

Dropped pallet during cargo transfer

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A plastic pallet loaded with plastic lube oil drums fell while being hoisted.

What happened?

During transfer of lube oil drums via barge to a vessel in an anchorage, a plastic pallet loaded with plastic lube oil drums fell while being hoisted. The incident resulted in product damage (ruptured drums, oil spillage on deck). There were no injuries nor structural damage.

What might have gone better?

- The pallet was inadequately secured before lifting, and when it was lifted, it was an out of balance load and tipped over.
- There could have been more adequate secondary securing of the load – straps or netting.
- There could have been more and better supervision of the barge crew during cargo lifting operations.
- There was perceived “time pressure” at work.
- There was unchallenged reliance on routine – “we’ve always done it this way”.



The following causes were identified

- There were procedures in place for this lifting operation but they were not followed;
- There was a lack of clear communication and coordination between ship crew

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Safe mechanical lifting

- and barge crew;
- Insufficient training/awareness of safe lifting practices with plastic pallets.

Actions taken

- Ensured thorough pre-checks of all cargo loads, however small, before lifting.
- Ensured cargo loads are adequately strapped and secured and “in balance” before lifting.
- Reiterated need for toolbox meetings between ship and barge crew before work starts.
- Ensured better oversight and supervision of cargo lifting by ship’s duty officer.

What was learned?

- Even routine store transfer operations can escalate into incidents if procedural discipline is not maintained.
- Joint coordination between vessel and barge is essential to ensure lifting safety.
- Ensuring good secondary securing of palletized cargo should be a standard practice.

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