

KISH P & I LOSS PREVENTION CIRCULAR KPI-LP-131-2013
(A Pilot Ladder Accident & Lessons Learnt)

► **Pilot ladder gives way:**

A pilot was about to disembark from a small cargo vessel in benign weather conditions, with a good lee, and the pilot launch alongside and under control. The bottom rung of the pilot ladder was slightly above, and clear of, the deck of the launch. The pilot inspected the ladder as best he could from the main deck to ensure it was properly rigged and secured and free of any obvious defects. All appeared correct.

As soon as the pilot committed his full weight to the ladder, the ropes on each side of the ladder parted simultaneously at the point where they went over the rounded fishplate at the sheer-strake (see photos). The pilot fell two metres to the deck of the pilot launch, bruising and spraining his right foot and ankle which took the impact of the fall. His injuries could have been much worse had the freeboard of the vessel been greater.

The root cause of the accident was the failure of the pilot ladder due to inadequate maintenance and inspection.

Accidents due to inadequate pilot ladders or their installation, totally preventable, happen with alarming frequency. There really is no excuse for unsafe pilot ladders on board ships.

