

## MONTHLY SAFETY SCENARIO

MARCH 2023

# Lost balance while washing down caused fatal injury

A bulk carrier was in port and one of the ABs was washing the hatch coaming gutter. He had connected a fire hose to a fire hydrant and was spraying water. The cargo hatch covers were open and the AB was wearing a safety harness. The harness became tangled with the fire hose and so the AB briefly unhooked it so he could untangle the safety cord. At the same time the pressure in the hose changed causing the AB to lose his balance and fall 16 metres down into the cargo hold.

First aid was given to the AB by the crew and the Master called for an ambulance. Unfortunately, he did not recover and died at the hospital.

Working aloft is a high risk operation and all vessels have procedures on how to do it safely. It is a requirement to

fill out both a risk assessment and a work permit for any job in this category. The risk assessment and the code of safe working practices for merchant seafarers (COSWP) requires that all risks should be evaluated and that the harness should be connected at all times.

If two persons had been assigned for this job it would have meant that the AB could work on his assigned task by washing down and the other AB could assist with the hose.

Everybody looks at risk differently – that is why it is so important that the safety department ensures the crew is trained in evaluating and understanding risks, and the potentially fatal consequences of forgetting this.





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## Questions

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?

What were the immediate causes of this accident?

1. Is there a risk that this kind of accident could happen on our vessel?
2. How could this accident have been prevented?
3. What sections of our SMS would have been breached if any?
4. Is our SMS sufficient enough to prevent this kind of accident?
5. If procedures were breached why do you think this was the case?

6. Do we have a risk assessment on board that addresses these risks?
7. Is this a one person job or two person job?
8. Do we correct an identified issue with any safety issues immediately?
9. If someone is not wearing his required safety equipment, or wears it incorrectly, do we tell them?