



# Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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## Survive the Routine Tasks

Embarking, disembarking or mooring a vessel are routine tasks all fishermen do. Although routine, many fishermen are injured or killed while undertaking these routine tasks. BE A SURVIVOR! Have a plan for going in the water. Always have one hand for the boat and one for yourself.

- 1) **Wear a personal flotation device (PFD)!** This is the best thing you can do to survive long enough to get rescued.
- 2) **Rig your vessel with a boarding ladder!** or other boarding device! Permanently rigged ladders, quick-release boarding steps, or clever homemade devices that provide a foothold and manropes to leverage your way back aboard.
- 3) **Use technology!** Personal locator beacons, man overboard alarms and engine shutdown devices are just a few of the many ways to leverage technology to increase your chances of being a survivor.
- 4) **Nothing is routine!** Stay alert. One hand for the boat and one for you.

Casualty examples:

- 1) The operator of a 30 foot solo-operation salmon troller fell overboard while mooring at the local fish plant, a task he has done hundreds of times, without incident. He lost his balance and fell into the 50 degree F water. He lacked the strength and ability to climb aboard. Dock workers called 911 and the Coast Guard was able to rescue him from the water in a matter of just a few minutes. He was cold, but survived a little wiser.
- 2) An 80 foot tuna troller was mooring at a local fuel dock when the deckhand lost his balance while tossing a mooring line. The deckhand fell to the water and was crushed between the vessel and the pier.
- 3) An operator was returning to his vessel after an evening out on the town. He slipped while stepping on a piling and lost his grip on the side of the vessel, falling to the water below. He was fished out of the harbor, but not without broken ribs and a knot on his head.

Managing Risk:

To an experienced fisherman, the act of mooring or boarding a vessel may seem to be a low-risk event. Even though injury or death may seem remote during routine evolutions, the possible outcomes; injury or death are extreme. Think like a survivor! Have a plan!