

15 October 2023

Safety Bulletin 10/2023

Crane operator and signaller



Dear all,

G2 Ocean is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all personnel involved in our operations. The purpose of our monthly Safety Bulletins is to raise awareness of health & safety risks associated with cargo operations.

G2 Ocean works with several hundred stevedore companies worldwide. We believe that by seeking and sharing insights across company and country boundaries, we can prevent future incidents together. Descriptions of incidents will always be fully anonymised.

In this edition of our Safety Bulletin we highlight communication between crane drivers and signallers. We have had four recent incidents where this was one of several failed safety barriers. If you have any feedback, please email us at:

safety@g2ocean.com

Best regards G2 Ocean Team

Pioneering Sustainable Shipping Solutions
www.g2ocean.com



Insight

Shared responsibility

The signaller should act as the crane operator's eyes and ears, and for all lifting operations one person must have this role.

Four recent incidents have one thing in common: Communication between the crane operator and the signaller is not effective. Units are moving while personnel are not in a safe position.

Case 1: During loading of housing modules, the crane operator lowered the module on a stevedore's foot as he was positioning dunnage.

Case 2 and 3: Two similar incidents in only three days occurred in two Brazilian ports, during loading of pulp. Stevedores enter the top of the pulp bales from a fixed platform on the quay, to connect the hooks (pictures left and below). The required safety harness was in use and connected to the platform. But in both cases the safety line was entangled in the hook chain when the crane operator lifted the cargo. The stevedores were pulled along with the lift and injured.

Case 4: See next page.



Two stevedores got entangled with the lift.



Case 4: During loading of housing modules, two stevedores were caught between cargo and bulkhead. The cargo was being suspended to adjust the position of dunnage below, when it moved in a horizontal direction. One stevedore narrowly escaped. The other was saw what was about to happen and braced himself for the impact. The cargo hit his arm and he then fell backwards and hit an open access door behind him. The stevedore was taken to hospital.



Integration

Integration is one of G2 Ocean’s desired safety behaviours. We expect this behaviour from our own employees, and everyone we work with. The signaller’s role is well known and standard work practice for crane operations everywhere but must be integrated into daily work practises.

Consequences: 

- Case 1: Broken toe.
 - Case 2 and 3: Broken rib and back injury.
 - Case 4: Fractured wrist – surgery required.
- The latter case could have had even more severe consequences, including fatality.

Lesson learned: 

- While other causes also contributed to these 4 incidents, there was a lack of communication between the signaller and crane operator in all of them.
- The signaller must stop operations when persons are in an unsafe position, and check that everyone is well clear before giving the signal to start lifting.
- The crane operator must follow the signaller’s orders.
- Follow this life-saving rule: **Identify danger zones.** Never position yourself between the bulkhead and moving cargo.