

Unsafe attempt to transfer between vessels with no gangway

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A crew member was observed attempting to transfer between two vessels alongside each other without using an approved gangway or designated means of access.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls

What happened?

The unsafe act was immediately stopped and the individual was reminded of the company's safe access requirements.

The attempted transfer was in clear view of both vessel bridges; however, no action was taken to stop the unsafe act or provide a safe means of access, indicating a lack of effective controls and a silent acceptance of unsafe behaviour. Although no injury occurred, the situation had the potential to result in a serious incident.



Why did it happen?

- Normalization of unsafe practices: Personnel underestimated the risks associated with transferring between vessels alongside one another that appeared to be stationary.
- Failure to follow procedures: Approved safe access requirements and vessel transfer procedures were not followed.
- Lack of intervention and supervision: The unsafe act was visible to personnel on both vessel bridges; however, no intervention took place and no approved gangway was provided.
- Weak safety ownership: There was a missed opportunity for the vessel team to challenge unsafe behaviour and reinforce safe working practices.

What do we learn?

- Never transfer between vessels without an approved means of access.
- Bridge teams and vessel leadership are responsible for ensuring safe access arrangements are in place before any transfer takes place.
- Let us not silently accept or tolerate unsafe activities. If an unsafe act is observed, immediate intervention is required.
- If a gangway or other approved access arrangement is not available, the transfer should not take place. Even when vessels are alongside, unexpected vessel movement due to tides, swell, passing traffic, or mooring adjustments can result in serious injuries, including slips, falls, crush injuries, or man-overboard incidents.

Members may wish to refer to:

- [HSS 025 Guidance on the transfer of personnel to and from offshore vessels and structures](#)

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