Shipboard Ladder Safety Stats and Facts

FACTS

Maritime workers perform their duties in an unusually dangerous environment, with constantly moving decks and equipment, wet stairs and walkways, and severe weather conditions all affecting the safety of the crew. Maritime slip and fall injuries are common and, sometimes, serious enough to cause death or permanent disability.

In fact, the almost half a million people employed in the U.S. maritime industry have higher rates of injury and illness than their counterparts on land, with a fatality rate almost five times higher than the average U.S. worker.

Working conditions on a ship or ocean platform can be dangerous even with all required safety equipment in place.

Maritime injuries are commonly caused by:

1. Improperly secured lines, rigging, or anchor chains.
2. Slippery, oily, or wet decks, stairs, or platforms.
3. Poor lighting or visibility.
4. Obstacles or dangers that are unmarked or unexpected.
5. Hoses, wires, or cables that run across work areas and cause a tripping hazard.
6. Worn out or failing ladders, steps, or non-skid surfaces.
7. Ice, fish slime, hydraulic fluid, or other spills of slippery substances.
8. Lack of training in fall avoidance, including planning where to take cover and secure climbing techniques.

Falls from Heights: According to the (BLS), falls from heights consistently rank among the leading causes of fatal occupational injuries in the maritime industry.

Slip and Trip Hazards: Slippery conditions, such as wet decks, oil spills, or presence of algae, increase the risk of slips and trips on shipboard ladders. These lead to from bruises to more severe traumas.

STATS

- Falls from heights, including falls from ladders, are a leading cause of workplace injuries and fatalities globally. According to (ILO), falls from heights account for 10% to 15% of fatal occupational injuries worldwide.
- According to a study published in the International Maritime Health journal, ladder-related incidents accounted for approximately 15% to 25% of all maritime accidents and injuries.
- Of the many injuries sustained by maritime workers, 43% are slip and fall injuries. Serious falls might happen on the deck itself, off overhead platforms, from rigging, through hatches, down stairwells, or overboard. While OSHA and other regulatory agencies require fall protection in all working environments, maritime workers remain more likely to sustain a slip and fall injury than most other individuals.