# Manual handling results in back pain

## WHAT HAPPENED

A member of crew onboard a UK marine aggregate dredger was lifting an empty steel rubbish bin (white bin pictured below) at 16:30 hrs from the port to starboard side of the focsle store. Upon placing the bin on the deck he felt a temporary slight pain in his lower back. The injured party (IP) stated that he lifted the bin using the correct manual handling technique and had no difficulties or pain until placing the bin on the deck. He continued to work until 17:00 hrs. It was not until later that evening that the IP felt the pain increase in his back.

The following day, it was reported to the Ships Officers at 08:00hrs that the IP was unable to turn to for duty due to back ache. At 08:15 hrs the Second Officer visited the IP in his cabin to check on his welfare and fill in an accident report. The IP was resting in his bunk and advised that he was in discomfort, reporting that he had taken Ibuprofen to help ease the pain. Upon interview it was established that the IP had spent the previous 10 days refurbishing the focsle deck by chipping and painting and consequently had spent some time on his knees. However, regular stops during the work involving stretching exercises were undertaken as

well as routine scheduled breaks. During each day the IP was assigned other duties so was not in the focsle for prolonged periods. The IP's hand arm vibration log was studied and indicated that he had been working in accordance with exposure limits for using a chipping gun.
After interview, the incident was reported to the Duty Office staff and the IP was sent via taxi to visit a NHS walk in centre. He was advised that his back was in spasm with no lasting damage and that he could return to the vessel fit for work, although he was guided to avoid heavy lifts.

## LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

Immediate Causes:
Manual handling empty metal waste bin (3kg).

Root Causes:
The IP suggested that the cause may have been related to a previous injury to his back but has received no professional advice regarding this.

Learning points:
? All lifts must be carefully considered and appropriate lifting techniques used at all times.
? During routine working activity involving extended periods of deck scaling regular breaks should be taken to exercise muscles and alleviate cramping.





| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **LOCATION:** | **AGGREGATE DREDGER** | **ALERT STATUS:** | **Normal** |
| **ACTIVITY:** | **MANUAL HANDLING AND STORAGE** | **DATE ISSUED:** | **15/03/2017 18:17:01** |
| **SUB ACTIVITY:** | **MARINE** | **INCIDENT No:** | **01449** |