

Surveyor's Notebook – Part II

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

— AUTHORITY – MASTER'S ROLE

Due to the high-risk nature of offshore personnel transfer using a crane, the master must be in charge of, or at least aware of, the transfer taking place and be confident that the procedures are being followed. The master should be the only person to authorize or permit personnel transfers to take place using personnel baskets and/or the ship's cranes.

He must confirm and/or satisfy himself about:

- the fitness and training of the people being transferred
- the suitability of the equipment and the ship being transferred to, including its station-keeping capability, the size, freeboard, lighting and whether there are any obstructions
- the limitations of wind speed, visibility and sea state
- the limitations and risks associated with night-time transfers
- the suitability of the crane being used: speed of lift, and condition of maintenance, wires and brakes
- that good, uninterrupted communication exists with the other ship
- that the operation has been discussed with the master of the other ship and that the procedure has been agreed
- that deck crews have been fully briefed
- that personnel being transferred have been fully briefed and are wearing life vest
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and life-saving equipment is positioned and operational, including the fast rescue craft if fitted

— COMMERCIAL PRESSURE

During these operations, considerable commercial pressure can be applied (directly or indirectly) to the master. There may be situations where the work or cargo transfer cannot start until a surveyor or mooring master has embarked, or the ship cannot complete cargo operations until the cargo surveyor has completed his readings or calculations, etc. The master may be trying to satisfy a number of interested parties. The transfer guidelines should unequivocally state and empower him to make a decision in the interest of safety.

Members should ensure that charterparty clauses are used that make this clear.

— AUTHORITY – CRANE OPERATOR’S ROLE

The crane operator must be trained and experienced. If he is neither trained nor experienced in operating the crane then the transfer should not take place.

The crane operator should establish that:

- the risk assessment has been carried out
- the permit to work or equivalent is in place
- the master has authorised the operation
- the crane is fully operational
- the wind speed, sea state and visibility are satisfactory for the operation
- he has an unobstructed view of the transfer area and/or the banksman
- there is good communication with the banksman, duty officer and bridge

— AUTHORITY – THE BANKSMAN AND OFFICER IN CHARGE

This person should be an experienced seaman, with full understanding of the operation. Ideally, this should be a responsible officer in charge of the deck.

The banksman is the person guiding the crane driver with directions (hand signals) when the crane driver does not have a full and clear view of the whole operation. The banksman must have a clear sighting at all times of both the person being transferred and the crane driver. The officer in charge may also be the banksman so long as he does not have any other duties at the time.

The banksman or officer in charge should ensure that:

- all the duties of the crane driver (see above) have been addressed
- the transfer procedure is understood
- he is clearly identified to the crane driver and all personnel involved
- the personnel transfer basket has been inspected
- the persons being transferred are briefed and understand the procedure
- common hand signals have been agreed and good communication exists with the crane driver and duty officer
- he has an unobstructed view of the crane driver and the ship to which the personnel are being transferred

— PERSONNEL BEING TRANSFERRED – RESPONSIBILITIES

The personnel being transferred, whoever they report to or work for, must obey the procedures as directed by the master.

They must:

- ensure that the transfer procedure is understood
- confirm and agree that the transfer is to take place
- agree to wear life vest
- agree and confirm that they will correctly use the safety equipment provided
- agree to abide to the instructions of the personnel in charge
- confirm that they are fit and well and not under the influence of alcohol or drugs

— SUITABILITY OF THE SHIP BEING TRANSFERRED TO OR FROM

Before the transfer, the master must assess the suitability of the ship that personnel are being transferred to or from. This should include the:

- condition of the ship
- station-keeping ability of the ship (ability of the ship to remain stationary alongside in the prevailing conditions)
- availability of clear deck space, with no obstructions likely to injure personnel

PROCEDURES

— WEATHER

Even though the master can call off an operation at any time, most offshore operations should establish weather parameters that provide the master with guidance. These may be explicit instructions from the company (or charterer) stating that the operation should cease or not take place when the weather exceeds these specified conditions.

Examples of weather parameters may be as follows depending upon the circumstances and conditions:

- maximum wind strength of 20 knots
- combined sea/swell height of 3 metres
- minimum visibility of 300 metres
- maximum ship rolling of 3 degrees

— COMMUNICATIONS

Visual and radio communication must be established by all parties involved, including the bridge.

Agreed hand signals must be used. Refer to copy of the hand signals agreed by the EU

directive 92/58 EEC which are in common usage. There are other accepted national signals which may be used, so long as all parties know and accept the signals being used.

— TRAINING OF KEY PERSONNEL, INCLUDING THE CRANE DRIVER

In view of the critical nature of the transfer operation, it is imperative that the person driving the crane has been trained and is experienced in its use. Normally, the crane driver is member of the ship's crew. On an offshore oil rig, for example, the crane driver will have attended an offshore crane driver's course, which may involve weeks of instruction.

Driving the cranes has always been a part of the deck crew's duties, and crew members should be trained in the use and capabilities of all cranes onboard. This can be done ashore and/or by a company-approved shipboard training programme. The deck crew's training should be recorded.

The banksman also should be trained and have his training recorded. His training should include agreed hand signals with the crane driver and officer on deck. Inexperienced officers should not be placed in charge of this critical operation;

— PERSONNEL LIFTING PROCEDURES AND INSTRUCTIONS

The personnel lifting procedures should be clear and easily understood and include:

- an understanding that only the master can authorize the transfer
- clearly designated tasks for key personnel
- clear guidelines and restrictions
- a risk assessment
- a permit to work system
- a final personnel transfer checklist for those carrying out the transfer
- guidelines for transfers in the hours of darkness: transfer operations should preferably be conducted during the hours of daylight; basket transfers in the hours of darkness should be done only in exceptional circumstances. If personnel transfer is to be done in darkness, good lighting must be available throughout and the master should explicitly agree to the transfer.

Procedures for personnel riding on the basket

1. Have you been advised of the procedure?
2. Are you in good health, not suffering from vertigo or seasickness, and your

capability not impaired by alcohol or drugs?

3. Always wear PPE and a life vest while riding a basket. In cold water conditions an immersion suit should be considered. Do not board a basket without a life vest.
4. Carry nothing in your hands when boarding or riding the basket.
 - Do not wear gloves or backpacks while riding in the basket, or be carrying or be burdened with equipment or heavy packs.
5. Place small hand carried items in the netted baggage area if fitted or have them passed down separately. Heavy or sharp items should always be passed down separately in an approved and safe manner such as crane lift, roped pallet/sling.
6. Hold the outer ropes, step onto the basket and position your feet as indicated by painted footprints if fitted on the basket floor.
7. Attach the safety lanyard. The safety lanyard serves as a fall restraint.
8. Pass your arms around the inner rigging ropes and cross your arms for more grip.
9. Bend your knees slightly to absorb any sudden movement or jarring of the basket. The basket should be equipped with cushion material to reduce jarring when landed.
10. If the basket contacts the boat at the top of a swell DO NOT STEP OUT OF THE BASKET. When the boat falls in the swell you could find a large drop from the basket.
11. The basket should contact the boat at the bottom of a swell if possible. Once it has landed securely on the boat jump clear.

— OTHER PERSONNEL BASKET SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

- be ready for the unexpected
- never stand under a suspended load
- never load the basket with more than the allowed maximum
- only transfer two passengers at a time during rough weather
- ensure a clear deck space in the landing area

— PERSONNEL BASKETS

Personnel baskets should be examined regularly by a competent authority. Ideally, this should be an approved contractor from ashore. The Safe Working Load (SWL) should be clearly marked on all personnel baskets together with clear instructions for their use.

Guidance should be available for the maintenance, storage and care of personnel baskets. Refer to the manufacturer's recommendations.

The rigging of the transfer basket should be checked by a competent officer immediately before its use. The security of all shackles, safety slings and hooks should be checked. The crane hook pennant should be long enough to be clear of the personnel being transferred.

— SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND RESCUE PROCEDURES

Personnel being transferred must wear life vests. If personnel being transferred refuse to wear a life vest then the transfer should not take place. Suitable approved life vests (complete with lights and sound signal equipment) should be available for the transfer of personnel. Consideration should be given to having these life vests regularly tested and certified by a competent shore authority.

Life-saving equipment should be on hand, including lifebuoys with lights, heaving lines and boathooks.

The ship should carry out a 'man overboard' rescue drill in the context of a ship-to-ship transfer operation if personnel transfers are likely to be carried out.

To be continued.....

(Article extracted from The Standard Club's publication – Standard Safety)