



ILA-USMX JOINT SAFETY COMMITTEE

OSH Circular 2025-12 (01 December 2025)

Deck Crane Safety

A fair number of ports operating within the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf Coasts continue to enjoy vessel calls wherein the operation of deck cranes form a critical part of the cargo handling equation. It's appropriate then, to provide some focus on several elements of deck crane operation that are essential to safe practice.

In isolating those elements, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has regulated the subject in the manner set out within the following links:

[Vessel's Cargo Handling Gear \[General Requirements\]](#)

[Vessel's Cargo Handling Gear \[Specific Requirements\]](#)

[Vessel's Cargo Handling Gear \[Rigging Gear\]](#)

[Vessel's Cargo Handling Gear \[Cranes\]](#)

Also, a recent publication of the G2 Ocean group takes the time to explore several of those elements from a practical perspective and may be accessed via the following link:

[Rough handling of cranes \[Safety Bulletin of 15 October 2025\]](#)

Safety Bulletin 10 /2025
Rough handling of cranes

What is "rough"?
Over the last months there have been incidents where the crane hoisting wire was damaged. In some of these cases the wire broke, and the load dropped. "Rough handling" or "unsafe operation" is often identified as a root cause or contributing factor.

This is what we mean by "rough":

1. Allowing the wire to touch the hatch coaming or any other part of the vessel.
2. Abrupt movements, such as sudden starts, stops and changes in direction.
3. Pulling cargo, rather than lifting it. Sideway forces cause damage to crane bearings and sheaves, which will impact the wire.
4. Allowing the wire to become slack, causing it to get entangled in other crane parts.
5. Ignoring indications that there is a technical malfunction, such as unusual sounds or warning lights in the operator's panel.
6. Operating the crane outside its design limitations, overriding safety devices.

Consequences: ⚠️

- There have been incidents this year which have caused damage to crane wires.
- Potential injuries when wires break and the load drops. This could be fatal for Stevedores and crew.

Lesson learned: ✅

- If you observe unsafe crane handling: Stop the operation.
- If a habit of rough handling has developed over time: Vessel crew, stevedores and we in G2 Ocean can find safer ways of loading the cargo. That has already been done in some ports. Examples of solutions:
 - Use a different size or type of frame.
 - Use forklifts to re-position cargo inside the hold, making it easier to access for the crane operator.

Got an OSH-related question? Write to the JSC at: blueoceana@optonline.net

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