

These flashes summarise key safety matters and incidents, allowing wider dissemination of lessons learned from them. The information below has been provided in good faith by members and should be reviewed individually by recipients, who will determine its relevance to their own operations.

The effectiveness of the IMCA safety flash system depends on receiving reports from members in order to pass on information and avoid repeat incidents. Please consider adding the IMCA secretariat (imca@imca-int.com) to your internal distribution list for safety alerts and/or manually submitting information on specific incidents you consider may be relevant. All information will be anonymised or sanitised, as appropriate.

A number of other organisations issue safety flashes and similar documents which may be of interest to IMCA members. Where these are particularly relevant, these may be summarised or highlighted here. Links to known relevant websites are provided at www.imca-int.com/links. Additional links should be submitted to webmaster@imca-int.com

1 Correct Specification of Shackles

Keywords: *Lifting*

Further to reports of counterfeit shackles appearing in West African and European markets (see Safety Flash 11/04), a member has reported “many counterfeit shackles and other lifting components appearing in the supply chain”. It has provided the following advice to all relevant personnel in the company and has asked IMCA to further disseminate this important information.

Such counterfeit components may not meet the rigorous standards which bona-fide products are manufactured to. These standards serve as the only guarantee to ensure consistency of steel and product performance. It is thus extremely important that shackles are procured against recognised standards applicable in the region of operation.

For example, in Europe and Africa, the following European standard is suggested when setting out a specification for purchasing shackles: EN 13889 – Forged Steel Shackles for General Lifting Purposes – D Shackles and Bow Shackles – Grade 6 – Safety.

It is strongly recommended to check with recognised manufacturers, who issue product data sheets for most of their lifting products in order to make it easier to identify the various safety features of the products manufactured against a particular standard.

The company recommends that the following personnel be made aware of this issue, to ensure that they always specify, buy and use genuine lifting components:

- ◆ all engineers who specify lifting components and assemblies;
- ◆ personnel engaged in purchasing;
- ◆ rigging personnel, i.e. those who use the components.

The company is also contacting its suppliers to ensure that they know exactly which manufacturing source/supply they obtain their shackles from, i.e. not just accepting at face value that all is correct because a supply company may be Europe/USA-based, as such a company could itself be inadvertently supplied with counterfeit products if rigorous checks are not made.

2 Helideck Foam Sample

Keywords: *Helidecks*

Further to information provided in information note IMCASEL 31/04, we have been provided with the following information arising from a foam sample test onboard a vessel with a helideck.

The company reports that the results from a sample from the helideck foam monitor tank submitted for testing were perplexing. They stated that the foam had a very high concentration of water, as opposed to 0%.

Investigations were carried out onboard to comprehend this high concentration of water in the foam sample. After various tests it was concluded that the non-return valve located between the foam tank and pipework from the pump to the helideck foam monitor had been leaking.

This was not immediately noticed. However, the consequences of this could have been devastating – should a helicopter fire on the helideck have occurred, the vessel would have been using a mixture of foam concentrate and water which was incapable of producing the required blanket of foam.

The company concerned has instructed its helideck-equipped vessels to take the following measures to prevent recurrence of this:

- ◆ Where possible, test non-return valves for leakage;
- ◆ Enter the non-return valve item into the vessel's planned maintenance system for inspection and testing on a frequent basis when convenient;
- ◆ Schedule to fit an isolation valve between the foam tank and non-return valve.

3 Lifting Techniques

Keywords: Lifting

Further to information given in the first IMCA pocket safety card (Manual Handling Safety Card), a member has submitted the following notes which members may find useful:



“The phrase ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’ applies to this scene, which I came across recently in Hong Kong.

*The evident hyperextension of the back and the strain involved in yanking up the load by this method are a good example of what **not** to do when handling items without the use of machinery.*

The following points provide guidance and a reminder of the proper care to be taken when a task requires a manual lift of one description or another.

- ◆ Grip – A good grip makes maximum use of the palm of the hand, the ball of the thumb and the base of the fingers. Considerable damage can be caused by using the sensitive fingertips and continued use of them leads to strained fingers or strained forearm muscles;
- ◆ Back – The back should be kept straight to maintain it in its natural and strongest position. This necessitates bending at the knees and ankles to get down close to the load and then to raise it, pushing upwards with the leg muscles to regain the vertical position;
- ◆ Chin – The chin should be kept well in so that it is fairly near the chest, because this helps to keep the spine in its natural upright shape;
- ◆ Feet – The proper position of the feet is approximately the width of the hips apart and with one foot slightly in front of the other. This position provides a reasonably stable base as the load is lifted (lifting a load with the feet together creates a top-heavy, unbalanced situation) and, once the load is off the ground, affords the immediate facility of transferring the weight forward to the front foot so that the load can be carried away in the required direction;
- ◆ Arms – Arms should be kept as close to the body as possible so that the body itself does not become unbalanced by its own members;
- ◆ Body – The body, being kept in its normal position, should act as a counterweight to the load.

4 Driving Policy

Keywords: Road Accidents

A member has recently issued a reminder to its employees of that company's driving policy. Members may find the points below useful.

- ◆ It is understood that vehicular incidents and people being struck by objects are now the most common cause of accidents in the industry;
- ◆ The use of seatbelts is an obvious aid to safety, lessening injury and increasing the chances of survival in serious accidents. In many countries, to not use a seatbelt risks incurring financial and other penalties;

- ◆ The use of mobile telephones while driving is increasingly shown to be a cause of accidents and the practice is being made illegal in a growing number of locations, again risking fines, suspension or revocation of the driving licence or other penalties.

The member reminds its employees:

It's not just your own wellbeing, but also that of others, either on the road or in your vehicle, whose safety you could be putting at risk.

5 Dropped Objects from Scaffolding

Keywords: Lifting

There have been several incidents where tools and equipment have been left inside scaffold tubes that are part of a scaffold structure.

The picture to the right is from an incident where a metal spike fell 7-8 feet to the deck, narrowly missing a scaffolder as he was dismantling a scaffold structure.

Fortunately nobody was injured, but there could have been a serious accident had someone been struck. The root cause of the problem has been noted to be as a result of personnel working on scaffold structures, using horizontal scaffold tubes as temporary storage areas while undertaking a work activity, then forgetting to remove the item.

All personnel working on scaffold tubes have a responsibility to work safely and it is vital that they leave their working area in a safe condition.



The following actions have been recommended:

- ◆ capping the ends of guardrails and horizontal scaffold tubes to minimise the opportunity and temptation for personnel to use tubes for storage;
- ◆ issuing a reminder to all personnel working with, on or around scaffolding:
 - be aware of the risks of dropped objects;
 - do not use scaffold tubes as temporary storage;
 - remove all tools and equipment from the scaffold structure on completion of each task/on leaving an area of the structure.

6 Dropped Object During Delivery of Offshore Container

Keywords: Heights

During delivery of an offshore container to a warehouse, a large metal object was observed lying on top of the container by a worker on a higher floor.

The object was removed and was found to be a 4 foot metal rod/brace (see photograph to the right).

Investigation showed that the driver had travelled several miles, including passing through the local city centre, with the object on top of the trailer, posing a hazard to all in the surrounding area.

In response to the incident, the haulage company is currently reviewing its risk assessments covering loading, unloading and container transport procedures.



The company involved has reminded all suppliers of material for shipment of the UKOOA guidelines on this topic, which detail the appropriate requirements and manner to present cargo for offshore shipment.