IMCA Safety Flash 06/03

July 2003

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 Tagline Incident

A member has reported an incident whereby an injury was sustained by a person during lifting operations on a construction ship.

A person was acting as banksman, but also assisted with the handling the load, weighing approximately 1256kg, which was being moved from the starboard aft side of the ship to its moon-pool area. The load had taglines attached to control the load as it was being lifted over ROV system containers.

To help steady the load, the acting banksman wrapped a tagline around a handrail, but his fingers became trapped when the load swung and the tagline became taut. As a result, a part of the person's left finger was amputated and he sustained superficial rope burns to two other fingers.

The company involved has noted the following as 'lessons learnt':

- The banksman was also controlling the tag line. This combination of roles is thought to have resulted in loss of attention;
- The practice of using tag lines needs to take into account of dynamic forces when controlling movement of the load;
- The practice of taking a wrap around the tag line makes it difficult to release in a critical situation.

The company's instructions for lifting equipment and lifting operations were revised shortly after the event. The two key additions were:

- An statement instruction that the banksman is to be solely dedicated to instructing the lifting operation and should not take part in any additional duties;
- A new section 'Use of Taglines' describing the consideration of safe positioning, dynamic forces of loads, securing taglines and a warning to never wrap a tagline around any body part for controlling the load.

2 Inflatable Lifejackets Fail to Inflate

Keywords: Gas

This safety alert was received from the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA)

"Recently a fisherman and a workboat crewman died when the inflatable lifejackets they were wearing failed to inflate. We suspect that the gas cylinders may have worked loose since the lifejackets were last inspected.

Manufacturers provide instructions and maintenance procedures for inflatable lifejackets which include details of regular and routine inspections.

The following key learning points have been noted:

- *Owners of inflatable lifejackets should have them serviced and inspected in accordance with the manufactures' instruction;*
- *Owners should include the service and maintenance of inflatable lifejackets within their safety management system;*
- *Users of inflatable lifejackets should be instructed in their use;*
- *Owners should maintain a record of serving, inspection and the training of users of inflatable lifejackets;*

- *Users of inflatable lifejackets should inspect them before putting them on. Inspection should include:*
  - *Inspection of straps, buckles and outer covers;*
  - *Inspection of Safety harness, its stitching an buckles;*
  - *Inspection of the inflatable lung for abrasion damage;*
  - *Inspection of gas inflation cylinder for signs of corrosion;*
  - *Inspection of the gas inflation for tightness of connection to the inflation mechanism; and*
  - *Inspection of the automatic inflation system, if fitted."*

3 SARS

Keywords: Infection

In respect of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) members are able to obtain advice from several international/ governmental agencies around the world. For example:

World Health Organisation: http://www.who.int/csr/sars/en/

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/

4 Positioning of Emergency Positioning Indicating Radio Beacon

Keywords: Dropped

IMCA recently received details of an incident involving a dropped object.

A vessel was undergoing a port state inspection in conjunction with a radio surveyor. During the inspection of the EPRIB (Electronic Positioning Indicator Radio Beacon), it was noted that it was a type that had to be removed from the holding bracket. The bracket was a spring clip type with a designated amount of tension that was mounted on the outside handrail on the monkey island. When the surveyor unclipped the EPRIB, the spring tension of the bracket forced it out of his grip resulting in the unit falling to the main deck below (approximately 50 feet). This could have resulted in major injury to personnel.

The recommendation made by the party concerned to members was to carry out a swift review of the position of EPRIBs on board their vessels and to move the holding brackets to a safer location if necessary.

5 Mugging and Robbery

Keywords: Robbery

Further to a Safety Flash 05/03 a further robbery report has been received from a member.

While getting a ride back to the vessel from Trinidad, Port of Spain, an employee was mugged and robbed at gunpoint. He was offered a ride back to the boat by a seemingly friendly man and his three friends. Approximately ten minutes after being in the vehicle the man in the seat next to him produced a gun and began to empty the employee's pockets. His visa card and the money he had on him were taken. He was then severely beaten when the PIN number to his Visa card would not work. The men decided to keep him prisoner to try to get more money out of the next day. When he mentioned that he would be missed at the vessel and the card would be blocked, they drove to a remote location outside of town to kill him. The gunman's mobile phone rang and during this distraction the employee dived down a slope while being fired upon. The men than decided to leave him there. About two hours later he decided it was safe to come out and make his way to the vessel.

The company involved has issued the following advice to its employees:

- Do no accept rides from anyone other than official taxi drivers;
- Always use the buddy system when going ashore, never go alone;
- Take extreme caution when ashore; be aware of your surroundings and the people in your surroundings.

6 Fatality – Injury from an Air Hose

Keywords: Hoses

A member has reported that it is aware of the following incident, whereby a worker was struck on the head by a compressed air hose which had blown off of its fitting on a piece of equipment. He received serious head injuries, which proved fatal.

The air hose had been held by a hose clamp on the fitting, with no keeper, restraining chain or sling to prevent the hose from thrashing around and this failure to properly secure the hose and hose clamp was identified as the primary cause of the incident.

This had been a 'routine' task and didn't require a formal written job safety analysis to be carried out.

However, the company has highlighted the destructive potential of unrestrained compressed air hoses to all personnel through toolbox talks and safety training.

It has expressed the need for keepers, chains, slings, special proprietary couplings and whip-checks to be installed on all diameter or high-pressure compressed air hoses, in order to prevent them thrashing about in the event of a hose or coupling failure (see figure). The company has undertaken to perform regular inspections of all compressed-air-powered equipment, including hoses, in order to assess the integrity of couplings, clamps, keepers and hoses and to allow corrective action to be taken.