Shipboard Ladder Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Ladders play a crucial role in ensuring safe access and movement on ships. However, their improper use can lead to severe injuries and even fatalities. It is essential to understand the risks associated with shipboard ladder safety and adopt preventive measures to protect oneself.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

DANGERS OF SHIPBOARD LADDERS

a. Instability: Shipboard ladders can be affected by ship movement, vibrations, and slippery conditions, making them less stable compared to land-based ladders.

b. Height and Access: Ships often have multiple levels, requiring the use of ladders to access different areas. Working at heights increases the risk of falls and serious injuries.

c. Space Constraints: Shipboard ladders are often installed in tight spaces, making it challenging to maintain a safe distance from the ladder, resulting in potential entrapment hazards.

d. Environmental Factors: Harsh weather conditions, such as high winds, rain, or rough seas, can further compromise ladder safety.

SPECIFIC DANGERS OF SHIPBOARD LADDERS

Falls: Falling from heights is one of the most significant risks when working with shipboard ladders. Ladders may be located on upper decks or in confined spaces, increasing the potential fall distance. Falls can lead to severe injuries.

Instability: Ship movement, vibrations, and adverse weather

conditions can compromise the stability of shipboard ladders. The motion of the vessel can make ladders sway or shift unexpectedly, increasing the risk of falls.

Space Constraints: Shipboard ladders are often installed in narrow passageways or confined spaces, where there may be limited room for movement. This limited space can make it challenging to maintain a safe distance from the ladder, increasing the risk of entrapment, crush injuries, or being struck by moving objects.

Slippery Conditions: The marine environment can be prone to slippery surfaces due to water, oil, or other substances. These slippery conditions create a significant risk of slips, trips, and falls.

Weather Hazards: Strong winds can make ladders unstable, rain can create slippery surfaces, and rough seas can make accessing ladders hazardous.

Lack of Awareness and Training: Insufficient knowledge of ladder safety procedures and best practices can increase the risk of accidents. Crew members who are unfamiliar with proper ladder usage, climbing techniques, or safety protocols may unknowingly put themselves and others at risk.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BEST SHIPBOARD LADDER SAFETY MEASURES

Proper Training: Receive thorough training on ladder usage, including the specific safety protocols and best practices for shipboard environments.

Inspections: Regularly inspect ladders for any signs of damage, such as loose rungs, bent rails, or worn-out non-slip surfaces. Report any defects immediately to the responsible personnel and avoid using faulty ladders.

Secure Footing: Ensure that the ladder’s base is stable and positioned on a level surface before use.

Three Points of Contact: Maintain a firm grip on the ladder with at least three points of contact (e.g., two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand) always while ascending or descending.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Wear appropriate PPE, such as non-slip shoes and a safety harness, when working at heights or in adverse weather conditions.

Clear Workspace: Keep the ladder and its surrounding area clear of any obstructions, debris, or slippery substances that may compromise stability or cause slips and falls.

Follow Procedures: Adhere to established safety procedures and regulations.

Communication: Communicate with fellow crew members about your presence on the ladder, especially when passing through narrow passageways or obstructed areas.

Adverse Conditions: During inclement weather or rough seas, exercise extreme caution when using ladders. Assess the situation, consider alternative access points, and determine the best course of action.

Reporting Hazards: Report any unsafe ladder conditions, hazards, or near misses to the appropriate authority.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES TO PREVENT INJURIES WHEN WORKING WITH SHIPBOARD LADDER:

1. **Adequate Lighting:** Ensure that the ladder and its surrounding area are well-lit to enhance visibility.
2. **One Person at a Time:** Avoid overcrowding on ladders by allowing only one person to ascend or descend.
3. **Use Handholds and Railing:** Take advantage of handholds, ladder rungs, or available handrails to maintain a secure grip and improve stability while using the ladder.
4. **Avoid Carrying Heavy or Bulky Items:** When using a ladder, it is best to keep your hands free and avoid carrying heavy tools or equipment that may compromise your balance or grip.
5. **Use the Correct Ladder for the Task:** Ensure that you are

using the appropriate ladder type for the specific task.

6. **Maintain Clear Exit Paths:** Before using a ladder, ensure that the area around the top and bottom of the ladder is clear of obstacles or obstructions that may hinder a quick and safe exit.
7. **Never Lean Out or Overreach:** Maintain your center of gravity within the ladder's side rails.
8. **Take Breaks and Rest Periods:** When working for extended periods on ladders, schedule regular breaks to prevent fatigue and reduce the risk of accidents due to decreased focus or physical exhaustion.
9. **Be Mindful of Loose Clothing and Personal Items:** Avoid wearing loose clothing, jewelry, or carrying loose personal items while using a ladder.
10. **Regular Maintenance and Inspection:** Conduct regular maintenance and inspections of ladders to identify and address any potential hazards or defects.
11. **Continuous Awareness and Focus:** Stay attentive on the task at hand when using ladders. Avoid distractions, such as using electronic devices or engaging in conversations, that distract you.
12. **Emergency Preparedness:** Familiarize yourself with emergency procedures specific to ladder-related incidents.

FINAL WORD

Shipboard ladder safety is a collective responsibility. Stay vigilant, follow established procedures, and continuously improving safety practices, we can safeguard ourselves, and prevent accidents.