



# UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

## FINDINGS OF CONCERN

### Marine Safety Unit Morgan City

August 19, 2025  
Morgan City, LA

Findings of Concern 010-25

## SHIPYARD WORK BARGE POLICIES AND OPERATIONS

Purpose. The U.S. Coast Guard issues findings of concern to disseminate information related to unsafe conditions that were identified as causal factors in a casualty and could contribute to future incidents. Findings of concern are intended to educate the public, state, or local agencies about the conditions discovered so they may address the findings with appropriate voluntary actions or highlight existing applicable company policies or state/local regulations.

The Incident. In February 2024, a paint supervisor died after falling into the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) while conducting a painting project aboard a freight barge at a Louisiana shipyard. The supervisor was positioned on the deck of the freight barge, which was in the water at the time of the incident. The painters' task was to paint the port-side hull of the barge and the team utilized a small work barge which was tied off to a working line around cleats located on the deck of the freight barge.

The supervisor untied the work barge's line from the cleat and began to walk backwards to pull the line and reposition the barge. As he was repositioning the barge, he tripped on another cleat and fell off the side of the barge, striking his head on the work barge just prior to entering the water. The deceased supervisor was recovered by law enforcement officers several hours later beneath the starboard side of the freight barge.



Photograph of cleat with mooring line secured to it on the top deck of freight barge.

Contributing Factor and Analysis. There were multiple concerns found aboard the freight barge that contributed to the incident including trip and fall hazards, lack of temporary handrail installations, and no written policy for using assist boats. Additionally, there was inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE) relative to the hazards presented by the current job, such as a hard hat with a chinstrap.



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**Photograph of small work barge with scaffolding adjacent to the side hull of the freight barge.**

**Findings of Concern.** Coast Guard investigators have identified the following measures that shipyard managers can consider to mitigate the risks associated with the contributing factors identified above:

- Consider developing policies that denote requirements for the use of push boats within shipyard waterways to assist with moving small work barges around the shipyard, limiting the use of shipyard workers physically pulling lines to move work barges.
- Ensure development and proper implementation of policies regarding the use of guard rails, safety nets, or personal fall arrest systems while working on vertical or horizontal walking/working surfaces with a side or edge that is six feet or more above a lower level. Most freight barges offer minimal to no handholds to prevent falling over the side.
- Ensure that proper PPE is used and worn correctly, including hard hats with chinstraps. Wearing a chinstrap properly can prevent a hard hat from falling off if someone falls over the side.

**Closing.** These findings of concern are provided for informational purposes only and do not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. For any questions or comments please contact Marine Safety Unit Morgan City Investigations Division by phone at (985) 380-5339 or by email at [MCIO@uscg.mil](mailto:MCIO@uscg.mil).