

Lifting integrity: four documents, one lesson, ten weeks

Between June and August 2026, four documents under three letterheads described the same family of lifting failure. Three are individual alerts. The fourth is a regulator counting five years of them. Read side by side, they say one thing: our inspections were not looking where the failures live.



WHAT HAPPENED

Safety Alert 517 (BSEE), 6 June 2026.

Poorly maintained crane components failed during personnel transfers; multiple people injured. The gear let go with people on the hook path.

Safety Alert 520 (BSEE), 1 July 2026.

Anti two block systems and wire rope terminations: inspect them or the crane protects nobody. The protective system itself was the weak link.

Safety Alert 522 (MMA), 12 August 2026.

Two sheave pin bearing failures. The inspection regimes in place never required removing the pins, so the failing surfaces had never been seen.

IMCA Safety Flash 15/26, 20 August 2026.

Carried NOPSEMA's safety bulletin on lifting operations dangerous occurrences and injuries to the offshore industry. Not one event but a regulator's review of five years of them, which is why it is the document that tests whether the other three are a coincidence.

THE PATTERN THEY MAKE TOGETHER

- **The inspection could not see the failure.** Pins that were never pulled. Protective systems that were themselves never examined. Maintenance regimes that satisfied the paperwork and missed the component. Ask of every lifting inspection: could this method have found the failure mode it exists for?
- **OEM instructions are carried as advice, not as requirement.** NOPSEMA names underweighted OEM instructions among its recurring themes across five years of notifications. The manufacturer's inspection criteria describe the item in your hand; a generic regime does not.
- **People were in the line of fire when the gear let go.** Injuries in this family cluster around personnel transfers and drop zones, where a component failure becomes a human consequence immediately.

Why the fourth document changes the weight of the other three: NOPSEMA reviewed five years of offshore lifting notifications and named the same recurring themes we had just read one at a time. Control of work applied generically, changes to risk not recognised, OEM instructions underweighted, personnel in the line of fire and drop zones, gaps in training and competence. Three alerts in ten weeks can be a run of bad luck. A regulator on the other side of the planet, counting a different ocean over five years, finding the same list, is not luck. That is what turns four documents into one finding.

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS

- **Walk your lifting gear register against OEM inspection requirements** and ask what each inspection can actually see. Where a failure mode is only visible on removal, schedule the removal.
- **Interrogate PASS results.** A passed inspection that could not have detected the failure mode is not assurance, it is paperwork. Note the method beside the result.
- **Re walk drop zones and line of fire** on every crane path and personnel transfer arrangement, and keep the discipline that nobody stands under a load path, however routine the lift.
- **Treat personnel transfers as the highest consequence lift on board.** Alert 517 is people on the hook path under poorly maintained components. Before anyone rides the crane, the maintenance state of every component in that load path is confirmed, not assumed.
- **Brief the family, not the instance.** Four documents, one lesson. A toolbox talk that connects them lands harder than four filed PDFs that never met each other.

SOURCES

[BSEE Safety Alert No. 517 \(6 June 2026\)](#); [BSEE Safety Alert No. 520 \(1 July 2026\)](#); [MMA Safety Alert No. 522 \(12 August 2026\)](#); [IMCA Safety Flash 15/26 \(20 August 2026\)](#), carrying NOPSEMA Safety Bulletin, Lifting operations dangerous occurrences and injuries (May 2026). This alert is a synthesis in our own words. Every source above links to the issuing body's own page; the primary documents remain authoritative and should be read there. Rev 1, 4 September 2026: alerts 517 and 520 restated as BSEE issuances; both predate the 10 July 2026 reunification of BSEE into the Marine Minerals Administration (MMA), which issued 522. Rev 0 labelled all three MMA. Rev 1 also rewrites action 4 to an alert 517 finding and drops a certificate gloss whose only source was the withdrawn diving-bell item.



PEAR MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

This alert exists because these four documents were filed in one register and read side by side. That is the whole method, and it is available to any safety team willing to keep its records where they can meet.