

2. Is there a risk that this kind of accident could happen on our vessel?

3. What could you have done to prevent this accident?

4. What are our procedures about climbing on a pallet or cargo that is being moved?

5. What are our procedures if we see a crew member doing anything unsafe onboard?

6. How do we ensure that crew members follow the required safety practices?

7. Do we have a tool box meeting before a cargo operation commences?

8. If not, could this be useful?

9. What sections of our SMS would have been breached, if any?

10. Does our SMS address these risks?

11. How could we improve our SMS to address these issues?

12. What do you think was the cause of this accident?

13. Is there any kind of training that we could do that addresses these issues?