

## Ports of Auckland Ltd fined after injury to stevedore

**20 March 2015: 12.30pm**

Ports of Auckland Ltd (POAL) has been fined \$55,000 and ordered to pay \$25,000 in reparation to a stevedore who suffered serious injuries unloading a container ship at the port in January 2014.

POAL admitted a charge laid by Maritime New Zealand under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 of failing to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of employee, and was sentenced in Auckland District Court today (20 March 2015).

The stevedore was injured while attempting to dislodge a twist-lock that was stuck in the top of a two-high container stack on board the *Lica Maersk*.

The man was using a 5m unlocking pole which, with the weight of the twist lock, pulled him from the top of a container 15m down to the water.

During his fall, he hit a crane beam, and then the wharf, before landing in the water where he spent approximately 15 minutes due to difficulties in rescuing him from the narrow space.

The man suffered multiple injuries including breaking both legs, three fractured vertebrae, 10 fractured ribs, fractures to his sternum, a lacerated lung, and two fractured tendons in his left hand.

The man was hospitalised for three months after the accident and is unlikely to return to work as a stevedore.

The investigation by Maritime NZ found that no safety rail was in place in the area the man was working because it was covered by container lashing equipment.

POAL management had identified that use of unlocking poles to remove twist-locks was hazardous in mid-2013 but stevedores were not told they should not be used. The company failed to provide adequate training in relation to ship inspections and health and safety procedures and failed to adequately monitor employees to identify and prevent unsafe work practices.

Maritime NZ Director Keith Manch said the sentence reflected the seriousness of the incident and ramifications for the stevedore involved.

“There were multiple failings of procedures and communication in this case and the long term effects for the injured man have been devastating,” he said.

“Health and safety must be taken seriously. All workers have the right to safe workplaces and to go home healthy at the end of the day.”

**For further information contact:**

Maritime New Zealand Media Line

Phone 04 499 7318