



# SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



## NZ\$110k Fine for Stevedoring Company

Tauranga-based stevedoring firm C3 has been ordered by the Wellington District Court to pay a fine of NZ\$90,000 and costs of NZ\$20,000 for safety failings, following an incident at CentrePort Wellington in 2018.

According to a February 4 Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) statement, a log-lifting excavator was being moved between two cargo holds when it fell from its lifting arrangement attached to the ship's crane, hit the side of the vessel and fell into the water.

Investigators identified several key factors potentially contributing to the incident, including a failure to adequately train staff conducting the operation and failure to maintain current certification of the lifting lugs affixed to the relevant excavator.

Commented MNZ central compliance manager Blair Simmons: "While no single factor can be identified as the cause of the incident, there were clearly several serious health and safety failings that needed to be urgently addressed."

Two years ago, C3 received a NZ\$240,000 fine for an incident at Northport in 2017, whereby a 15-tonne excavator had been dropped from a ship's crane.

In a July 10, 2020 statement on that incident, MNZ northern regional compliance manager Neil Rowarth stated that circumstances were "seconds away from five workers almost certainly being killed."

"The five workers had been in the drop zone moments before the excavator fell from the crane," he said.

"The incident happened because C3 did not adequately train some of its stevedores for working around cranes. They did not clear the drop zone below the crane and allowed the excavator to be loaded incorrectly onto the crane."

Noting that such incidents are "potentially disastrous", Mr Simmons said it was his agency's hope that the fines and learnings from both incidents would help drive safety improvements for those involved in working with heavy machinery onboard vessels.

MNZ has stated it wants companies to prioritise safety to look after their people and avoid the negative consequences, such as ending up in court.

March 2022

