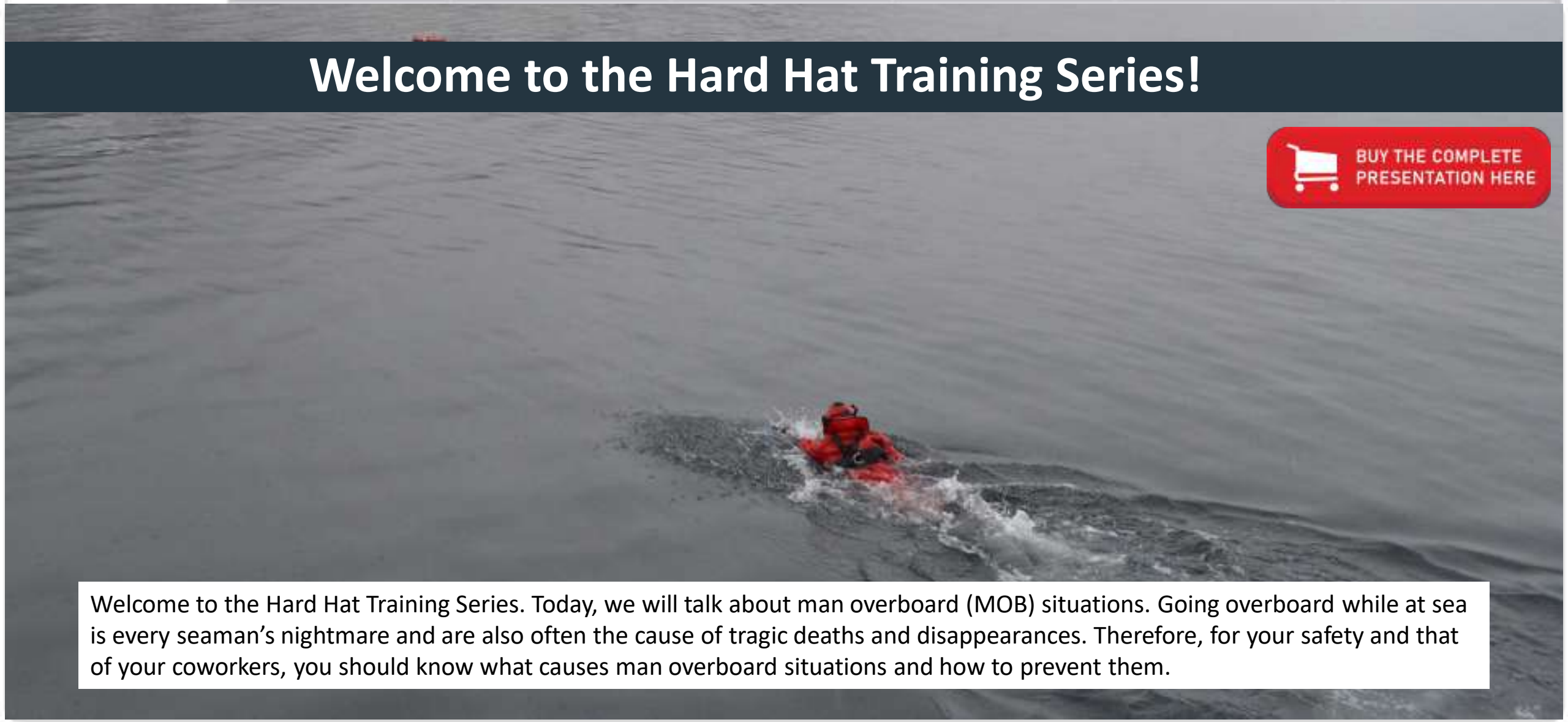
Welcome to the Hard Hat Training Series!



Welcome to the Hard Hat Training Series. Today, we will talk about man overboard (MOB) situations. Going overboard while at sea is every seaman's nightmare and are also often the cause of tragic deaths and disappearances. Therefore, for your safety and that of your coworkers, you should know what causes man overboard situations and how to prevent them.

Rescuing a man overboard can be a complex and detailed operation. If you don't quickly follow the correct procedures the chances of a successful rescue aren't good. Never take your own safety or those you work with for granted when working aboard a seafaring vessel. All too quickly, bad weather can hit, the sea can swell, or a simple accident can occur that leads to the dreaded words, "Man overboard!"

A True Story

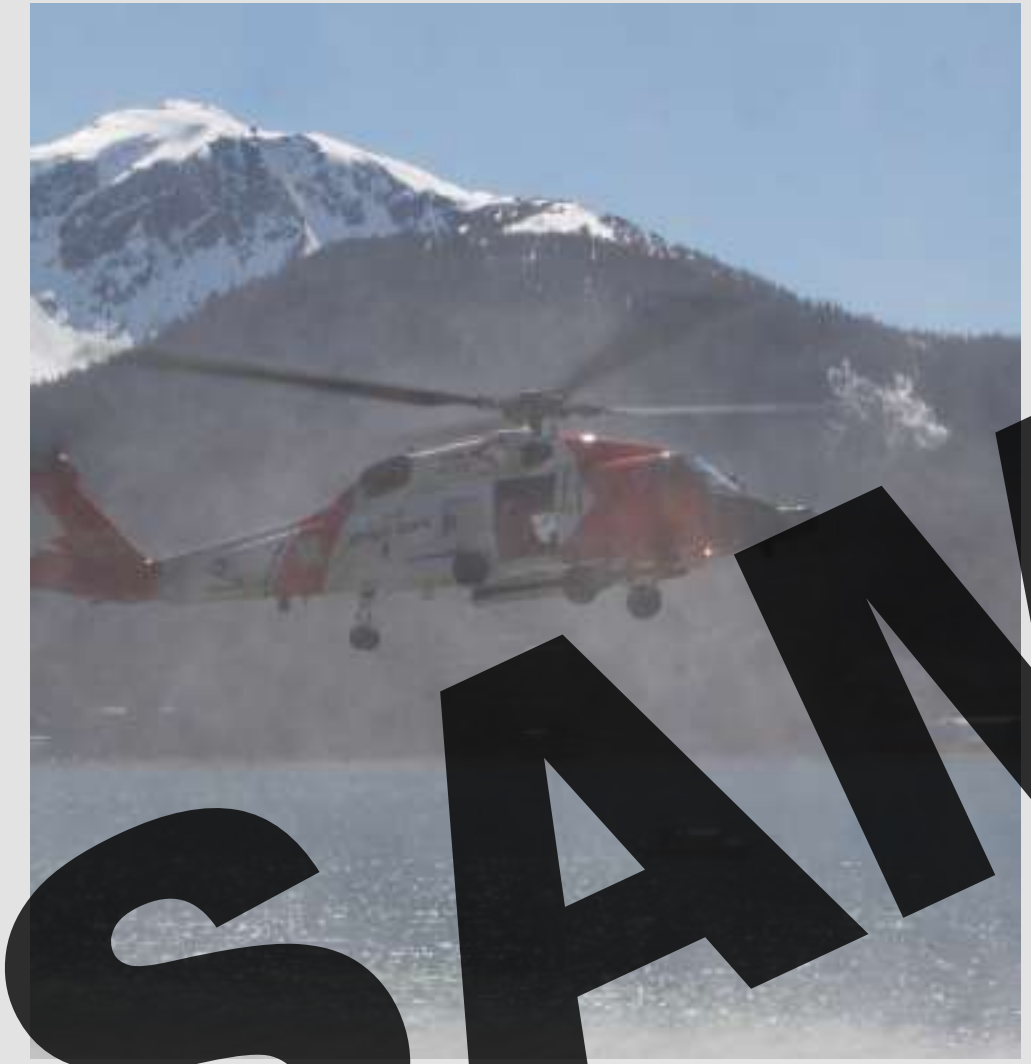
A fishing vessel was making its way back to port after several months at sea. One evening, as the vessel's chief engineer was walking across the deck one evening, he noticed a mooring rope trailing in the water from the stern of the vessel. The chief engineer informed the master, who then assigned the engineer and three crewman to retrieve the mooring line. After doing so, the men decided to hoist the vessel's five mooring lines onto a platform, so they wouldn't fall into the water again.

Two crewmen went to the top of the platform while the other two passed the mooring lines up to them. While they were working, a squall suddenly appeared. The chief engineer saw a large wave coming toward the vessel and yelled out a warning as everyone scrambled to find something to hold onto.

About 15 feet tall, the wave hit the bulkhead of the engine room and rebounded back over the stern, sweeping the chief engineer and one other crewman overboard.

Immediately after the men went overboard, the other two crewman could still see them. Unfortunately, there were no buoys available; they had all been taken to the deck workshop to be repainted. Both remaining crewmen ran to midship to retrieve two buoys, though neither of which had a line attached. They threw them out anyway, hoping the buoys would reach the men in the water, but they could no longer see them.

At this point, the master deployed a man overboard marker and broadcasted a man overboard distress signal. The coast guard responded, sending a helicopter to help search for the men. The master then performed a turn and proceeded to the last known location of the crewmen, as indicated by the MOB marker. Lookouts were positioned on the bridge wings to search for the men.



The coast guard helicopter informed the master a few hours later that they had sighted a body but had lost contact due to poor visibility. The fishing vessel and the coast guard continued their search for two days; they never found the men who had been swept overboard.

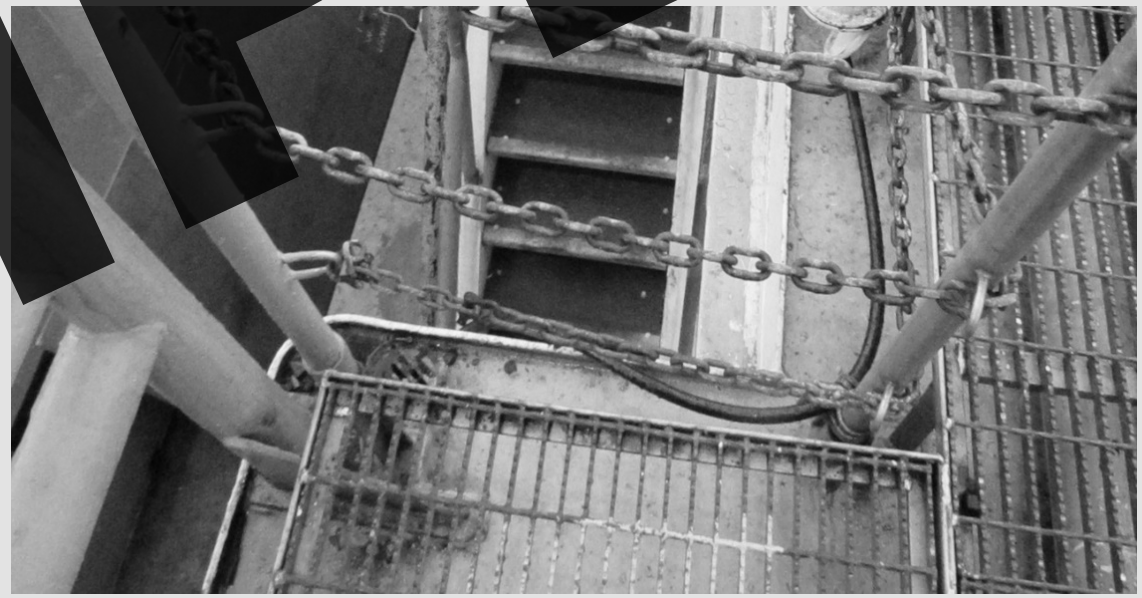
Unfortunately, this tragic scenario occurs many times each year. In fact, man overboard situations are the second-leading cause of death among commercial fishermen, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Between the years of 2000 and 2014, there were 210 fatal falls overboard in the United States alone.

Did You Know?

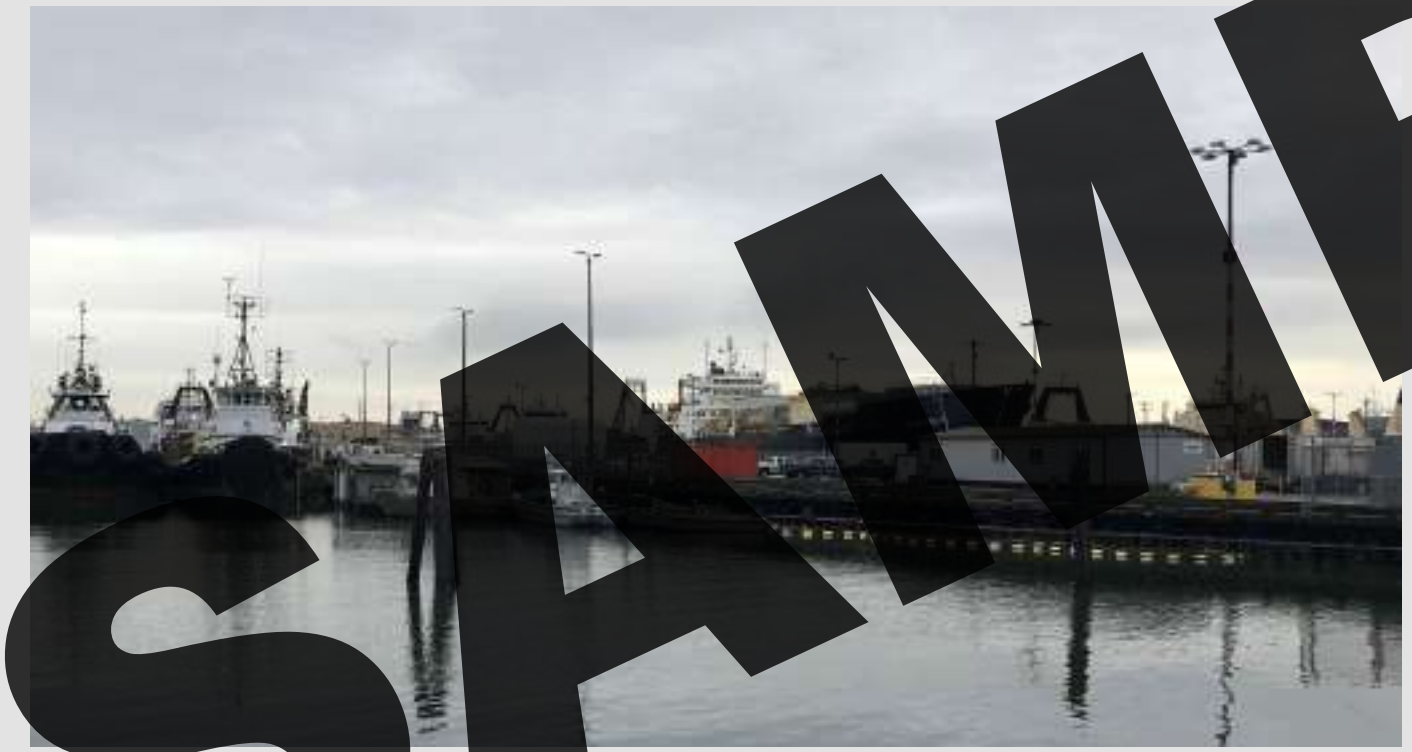
Vessel disasters are the number-one killer of commercial fishermen. Vessel disasters are when a ship sinks due to running aground, fire, or collision.

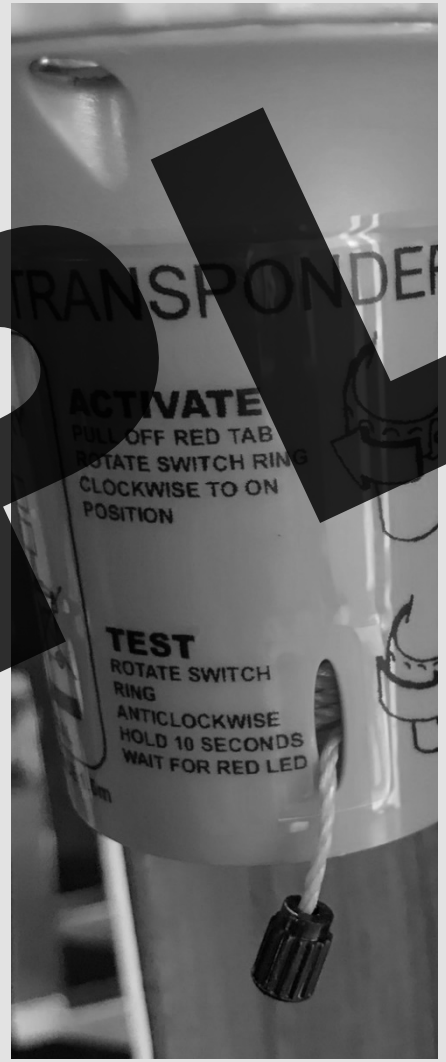
Overview

In today's training, we will teach you how to prepare for a MOB situation, going over principles such as safety analysis, training and drills, and equipment that can keep you safe. We will also teach you controls you can use to prevent a MOB and go over the basics of all protection; the importance of preventing fatigue; and walking and working surfaces.



We will then review some of the most common hazards involved in a MOB incident. Finally, we will walk you through the man overboard process and how to rescue someone in the water. By the end of this training, you will know how to prepare for, prevent, recognize, and react to a MOB situation, as well as how to perform a successful rescue.





STANDARDS

29 CFR 1926.106 – Working on or Near Water

33 CFR 149.338 – Immersion Suit Requirements

46 CFR 199.273 – Immersion Suits

46 CFR 160.064 & 160.076 – Inherently Buoyant & Inflatable PFDs

46 CFR 28.265 – Emergency Instructions

46 CFR 28.270 – Instructions, Drills, and Safety Orientation

46 CFR 28.105 – PFDs & Immersion Suits: General Requirements

46 CFR 25.25 – Life Preservers & Other Lifesaving Equipment

These are some of the main standards concerning maritime safety. Many states and provinces have additional standards. We have provided these as a guide, but it's your responsibility to know all federal, local, and company rules that apply to your job site.

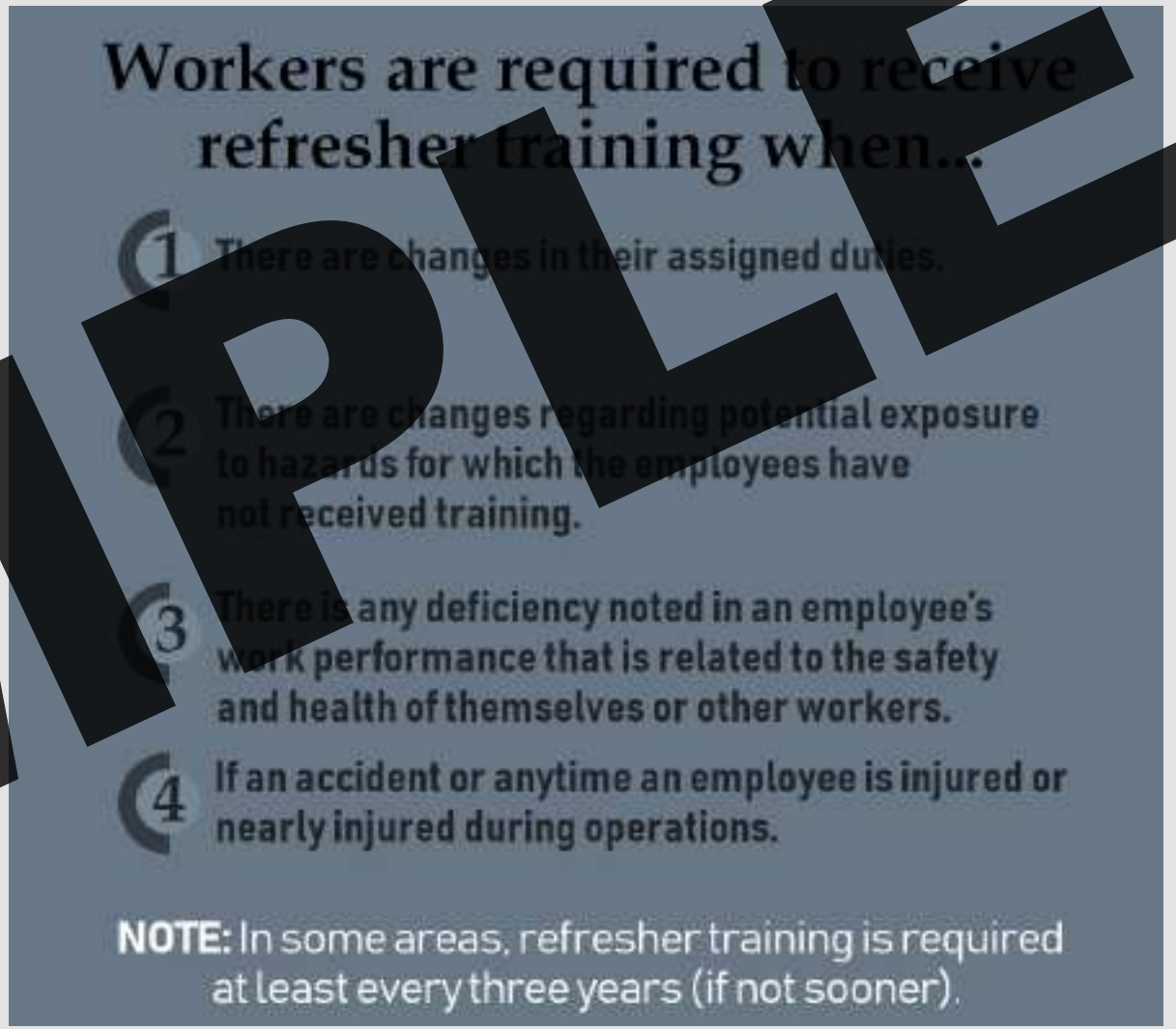
Training & Drills

Employers must provide training for crew members aboard commercial vessels. You should be taught how to identify, prevent, and respond to hazards specific to your ship and the job at hand. This includes instructions on how to don and care for PFDs and immersion suits.

Your employer must conduct drills at least once a month. During a drill, crewmembers must conduct themselves as if they were truly in the midst of an emergency. This is when you will don and test your immersion suit, which we'll discuss in detail later.

Initial training and refresher training, as well as any written and practical evaluations, must be documented and filed. At the very least, in the case of an investigation, governing bodies will want to see proof of proper and consistent training (in the way of training outlines, class lists, training goals, tests, certificates, and so on.) These documents should include the name of the person who taught the class or conducted the evaluation.

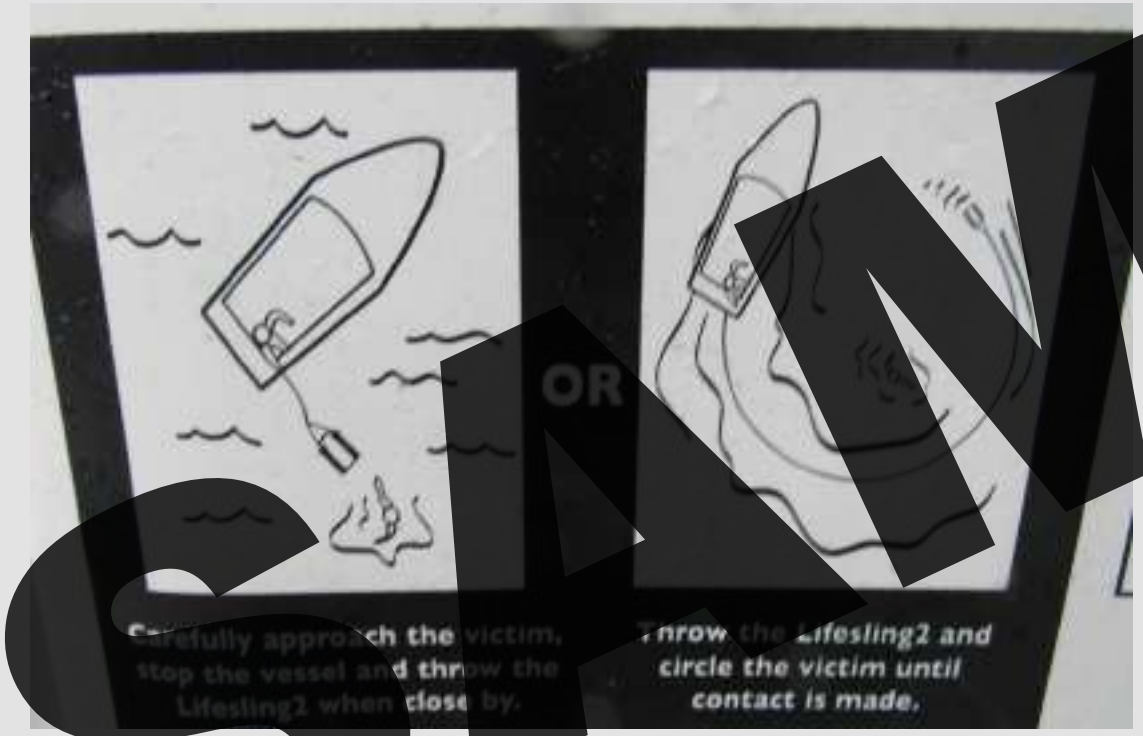
Training is not just a one-and-done occurrence; it is on-going. In fact, similar to the guidelines set down for when initial training is required, OSHA is also specific when it comes to “refresher training.” More specifically, OSHA acknowledges the need for “refresher” or “follow up” training whenever there is a demonstrated need for it. Some examples of when refresher training is required are listed here. Can you think of any others?



The extent of training will be determined by the employer, but at the very least it should include classroom instruction followed by a written and practical examination that prove continued competency.

While quick thinking is certainly a valuable asset in any workplace, the best way to prevent a man overboard fatality is to have procedures established and prepared well in advance of an emergency. Through proper planning and preparation, employers can provide the right equipment, create current protocols, and train employees on what to do to prevent and respond to accidents. This way, everyone is well prepared and ready to act in any emergency.

The overall goal today is to focus on general safety principles regarding working on or near bodies of water. We will strive to provide information that will increase your recognition of the potential hazards, improve your knowledge of safe operations, and help keep you and those around you safe.



Prepare