Southern Ports

Working on, Over or Near Water Procedure

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Revision Number	Description	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review Date	Issue Date
Rev 1	Add in abbreviations and definitions.	T. Willoughby G. Jackson	G. Solly	29/10/2014	
Rev 2	Add wording into section 3.3	T. Willoughby G. Jackson	G. Solly	29/10/2014	
Rev 3	Add in mechanical and electrical ship loader inspection	T. Willoughby G. Jackson	G. Solly	29/10/2014	
Rev 4	Add in section 6; marine orders	T. Willoughby G. Jackson	G. Solly	29/10/2014	
Rev 5	Change paragraph, Section 4.3.6	Mick Cole	G. Solly	03/12/2014	
01	Reviewed all procedure	G. Jackson	G. Solly	02/12/2015	
02	New SPA format, minor amendments and addition of Important summary Points	Ross Graham	Mick Cole	21/05/2018	15/06/2018
03	Review Revised to expand on RA, WAH requirements	Allan Sharpe, Shae Turrell, Bryce Cooper	David Graham	25/01/2021	09/02/2021
04	There have been no material changes to the process, Key amendments provided clarity to some terms and how to carry out steps in process	Group HSE Manager	Interim – Chief Operating Officer	29/08/2025	29/08/2025

AUDIT

This Procedure shall be reviewed or revised:

- where a Risk Assessment or Audit identifies a need to review
- when legislative changes impact this Procedure
- following a significant incident involving this Procedure
- at least every three years.

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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide information and guidance as to the minimum safe standards for work being undertaken on, over or near water.

2 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all activities relating to Working On, Over or Near Water under the control of Southern Ports inside the port land and marine boundaries.

For the purpose of this procedure, “on, near and over” water is defined as working in close proximity to water where there is a reasonable likelihood of falling into the water. This is best described as working 1.5m or less from an unguarded edge, above the water or on-board any floating plant unless a person is within an enclosed cabin or accommodation area.

This procedure does not cover the following activities:

- Tug Operation
- Hydrographic survey work
- Diving operations

3 GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 Health, Safety and Environmental Hazards

When planning work on, over or near water, consider if there are risks such as:

- People falling from structures or scaffolds into water
- People being unaware of work overhead
- Inadequate lighting and poor visibility
- Electrical equipment encountering water
- Meteorological conditions – including wind, rain, current, swell, lightning
- Conducting rescues or environmental responses

3.2 Minimum Equipment and Tools

When working within 1.5m of the water’s edge the following minimum controls are required:

- A Personal Floatation Device (PFD) is to be worn.
- A safety helmet and a chin strap must be worn at all times.
- A minimum of two personnel is required.
- A life-ring fitted with 25m of rope is to be available on all Berths.
- A VHF radio (unless verbal contact and visual contact can be maintained).
- A portable rope ladder if there is no fixed ladder within 25m of the work location (onshore),
- Appropriate fixed or portable lighting to be used when working at night.

3.3 Personal Floatation Device (PFD)

A certificate of inspection shall be required to verify the PFDs performance and the organisation’s testing procedures. The certificate shall state the PFDs serial number, if it is compliant and to what standard / procedure it was tested to. A certificate shall not be issued nor the PFD be made available if it is non-compliant.

All PFDs shall be uniquely identified and referenced against the manufacturer's serial number recorded on a register.

Every user of a PFD has a responsibility of checking for any visible faults, and that the PFD has been serviced within 12 months before donning. Where doubt exists, the jacket shall be placed out of service utilising an "Out of Service" tag to identify its fault. The PFD will then be sent for inspection, repair and/or re-certification.

4 WORKING ON, OVER OR NEAR WATER

4.1 Working on water

Activities considered to be 'work on water' include, but are not limited to:

- Vessel transfers
- Operating watercraft

The master of the vessel shall ensure the applicable PFD is available for persons boarding their vessel (in open or enclosed waters).

All persons accessing berths or jetty structures with unguarded edges and those onboard a vessel as mentioned above shall wear a PFD.

When onboard a berthed vessel, personnel may be allowed to remove their PFD during work, as long as adequate edge protection is available during the total time of their task.

The *Diving and Waterside Activities Permit,* authorised by the Harbour Master/Delegate will be required for the following activities:

- Diving
- Surveys
- Nav aid inspections
- Under berth inspection or works involving a vessel.
- Maintenance activities on the berth face including fenders

4.2 Working over water

JHA or SWMS is the workplace risk assessment tool that shall be conducted for work over water. When undertaking the risk assessment, consideration should be given to the use of a harness and or combination of a harness and Personal Flotation Device (PFD). The use of a combination harness and PFD over water should be risk based and dependent on the task being undertaken and the work platform being used.

When working at height or in a MEWP or workbox over water personnel should ensure that:

- Harnesses used for working over water should have a built in PFD, the alternative is to wear a separate harness and PFD. A PFD shall be worn at all times unless determined impractical for the task.
  - The decision to not wear a PFD shall be documented in a risk assessment which must be authorised by the supervisor responsible for the work.
- The harness/lanyard shall be attached to anchor point when working over water within the basket of a MEWP or workbox unless determined impractical for the task.
  - The decision to not attach the lanyard to the anchor point when operating a MEWP or workbox over water shall be documented in a risk assessment which must be authorised by the supervisor responsible for the work. In this case the lanyard must be reattached before moving over land or any hard surface.
- A rescue flotation device (e.g. life ring) must be readily available when working over water in addition to PFDs. Ensure workers know where rescue ladders are located on the wharf edge.

- A Standby Person is present at all times to guide the operator, monitor work, use the life ring for rescue and initiate the emergency response plan if required.
- A safety helmet and a chin strap must be worn at all times when working at heights.

Where personnel are required to work suspended over the water a risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure all hazards associated with the work are assessed and controlled to As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) using the hierarchy of control.

The following controls shall be considered:

- Where possible, the risk of falling into the water will be eliminated by conducting the work on land and then installed in position over water.
- Where work must proceed, access by means of hard barricading or scaffold will be the preferred option.
- Work from a certified workbox suspended from a crane may be considered if scaffolding is not practicable or the task is of short duration.
- Work positioning system that enables a person to work supported in a harness under tension in such a way that a fall is prevented (restraint technique). An authorised Working at Height Permit shall be obtained prior to any working at height being undertaken.

Regardless of the method of suspension, the following requirements MUST be met:

- All work conducted requiring the use of a certified workbox, will be conducted under the permit to work system.
- Drops zones shall be delineated using signage and barricading where practicable.
- Where personnel are erecting or dismantling scaffolding suitable Fall Injury Prevention Systems (FIPS) shall be used.
- Where personnel are working inside a certified workbox or MEWP over water a PFD will be worn.
- A safety helmet and a chin strap must be worn at all times when working at heights.
- A suitable method of communication such as a radio is to be used between the personnel in the workbox and the crane operator.
- Only competent personnel required to complete the task shall be in the workbox or MEWP.
- Environmental conditions must be considered prior to commencement of work. The work shall be suspended if the environmental conditions including but not limited to excessive wave and swell events, lightning activity, precipitation or high wind speed are experienced or predicted.
- A life ring (rescue buoy) will be available not more than 25m from the work location.
- A rescue plan shall be formulated and communicated to all required team members prior to the work commencing.

4.3 Working near water

Where personnel are required to work near water, typically the unguarded edge of the berths, all activities will have the risks associated with the task managed using the hierarchy of control.

All personnel accessing within 1.5 metres of an unguarded water's edge, shall wear a PFD.

Common work activities for all personnel within 1.5 metres include, but are not limited to:

- Mooring operations
- Boarding before gangway nets are secure
- Checking service connections

- Reading drafts
- Conducting safe act observations and investigations
- Emergency response; and
- Any maintenance tasks either mechanical, electrical or ship loader inspections.

The following controls should be considered:

- Eliminate the risk by conducting the task away from an unguarded edge (greater than 1.5m).
- Edge protection such as scaffold or hard barricading to be installed where work proceeds over a longer duration.
- Personal protective equipment such as a work positioning system that enables a person to work supported in a harness in tension in such a way that a fall is prevented (restraint technique) and a PFD will be used to mitigate the hazards associated working within 1.5 metres of an unguarded edge near water.

The following minimum requirements shall be met when working near water:

- A risk assessment is conducted and documented for the work.
- A suitable method of communication (verbal / radio) between personnel working near the edge and the contact persons working away from the edge for example, a sentry, berthing or cargo supervisor, or Superintendent.
- A minimum of 2 personnel is required when working near the water edge.
- Environmental conditions must be considered prior to the commencement of work. Where practicable, work near the edge will not be conducted in windy, wet or hazardous conditions.
- A life ring (rescue buoy) will be available not more than 25m from the work location.

5 EMERGENCY

5.1 Raising the alarm

In the event of person(s) falling into the water, the following actions should be taken:

- Raise the alarm per port emergency response procedures.
- State the following:
  - Location of incident
  - What has happened – person in water
  - Number of persons are involved
  - What action you are taking
  - Your Name

5.2 Response Resources

If a person(s) in the water, has fallen from shore or a vessel, then the following actions should be taken:

- The person observing the person(s) in the water will maintain strict visual contact and point at the person(s) in the water so as not to lose sight of them.
- Raise the alarm verbally or by radio.
- Throw a tethered life ring.
- If the person/s in the water can respond to commands, advise them of the nearest location where a fixed or portable exit ladder is located, and
- Initiate the rescue plan, if safe to do so.

6 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
ALARP	As Low as Reasonably Practicable; in regard to implementing controls to reduce the level of risk.
Barricade	A temporary fence consisting of either rigid or soft vertical and horizontal members to prevent or restrict personnel from entering an area where they could be exposed to a hazard(s).
MEWP	Mobile Elevated Work Platform
PFD	Personal Floatation Device
Restraint Technique	Method of working supported in a harness under tension in such a way that a fall is prevented.
Risk Assessment (RA)	May include but not limited to a: • Operational Risk Assessment, • Permit to Work (PTW) • Safe Work Instruction (SWI), • Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), • Stop & Think, or • a combination of the above.
Safe System of Work (SSOW)	Comprises of four elements (Planning, Equipment, Change and People) which are interrelated or integrated and that are dependent upon each other to ensure that a safe system is maintained at the workplace.
Shall and Should	The word “shall” is to be understood as mandatory and the word “should” as recommended but non-mandatory.
Sign	An inscribed board, plaque or other delineated space on which a combination of legible writing and symbols is used to convey a message.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Regional Managers	*Regional Managers* at each port are responsible for: • Implementing the requirements of this Procedure. • Ensuring that a Risk Assessment process is undertaken. • Providing adequate planning, training, safe equipment
Leaders	Leaders (Managers, Superintendents and Supervisors) are responsible for: • Facilitating and verifying that a documented Safe System of Work is established. • Ensuring that Permits and Authorities to Work have been issued where required. • Ensuring there is safe access and egress, authorised serviceable plant and equipment, and protection from hazardous substances. • Verifying that employees are competent to perform their duties by evidence of training and assessment. • Regularly monitoring and assessing the workplace for compliance.

Workers	Workers (*Employees, Contractors and Consultants* – but not Visitors) are responsible for: • Engaging with the Leaders in the process of establishing a documented Safe System of Work. • Acting responsibly in performing their work in accordance with this Procedure and documented Safe Systems of Work. • Taking reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and others, and to protect the environment. • Reporting all injuries, incidents and hazards to their Leader. • Only conducting tasks that they have been verified and authorised to do so through training and or assessment.
Health and Safety Representatives	*Health and Safety Representatives* are responsible for: • Attending Health and Safety Committee meetings. • Conducting workplace inspections. • Issuing Provisional Improvement Notices as required. • Directing workers to stop unsafe work.

8 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

The applying legislation and documents include, but are not limited to the following:

External

- Work Health and Safety Act 2020
- Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022
- AS1512 Personal Floatation Devices Type 1
- AS2261 Rescue Buoys
- AS2259 General requirements for Buoyancy Aids
- AS1801 Industrial Safety Helmets

Internal

- Authority to Work and Permits Procedure D23/6142
- Work at Height Procedure D20/7758
- Scaffolding Procedure D17/3943
- Barricading, Guarding and Signage Procedure D18/2169
- Lighting Procedure D17/11710