

RNZ

Worker dies during coal loading operation at Lyttelton Port

4:34 pm on 25 April 2022

A person has died during the loading of coal onto a ship at Lyttelton Port this morning.



Lyttelton Port (file pic) Photo: RNZ / Nate McKinnon

Lyttelton Port Company has confirmed there has been a fatality aboard the vessel *ETG Aquarius* berthed at Cashin Quay.

Acting chief executive Kirstie Gardener expressed her "deep sadness" for the worker's family and also those working at the port.

"Our focus right now is on supporting our staff and the family of our LPC team member at this tragic time.

"At the moment we can't confirm any further details on the incident."

She said more details would be released later.

Police confirmed the death and said emergency services were called to the vessel shortly before 9.30am.

Police would conduct enquiries on behalf of the Coroner. Maritime New Zealand has been notified.

It is the second fatality at one of the country's ports in a week. Atiroa Tuaiti, 26, died last Tuesday while working on a container ship at Ports of Auckland.

His employer, Wallace Investments Limited general manager Felix van Aalst, said in a statement on the day of the tragedy that it was too early to know complete details but confirmed "it was a fall from height".

His death has led to calls for an inquiry into health and safety at the port.

This afternoon, the Maritime Union said New Zealand is developing a poor record when it comes to deaths at our ports.

The union's national secretary Craig Harrison said port safety seemed to be getting worse.

"We've got a terrible record in the industry in the last few years.

"When you think of the volumes involved going through Sydney alone - we don't hear the amount of injuries or harm or even death in that port, yet we seem to be unbelievably getting worse."

Last week, Harrison told RNZ the incident at Auckland Port was a tragedy and reinforced the dangers port workers faced every day. He is among those who say a national inquiry is needed, and he believes it should be overseen by the union and the government.

He said port workers were overrepresented in death statistics in comparison to other industries such as construction.