

WMAR TV2

The Rodeo came to Baltimore on Tuesday. More than 200 Longshoremen learned to operate multi-ton pieces of farm and construction equipment during training exercises.

The event was held at the Port of Baltimore. It was all part of the 13th Annual Ro/Ro Rodeo. Ro/Ro is any cargo that can be driven on and off a ship.

The Port of Baltimore is ranked as the number one port in the U.S. for the amount of cargo it handles.

"It's very beneficial. We want to minimize damage as well as teach the men and women how to operate in a safe manner," said Dominic Scurti with the Maryland Port Administration.

This is the 13th year for the two day event.

WJZ TV

May 11, 2010 Port Workers Train To Move Heavy Equipment
Reporting Suzanne Collins BALTIMORE (WJZ) — Baltimore is the number one port in the U.S. when it comes to shipping cars and heavy equipment.

Suzanne Collins explains why, and what extra steps are being taken to be sure that business stays right here.

It's called the Ro-Ro business. It rolls onto ships for transport and rolls off. It's how cars and heavy equipment are moved around the world in massive ships.

"There are many decks on it. Think of them almost as a floating parking lot, maybe 13 decks, and these longshoremen and women drive these units on board in rather tight spaces," said Dominic Scurti, Port of Baltimore 11.

Longshoremen trained Tuesday to drive various heavy equipment on and off the ship, like construction equipment, tractors and even combines. It takes special skills to operate all those different machines.

The operators don't wear watches, jewelry, or even have zippers on clothing. The reason is they want to deliver the equipment without a single scratch, especially when it comes to moving expensive cars onto ships.

"Without scratches, fingerprints or anything. Honestly, if you're purchasing something that's going to cost that much money, then why not?" said longshoreman Kimberly Kokosinski.

With heavy equipment is worth \$30,000 to a \$1 million apiece, companies like John Deere and Caterpillar were on hand teaching the longshoreman how to drive safely to cut damage losses.

It's better to learn about smooth driving during the training rodeo than when parking heavy equipment one to two inches apart on a ship.

"Like the manlift, if you're not sure what you're doing on a manlift and you stop it all of a sudden by taking your foot off, it can jerk you and make you fall off the machine and you end up breaking your neck or anything," said Jacoby Wheeler, longshoreman.

This training, the reputation for damage-free handling and a closer proximity to the Midwest have made Baltimore the top port Ro-Ro business.

The Ro-Ro ships are so large they can carry up to 8,000 cars at a time across the ocean. (© MMX, CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.)

Dockside 'Rodeo' at Dundalk Marine Terminal

Members of the International Longshoreman's Association (ILA) Local 333 participated in driver training exercises at the Port of Baltimore's Ro/Ro (Roll on/Roll off) Rodeo at the Dundalk Marine Terminal on May 11 and 12. Over 200 dockworkers received instruction from farm and construction equipment manufacturers and car makers from throughout the country on how to load heavy machinery onto ships. In 2009, the Port of Baltimore handled 514,000 tons of Ro/Ro equipment.