ILA–USMX Joint Safety Committee

OSH ALERT 2023-04 [17 March 2023]

Lashing Bridge Hatchways

Since the introduction of lashing bridges, one of the most frequently occurring accidents observed globally involves lashers who fall through open lashing bridge hatchways.

As a solution, it's very easy to simply say that workers who open hatchway covers should always close them. In that way, these accidents would very likely cease to exist.

For whatever reason, however, our industry has not perfected a means nor a manner with which to make workers (lashers or otherwise) close hatchway covers each time they open them.

Lots of mitigating efforts have been attempted, including the installation of fore & aft elevating walkway pipe guards on some ships (***See*** photo above left).

Despite those mitigating attempts, accidents have continued to occur. The ILA~USMX Joint Safety Committee hasn't found "the magic bullet" with which to bring all such accidents to an end, but it has received a suggestion that may serve to foreclose on a portion of those accidents occurring.

What if regular ship's maintenance included the painting of those hatchway grates a brilliant "Safety Yellow?" Then, it could be reasoned that if the brilliant "Safety Yellow" color was not present to the eye of the person on the walkway... something could be wrong and greater care would be exercized in response. Is it worth a try? In light of the potentials involved: Yes….

Got a question about this particular subject? Write to the JSC at: blueoceana@optonline.net

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