



Working Near or Over Water

Explain Dangers

Working near - or over - water poses many hazards similar to working at height but also includes additional risks such as drowning, hypothermia, overturning equipment into the water and getting carried away by the current. It is extremely important to complete a thorough hazard assessment prior to commencing work.



Identify Controls

As it only takes a few centimeters of water to drown, it is very important to maintain a safe worksite while workers are present as well as when they leave for the day. In order to keep workers and the public safe, signage and barricades may be required in order to safeguard your work area.

Where a worker may be at risk of drowning, he or she is required to wear a self inflating, Personal Flotation Device (PFD), appropriate to the work environment and hazards. The PFD must meet the requirements

and standards of the Canadian General Standards Board (see Section 4.66 NL OHS Regulations).

In some cases, like when working 3 metres, or more, over water, workers are required to be protected through the use of fall protection. This might take the form of guardrails, safety nets, travel restrict systems or personal fall arrest systems. PFD's are not required when fall protection systems are being used.

Some other hazard control considerations:

- Practice good housekeeping. This can help mitigate slips, trips and falls.
- Establish a control zone to keep workers six feet back from the edge of the water. Implement additional controls when it is necessary to work closer to the water.
- Use footwear with slip resistant soles.
- Inspect the area for loose boards, concrete or anything else that might cause unstable footing.
- Flag any trip hazards and the edge of the dock with highly contrasting colours (i.e. paint or tape).

Emergency Planning

Emergency planning must be carried out prior to commencing any work near or over water. These plans must include procedures to rescue or evacuate workers, should the need to do so arise. The plans should also identify the appropriate life saving equipment (i.e. throwing line attached to a lifebuoy, rescue craft etc.) and include provisions for training both rescue team and the workers. Emergency plans should be specific to the location and nature of work. In instances where personal fall arrest systems are being used, a written working at height plan including a rescue plan, would also be required.