

TAKE CARE OF YOUR EYES



IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, WE HAVE HANDLED MORE THAN 30 CASES WHERE EYES HAVE BEEN DAMAGED. LUCKILY MANY OF THE INJURIES WERE MINOR AND LEFT NO LASTING DAMAGE, BUT SOME WERE MUCH MORE SEVERE, LEAVING THE SEAFARER PERMANENTLY DISABLED.



Many accidents take place in the engine room, where working with potentially dangerous equipment and tools is more common. However, there are many cases where dust and other particles enter the eyes when carrying out routine maintenance tasks or even when someone walks too close to other work being carried out. Our review also indicates that eye injuries have occurred across all ranks, from chief officers to cadets.

In the majority of cases reviewed, it seems that no personal protective equipment (PPE) was worn. Often the works being carried out were routine – for example, maintenance or sweeping – and so PPE was wrongly deemed to be unnecessary. But even such routine tasks can lead to severe eye injuries, with ships being diverted and seafarers repatriated and, in the worst cases, leaving the seafarer with a permanent disability and being unable to work. It is essential to have clear procedures for the correct PPE to be worn for each type of job, and that a proper routine is implemented.

WEARING GLASSES OR GOGGLES WILL NOT ALWAYS GUARANTEE TO PREVENT INJURY, BUT THEY DO GO A LONG WAY TO AVOID DAMAGE TO THE EYES AND LESSEN THE IMPACT OF MANY ROUTINE INCIDENTS.

The cases we looked at fall into 3 broad categories:

FAILURE OF EQUIPMENT such as hammers, grinders or pliers, where the equipment breaks and damages the eye, or a solid piece of metal breaks off and enters the eye.

SOLID PARTICLES entering the eye during routine operations such as hold cleaning, deck sweeping, paint chipping, rust removal and general maintenance works.

HARMFUL LIQUIDS entering the eye such as splashes of chemicals, paint, thinner or other dangerous liquids.

ALWAYS MAKE SURE YOU CONSIDER ALL THE RISKS BEFORE TAKING ON ANY TASK. IF THIS COULD INVOLVE THE RISK OF EYE INJURY, THEN WEAR APPROPRIATE SAFETY GOGGLES OR GLASSES. GENERAL (PERSONAL) GLASSES AND SUNGLASSES MAY PROVIDE SOME PROTECTION, BUT WEARING THE CORRECT PPE IS MUCH SAFER. GOGGLES SHOULD ALWAYS BE CHECKED BEFORE USE AND IF ANY CRACKS AND DEFECTS ARE FOUND THEN AN ALTERNATIVE PAIR MUST BE USED. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE GLASSES OR GOGGLES PROVIDE A TIGHT THOUGH COMFORTABLE FIT.

