

# Safety #3 On Deck

HSWA FOR SMALL  
FISHING VESSELS

## Why worry about safety on deck?

Most accidents on deck result in shoulder injury as a person falls and sprains or tears their shoulder, leaving a person incapacitated for days, sometimes weeks. About 80 shoulder injuries a year involve the shoulder. But the worst outcome of a slip is a man over board accident.

There are many potentially unsafe situations on deck.

## What HSWA says about safety

Risks on the deck must be eliminated or minimised. Crew (both those on wages and those who are self-employed) must take reasonable steps to ensure that nothing they do at work harms themselves or any other person. You are responsible for taking sensible safety precautions – like keeping the deck clean and tidy and letting the skipper know if the deck is unsafe to work on.

Operators and skippers must make sure the boat is safe (so far as is reasonably practicable). Operators must involve workers in managing risks on the boat. This is a good opportunity for you to raise any concerns you have about safety on deck.

## The main reasons for slips and falls

- › Slippery deck
- › Improper use of catwalks
- › Missing grating, railings and stanchions
- › Missing warning signs
- › Improper personal protective equipment (PPEs) especially safety shoes and safety harness
- › Lack of situational awareness
- › Lack of awareness of the job
- › Absence of safe job analysis

**Safe crews fish more**

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## Tips for safe decks

1. Clean up slippery decks.
2. Mop up spills as soon as possible.
3. Fish slime, etc should be flushed from the deck frequently.
4. Secure loose gear up of the deck. No ropes or lines should be left strewn on deck.
5. Keep decks as clear as possible at all times.
6. Keep equipment, ropes, fish bins or ladders tied or stowed up off the deck.
7. Heavy objects (blocks) used aloft should not be left loose or swinging.
8. Rope off any breaks in the deck. Make the rope visible by tying rags to it and tie it at a height so people see it and it doesn't turn into a trip wire.
9. Water-hoses should be coiled and hung on brackets.
10. Hatch covers should be neatly piled out of passageways when the hatches are open.
11. Hatches should not be left partially opened or concealed with a tarpaulin. Don't leave a hatch open for longer than you have to.
12. Supplies and fish boxes carried on deck should be covered, if necessary, and securely lashed.
13. Make sure scuppers are not blocked by equipment, tools, or debris. Blocked scuppers can pose a serious hazard, especially in rough seas.
14. Stow items at main deck level or below. Do not stow heavy items high on vessel as it will affect the Centre of Gravity making the vessel unstable.
15. Don't store gear in passageways. Keep walkways, passages and waists clear.
16. Store sharp objects in galley or on deck (knives, gaffs, etc) safely.
17. Clean rags should be kept in a box or locker. Dirty rags should be disposed of in metal containers with lids.
18. Keep quarters neat and orderly. Stow personal gear properly.
19. Fire extinguishers should be properly located and never used as coat racks.
20. Keep a bolt or wire cutter (or knife) on board to cut lines or gear that is tangled or needs to be cut away quickly.
21. Don't hang unattended towels or wash cloths above the stove to dry.
22. Degrease filters and stove ventilation trunking regularly.
23. Clearly labelled products and equipment simply reduce the risk of mistakes such as mixing incorrect chemicals, putting the wrong oil in, turning the wrong switch off.

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## Report any accident

A master or skipper must report any accident, incident or serious harm injury under section 31 of the Maritime Transport Act 1994. This applies to all New Zealand vessels. You must report an accident “as soon as practicable”. This means as soon as you are able to do so after you have secured the safety of people, your boat and the environment, and when you have communication available.

Sometimes people are concerned that reporting an accident or incident to MNZ will result in prosecution. In exceptional circumstances, MNZ may use the information provided to support an investigation, however this is very rarely the case.

SAFETY =  + HSWA

For tips on safe fishing go to  
[www.maritimenz.govt.nz/safety-on-deck](http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/safety-on-deck)

## Safe crews fish more