

Safety and health alert

17/96 Deckhand injured by moving cray pots

Incident

A 25 year old deckhand received a head injury and punctured right lung when cray pots moved on a fishing vessel off Kalbarri, pinning him against a skinning box.

The vessel on which the deckhand was working had between 60 and 75 pots stacked on the deck, and at the time of the accident the crew were retrieving pots from near a reef.

The fishing vessel was close to shore with the stern seaward. A 3 metre wave struck the vessel, causing no apparent damage. However almost immediately after the wave struck, a second wave of similar size broke over the stern of the boat causing the stacked cray pots to be dislodged.

The crew member was on the rear deck when the wave struck. The force of the wave caused the pots on the deck to shift and several toppled over on top of the deckhand. Almost immediately, the remainder of the crew went to the aid of the unconscious deckhand.

Factors

- The vessel was stern-on to the waves.
- The pots were not lashed (normal procedure).
- The crew member was located between the stacked pots and a fixed structure.

Recommendations

1. When fishing near reefs, extreme care is required and generally the vessel should be bow onto the waves.
2. A system should be considered of locking pots stacked on deck so they cannot fall on the crew.
3. All cray pots to be lashed during poor weather or while travelling long distances.
4. Crew members must not stand between pots and the wheel house.
5. At least one member of the crew to possess current first aid certificate.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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