



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Inspections and Compliance Directorate

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Safety Alert 02-03

JOINT MMS / USCG SAFETY ALERT

The U.S. Coast Guard, in conjunction with the Minerals Management Service (MMS), completed a review of accidents on fixed offshore facilities that have resulted in fatalities or serious injuries. It was observed that a number of incidents occurred during operations in which grating or other deck covering had been temporarily removed. Cases involved personnel who were working at temporary deck openings and who became entangled in equipment, tripped, or simply forgot that the opening was there. Other events involved personnel who were not aware of the temporary deck opening and who were passing through the work area when the accident occurred.

Coast Guard regulations require that openings in decks that are not in use be covered, guarded, or otherwise made inaccessible. Further, in cases where there is a hazard of falling ten or more feet when engaged in an activity such as during and after removal of decking, personnel are required to wear secured safety belts. MMS regulations require that lease operations do not result in injury or loss of life and that operators perform work in a safe and workmanlike manner.

In order to reduce fall hazards associated with temporary deck openings, employees shall wear secured safety belts when:

- removing grating or other deck covering to create a temporary deck opening,
- working within the perimeter of the guard rails, or
- near the temporary opening when a portion of a temporary guard rail is removed.

Employees may work outside an opening without safety belts if temporary guard rails are installed that completely encompass, and are in close proximity to, the deck opening. These temporary guard rails should be of a contrasting color to the immediate environment and should be substantially constructed to prevent an accidental fall through the opening by an employee. Routine safety meetings and notices regarding work hazards should continue to highlight the dangers associated with temporary deck openings. The following regulations relate to the aforementioned issues:

- 33 CFR 142.42
- 33 CFR 142.87
- 30 CFR 250.106
- 30 CFR 250.107(a)

For additional information contact Mr. David M. Moore of the MMS at 703.787.1637 or LCDR Eric Walters of the USCG at ewalters@comdt.uscg.mil or 202.267.0499.

[HTTP://WWW.MMS.GOV/SAFETYALERTS/](http://www.mms.gov/safetyalerts/) FOR ADDITIONAL SAFETY ALERTS RELATED TO OCS OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES.

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