



# Ship to ship in the future

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By Andrew Berkman

Ship-to-ship transfers has become an issue for QFRS following the leaking of a toxic chemical from containers on board the Kota Pahlawan.

The transfer of five QFRS personnel from a pilot ship to the deck of the container ship off Mooloolaba was a first for the service, leading to obvious questions about future exercises.

“When we look back on this incident I think we’ll need to sit down and look at policy and procedure and protocols regarding inspection at sea,” Incident Controller and South-East Command AD Col Hartley said.

“The safety ramifications of today are that we may need to do more inspections of volatile substances before they are accepted into ports such as Brisbane, Cairns or Townsville.

“However our people have not been trained to do ship to ship as yet.

“The nature of getting from one level to the next with heavy scientific equipment and breathing apparatus was an issue in this case.”

Another issue likely to be discussed following the June 22-23 incidents is packaging of hazardous materials.

Maritime Safety Queensland enforces tough regulations on local companies moving hazardous materials but the same regulations are not as stringently enforced in all countries.

“In this case the substance appears to have been packed correctly,” Col said.

“The product is unstable, it goes into decomposition, breaks down and omits an odour if not used in a short amount of time.

“We were told this quantity was three-months-old, which is too long, causing it to go through a chemical reaction.”