



LEARNING FROM INCIDENTS

AWARENESS ALERT

DC-AW-2016-6

Chemicals

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Tankerman falls from barge onto dock (Stop Work Authority)

Target audience for this alert

- Marine carriers and terminal operators
- All staff and contractors

Note: the preferred way of communicating this LFI is via a meeting or discussion forum

What happened

A tankerman aboard a barge was connecting the dock arm while dockside at a third party terminal. While he was assisting in manoeuvring the loading arm and as he was pushing down a temporary handle, it slipped out of its fitting causing the tankerman to lose his balance and fall approximately five feet (1.5 m) down onto the dock below. He sustained a laceration on his hand, which required two stitches, and bruised ribs. He was taken to hospital for treatment and sent home for two days' rest.

Why it happened

According to the barge operator's incident report, the tankerman had to perform an unusual operation to line up the dock arm with the barge connection by himself using a temporary handle.

As the tankerman pushed down on the handle it slipped out of its fitting, causing him to lose his balance and fall. At the time there was no mechanism to secure the handle to the dock arm (subsequently resolved).

The tankerman reported, post-accident, that he had never performed this type of line up before and felt uncomfortable performing the task. However, he decided not to raise his concerns even though the barge operating company had a formal Stop Work Authority policy in place.



*LFI Legal Guidance- <http://swm.shell.com/hse/incident/index.html>

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Lessons learned

- Although a Stop Work Authority policy may be in place in your workplace which allows activity to be stopped if workers have concerns about safety, this does not automatically guarantee its implementation. Leaders need to create and foster a safety culture where people feel free to speak up and raise any safety concerns and recognise people for doing so, regardless of the outcome in any particular case.
- When faced with a situation that you have never encountered before and you are in doubt, it is always better to look for help and not try to do it by yourself.

Recommendations

- Discuss this LFI with your staff and contractors and identify any circumstances when it might feel difficult to apply a Stop Work Authority policy - and why.
- Reward and recognise people who apply the Stop Work Authority policy, regardless of the outcome in any particular case.
- Consider changing the wording "Stop Work Authority" to "Stop Work Responsibility" to highlight the fact that people have the responsibility and the authority to stop work when in doubt (not a choice).
- To encourage employees to stop work in dangerous situations, educate them about Stop Work policy during new-hire orientation and train workers on hazard recognition on a regular basis.
- "Call it when you see it": if something doesn't look right, there may be an issue. Raise it and discuss it with the responsible person.
- If in doubt, wait for help, do not try to do it by yourself.

Suggested toolbox/safety meeting questions

- How do you promote a culture of Stop Work Authority in your workplace?
- When something doesn't look right, do you feel encouraged to intervene and escalate the issue?
- What can prevent you from raising a safety concern?
- Do you ask for help when in doubt?

Further information

For more incident details or more information regarding the lessons learned or recommendations, please contact Shell Chemicals regional Marine Technical Advisor Capt. [Stephen Boudreaux](#) or the Shell Chemicals regional HSSE manager.

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