

# Marine Safety Forum – Safety Flash 13-09

**Issued: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

## **Subject: Gangway Safety**

Recently there have been a number of incidents and near misses reported by base staff involving vessels gangways. Whilst none of these have resulted in any serious injuries, it is only a matter of time before they do. These incidents and near misses range from improperly rigged gangways and safety nets through to poor housekeeping standards with tripping hazards left on the gangway.

1. A stevedore was injured when his leg made contact with a protruding securing pin.



*Securing pin for bulwark door protruding from its socket*



*Puncture wound to stevedores leg*

2. A poorly positioned and designed bulwark ladder led to a stevedore slipping and falling due to the excessively steep angle. The design of the ship does not help due to the limited deck space at the top of the gangway. The incident was made worse by the presence of slack guard ropes, resulting in the stevedore having nothing to grab on to as he fell.

*Note the excessively steep bulwark ladder and also the slack guard ropes and loose stanchions*



3. Recently sighted bad practice has included obstructions on the gangway in the shape of carelessly placed lifting bridles and lifting strops left hanging over guard ropes, reducing their effective height.

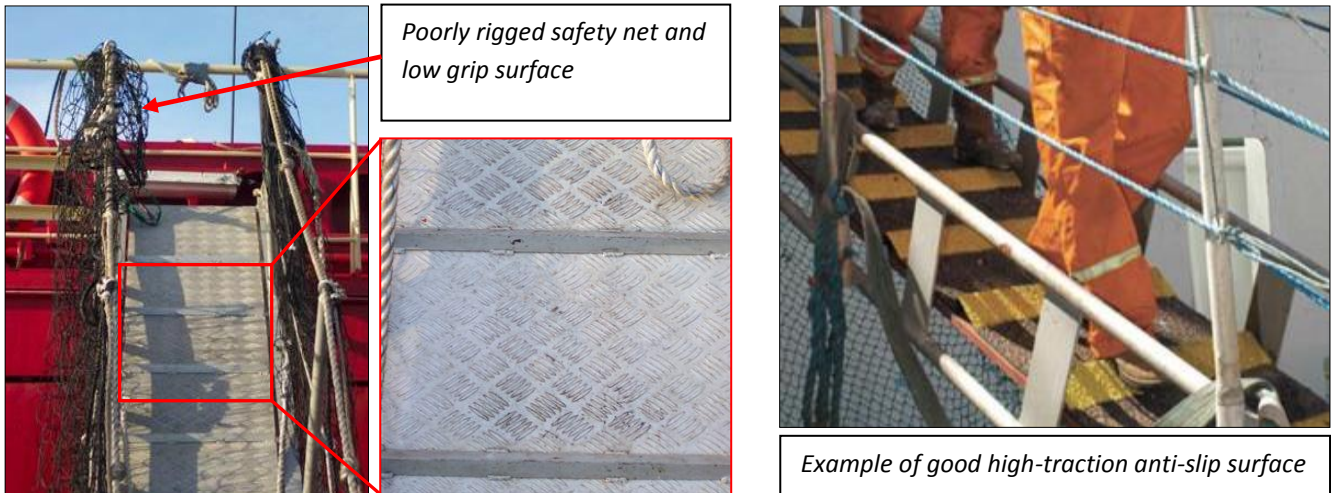


*Potential trip hazard from lifting bridle*

*Lifting bridle left hanging over the guard ropes*



4. Poorly placed/rigged safety nets and low grip surfaces are another frequently sighted problem.



For further guidance refer to the **Merchant Shipping (means of access) Regulations; 1988 SI; 1637** “The Master is obliged to ensure a safe means of access to the vessel at all times”. With regards to this regulation and the advice provided in the “Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen”, chapters 6 and 18. The following points must be applied whenever the gangway is in use;

1. The gangway must be properly rigged and deployed.
2. It must be safe to use and adjusted as necessary to maintain safe access to the vessel.
3. Gangway adequately lit at all times, with a minimum of 20 Lux at a height of 1m.
4. A lifebuoy with self-activating light and buoyant line posted adjacent to the gangway.
5. The gangway **MUST NOT** be used at an angle greater than 30° above the horizontal plane unless it is specifically designed for operation at greater angles, normally up to 50°.
6. Where necessary a bulwark ladder must be provided, safety fenced to a minimum height of 1m.
7. Guard ropes must be kept taut at all times and stanchions must be rigidly secured.
8. The gangway must be kept clear of cargo operations and quayside obstructions.
9. The gangway must be kept clear of any materials, substances or obstructions likely to cause a person to slip or trip.
10. A safety net should be mounted where a person may fall from the gangway, ship's deck or quayside. The aim of the safety net is to minimize the risk of injury arising from falling between the ship and the quay or falling on to the quay or deck and as far as reasonably practicable the whole length of the gangway should be covered. Safety nets should be securely rigged, with use being made of securing points on the quayside where appropriate.

In addition to this it should be noted that users of gangways are responsible for risk assessing conditions prior to use, and where necessary consideration should be given to turning and facing the gangway and bulwark ladder whilst ascending or descending.

