

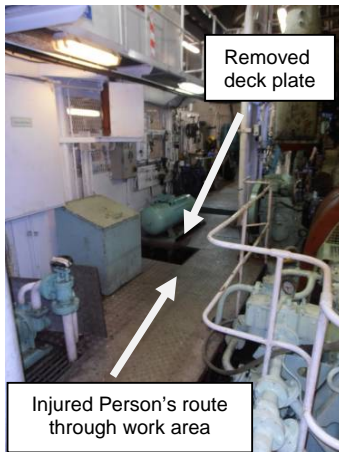
UK Safety Alert

Fall into Unguarded Opening Results in Injuries

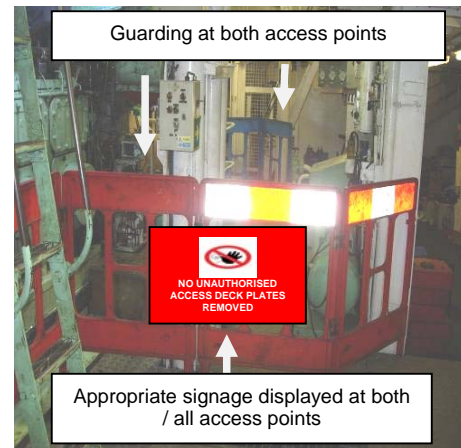
Details of the Incident

A ship's Engineer was fault finding on the main engine, an activity that required a deck plate to be lifted. Two contractors were working nearby and another Engineer (the Injured Person, IP) was working on the other side of the engine room.

The Engineer who was fault finding briefly went below the removed deck plate to trace an air line. The Injured Person, who had completed his task, was returning his tools to the engine room workshop, via the area where the deck plate had been removed. The Engineer who had been below the plates for about a minute then climbed out and turned to see the IP carrying the tools approaching him and the unguarded opening in the deck. The Engineer immediately challenged the approaching IP by putting his hand up to warn / stop him from proceeding towards the hazardous location where the plate had been removed (Note: ear protection was being worn in the engine room). Unfortunately the IP failed to acknowledge the warning, as he was not looking where he was going, and subsequently stepped into the unguarded opening, falling to the deck; he did manage to stop himself from falling completely into the opening. This resulted in the IP requiring hospital treatment, where he was treated for fractures to his lower right leg and cuts and bruising to his left leg and arm.



Incident location



What should have been in Place - Always guard openings

Learning Points

This incident demonstrates the importance of **always** putting physical barriers / guarding in place, with appropriate warning signage, prior to any plates, gratings or covers etc. being removed where there is a potential risk of falling into an unprotected opening, **even for short periods**. We all need to **STOP & THINK** about how our actions or inaction may affect the safety of others.

- While the Engineer was only under the plates for a very short period and did not leave the work location, he failed to look after himself and his colleagues by effectively physically guarding the work area and having the appropriate signage in place warning of the hazards at that location (E.G. "NO UNAUTHORISED ACCESS - FLOORING REMOVED").
- The contractors working alongside did not challenge the Engineer when he removed the deck plate about the lack of guarding around the opening.
- The Injured Person knowingly went into a work area when there was another alternative safe route available.
- The Injured Person wasn't looking where he was going when he was transiting the known work area.