



## **MARINE SAFETY ALERT**

### **Inspections and Compliance Directorate**

May 16, 2014  
Washington, DC

Alert 07-14

## **SLIPS, TRIPS and FALLS**

**Not too difficult to prevent.**

Coast Guard casualty investigators recently responded to an incident whereby a tour boat customer fell into an unprotected two step stair well and received significant injuries. Although the customer was taking photographs at the time and may have lost situational awareness there were no defenses to prevent the fall. The hazard was not previously identified and, as is often said, was an accident waiting to happen. Only afterwards did the owner operator install a small lifeline cable across the opening.

This type of vessel design, with a stair well leading to the head, is very common. These specific catamaran vessels were constructed by Cooper Marine, Inc. and Corinthian Catamarans, Inc. (formerly Corinthian Yachts, Inc.) in various sizes over many years. There may be hundreds of these vessels in operation as tour boats, water taxis, dive boats, etc., world over.



Hazards causing slips, trips, and falls require no special skills to be identified and may exist in all marine operations. The mitigation and prevention of such

hazards and resultant incidents may often be a very simple matter with minimal or no costs. Only an awareness to such risks is required by vessel employees followed by an owner operator commitment to addressing identified concerns.

As a result of this incident and many others like it the Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that owner operators;

- identify similar stair well hazards and secure them in a manner that will prevent slips, trips and falls;
- when a hazard cannot be completely eliminated (as with the image above), bring the hazard to the attention of passengers during the initial safety brief; and
- make risk awareness part of your operational culture by having vessel personnel frequently evaluate the vessel's condition with the express purpose of identifying and mitigating hazards.

This safety alert is provided for informational purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational or material requirement. Developed by the Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis with the assistance of CG Sector Jacksonville Investigation Division personnel. For questions or concerns please email [hqs-pf-flldr-cg-inv@uscg.mil](mailto:hqs-pf-flldr-cg-inv@uscg.mil).