Shipboard Ladder Safety Fatality File



Worker fell off pilot ladder into sea.

On 16 February 2021, a worker was disembarking a vessel to board a passenger launch via a pilot ladder. While descending the pilot ladder, the worker fell into the sea. The worker was rescued and conveyed to the hospital where he was subsequently pronounced dead. The Ministry of Manpower has commenced investigations into the accident.

The industry is reminded to conduct a comprehensive Risk Assessment for all work activities related to vessel embarkation and disembarkation. Precautions must be taken to prevent workers from falling into water. Where possible, always select a safer method (e.g. use of vessel gangways) for embarkation or disembarkation. If pilot ladders must be used, ensure workers are physically fit for the task and sufficiently confident before allowing them to proceed. Safe Work Procedures must be established to guide workers on the safe use of pilot ladders. Employers of workers exposed to the risk of falling into water must provide suitable life vest to keep the workers afloat in the event they fall into the water. Workers should be trained on the importance and correct manner of donning the life vest. Instruct workers not to attempt embarking or disembarking a vessel when conditions are not favorable (e.g. heavy rain, strong winds and/or choppy waters). If conditions are good, then embarking/disembarking may proceed only when the passenger launch is in position.