

# M2211

*Posted on 28.02.2024 by Adam Parnell*



**Categories:** [General Maritime](#), [Ports and Harbours](#)

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**Report Title** Open hatches at sea

## **Initial Report**

CHIRP received a report from a vessel at sea. They passed a handy-sized bulk carrier and observed a light within one of the cargo cranes, with two of its six hatches open. At the time, the observed vessel was proceeding at 7 knots in a busy shipping area.

The vessel's AIS gave the vessel's port of destination nearby. While observing the action of the handy-size bulk carrier, the reporter noted that the vessel had changed course to seek shelter in the lee of a nearby island. It was nighttime, and the weather conditions were Beaufort 3, with a significant swell of 1.0 m and a chance of precipitation.

## Comment

It is crucial to underscore the high-risk nature of certain maritime operations. Opening hatch lids and operating cranes in a seaway present significant dangers and should be strongly discouraged. Additionally, working at night while the vessel is underway is unnecessary and should be avoided.

The decision to seek shelter in the lee of an island, as reported, indicates that the vessel may have taken this action due to an emergency.

Operating cranes and fully opening cargo hatch lids at sea can subject crane components, such as heel pins, slewing bearings, and sheaves and wires, to additional forces. Even under low swell conditions, the potential for synchronised motion with the sea and swell can lead to uncontrollable swinging movements of the grab, pose a severe threat, and risk damage to the hold, crane, and associated wires.

Cargo hatch lids are designed for operation in port or at sheltered anchorages. Attempting to open them at sea can result in substantial damage to the hydraulic rams controlling the hatch covers and potential misalignment issues.

Regarding navigation, the vessel must adhere to Collision Regulations while underway. Taking appropriate action to avoid collisions, such as altering course, can impact the dynamic forces acting on the vessel's hull, cargo, cranes, and hatch lids. Ensuring strict compliance with safety guidelines and regulations is essential for mitigating risks and ensuring the crew's well-being and the vessel's integrity.

## Key Issues

**Situational Awareness-** The consequences of carrying out operations at sea must be understood. This is a last resort and requires managers' input to mitigate the risks.

**Alerting-** If cargo is shifting, affecting the ship's stability, then help is required from the nearest coastguard station, and a port of refuge must be sought. Management must be informed.



