



MSHA's Accident Prevention Program Safety Idea

**SAFETY
IS A
VALUE!**

Work Boat Safety

Category : General Safety
Mine Type: All Surface

Many accidents have occurred where miners have drowned while working on dredges and boats. In a recent case, a miner drowned when his boat sank while he was trying to retrieve a broken cable from a river. The boat was being operated with the bow facing downstream. The boat sank when the cable came on top of the boat, caught on the motor ("stern anchoring" the boat), and pulled the boat under. The victim was not wearing a life jacket.

The following can prevent such accidents:

1) Boats, like any other equipment, should be of adequate size and power to properly perform in the anticipated task. Remember that weight capacity includes persons, motor, gear, and any other load. If a retrieval operation is undertaken, the weight of the retrieved item must be considered.

2) Boats should be operated by qualified individuals who have adequate experience or training to perform the expected task.

If personnel operate a boat, they should, as a minimum, take a safety course such as those offered by the Red Cross or Coast Guard Auxiliary. Information on boat-safety training resources can be found at:

<http://www.uscgboating.org/safety/courses.htm>.

3) Establish and enforce policies for wearing Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs). Like seat belts on equipment, PFDs are effective only when they are worn. Provide quality PFDs of the proper type that are appropriate for each employee's size and weight. Types I and V PFDs are the only types that should be considered for a working environment. Type I's are designed to turn an unconscious person face up in the water. Type V's (marine work vests) are available in designs that allow freedom of movement, while providing adequate flotation. Maintain the PFD's in serviceable condition and replace them if they become worn or damaged.

To illustrate the importance of wearing a life jacket consider this statistic. In 1998, the U. S. Coast Guard reported that there were 574 drownings related to recreational boats. The Coast Guard believes that 509 of these, or nearly 90 percent, would have been prevented if the victims had been wearing life jackets.



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Remember – Safety is a Value that you can LIVE with!