



KNIFE SAFETY

Following knife injuries have recently occurred on merchant ships due to UNSAFE ACTS



- OS was attempting to remove plastic wrapping from stores pallet
- OS temporarily removed the glove on his right hand to pull a knife out of his pocket
- Without putting the glove back on he began cutting through the plastic wrap
- The knife slipped out of his hand and began to fall
- He instinctively grabbed for the knife with his right hand and raised his right knee in an attempt to catch it
- The knife handle landed on his knee with the blade facing upwards as his right hand came down
- The point of the knife went through his palm and came out the other side
- OS was sent ashore to the hospital for stitches and treatment



Chief cook had a serious cut on his hand

The cut was the result of using a grinder to sharpen a knife (UNSAFE ACT)

Causes of knife injuries:

- Body part in the line of fire (usually the hand holding the object being cut)
- Improper handling of the knife (picking up an unguarded knife, passing the knife to another worker)
- Unstable object being cut (the object shifts or moves allowing the blade to slip)
- Dull blade (excessive force required to compensate for the dull cutting edge)
- Wrong tool (a knife was not the tool for the task)
- Messmen cutting themselves whilst washing knives
- Grabbing a knife which was left in a sink of water and cannot be seen



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Knife safety handling tips to avoid cuts

- Use a knife only for its intended purpose; use the appropriate knife for the cutting job. Do not use knives as can openers, screwdrivers, staple removers, or box cutters.
- Knife to be Kept in good condition (i.e. blade sharp, handle intact).
- Never place knives near the edges of tables.
- Never leave a knife soaking in a sink of water where they cannot be seen. Hand wash knives immediately after use.
- Let a falling knife fall. Step back. Do not try to catch the knife.
- Carry knives with the cutting edge angled slightly away from your body.
- To hand a knife to someone else, place it down on a clean surface and let the other person pick it up.
- Store knives properly in racks or knife sheaths.
- Do not store the blades with the cutting edge exposed.
- Keep your fingers and thumbs out of the way of the cutting line.
- Place the object being cut on a stable surface (secure the object with a protected hand or holding device i.e. edge).
- Always use a cutting board.
- Concentrate on what you're doing when using a knife. Do not engage in conversation when using knives; pay attention to the task.

Visualize the path the blade will take before beginning the cut
Ensure that no body parts (or sensitive equipment) will be in that path if the knife slips or comes off the surface.

