



## **Shipping Guidance Notice – 140**

### **Guidance on the prevention of trips and falls on ship's staircases**

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To: Ship Owners, Operators, Master's and Crew

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#### **Introduction**

Following reported instances of seafarer injuries sustained in relation to trips and falls on staircases, the publication of this Shipping Guidance Notice (SGN), aims to emphasize the importance of mitigating potential risks of injuries to seafarers whilst ascending and descending staircases.

The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers (COSWP) provides useful guidance in respect of staircase safety. In respect of Gibraltar registered vessels, management companies and serving seafarers, should make use of the guidance contained therein.

#### **Key Points of COSWP Related to Staircase Safety**

##### **1. Regular Maintenance and Inspection**

- Staircases should be regularly inspected for any wear and tear, damage, or potential hazards.
- Handrails, steps, and non-slip surfaces must be maintained in good condition.
- Any defects should be reported and repaired immediately to prevent accidents.

##### **2. Adequate Lighting**

- Ensure all staircases are well-lit to prevent missteps and falls.
- Emergency lighting should be checked regularly to ensure it is operational in the event of power failure.

##### **3. Clear Markings**

- Steps should be clearly marked with high-visibility tape or paint.
- Edges of steps should have anti-slip tape or contrasting colors to highlight them.

(See Fig.1 + Fig.2 Below - Best practices and advice for the marking of stairways)

Fig.1 Best practices and advice for the marking of stairways

**Note: Anti-slip strips for instance should not have a thickness above 6mm**

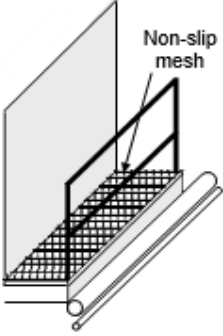
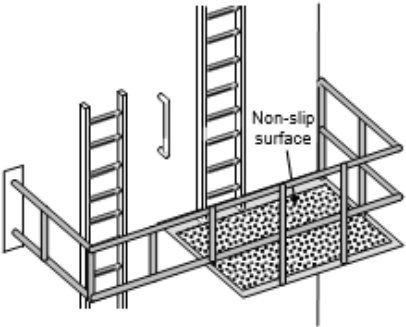
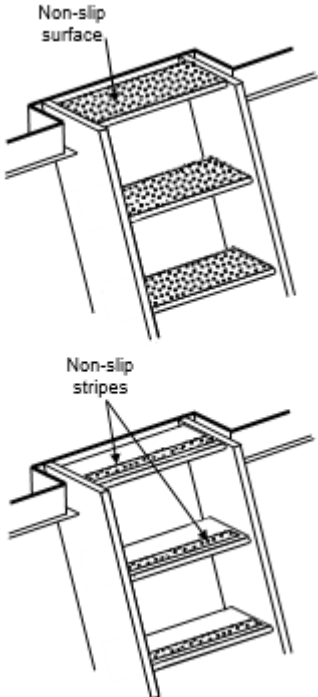
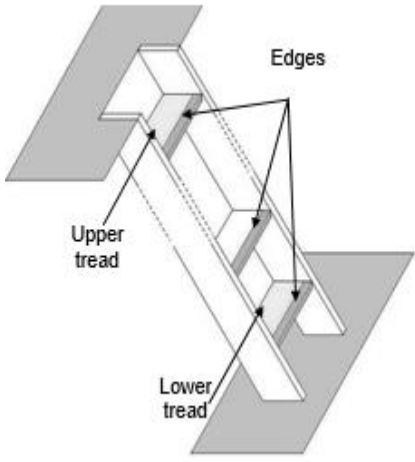
Description	Marking	Explicative drawings
<p>Walking surface of elevated passageways and other areas exposed to water and slippery substances</p>	<p>Non slip matting or fiberglass mesh</p>	 <p>Non-slip mesh</p>
<p>Walking surface of platforms</p>	<p>Non slip surface</p>	 <p>Non-slip surface</p>
<p>Stair ladders treads and steps</p>	<p>The treads should be made of non-slip surface.</p> <p>Personnel should be able to climb with confidence even if they have oil or water on their shoes.</p> <p>Non-slip surfaces or non-slip strips on the step edge can be used.</p>	 <p>Non-slip surface</p> <p>Non-slip stripes</p>

Fig 2.

Description		Marking	Explicative drawings
Stair ladder treads and steps	In areas that are poorly illuminated	Highly visible colour or reflective strips on the edges Highlight the top and bottom steps a different colour from other steps and decks	
	In areas that are exposed to light a certain part of the day	Dayglow paint on the edges highlight the top and bottom steps a different colour from other steps and decks	

**4. Use of Handrails**

- Handrails must be fitted on both sides of staircases where possible.
- Crew members should be instructed to always use handrails when ascending or descending stairs.

**5. Housekeeping**

- Staircases should be kept clear of any obstacles, spills, or debris that could cause tripping.
- Regular cleaning schedules should be adhered to, ensuring staircases remain safe and dry.

**6. Footwear**

- Crew members must wear appropriate footwear with non-slip soles while onboard.
- Footwear should be regularly checked for wear and replaced as necessary.

**7. Training and Awareness**

- All crew members should receive training on safe practices for using staircases, emphasizing the importance of using handrails and watching their step.
- Safety drills and briefings should include information on preventing falls and responding to injuries.

**8. Reporting and Response**

- Any incidents involving trips or falls should be reported immediately, and the circumstances should be investigated to prevent recurrence as required by the ISM Code.
- First aid and medical attention should be provided to injured seafarers promptly, and the incident should be documented.

## **Incident Reporting Procedure**

In the event of a trip or fall:

### **1. Immediate Response**

- Provide first aid to the injured seafarer and assess the severity of the injury.
- Report the incident to the Master and Safety Officer without delay.

### **2. Documentation**

- Record the incident in the ship's logbook, detailing the location, circumstances, and any contributing factors.
- Complete an incident report SGN 053 and any other forms as per the ship's safety management system (SMS) and submit to the Administration.

### **3. Investigation**

- Conduct a thorough investigation to identify the cause of the accident.
- Implement corrective actions to prevent similar incidents in the future.

### **4. Review and Feedback**

- Review the incident during safety meetings and share lessons learned with the crew.
- Update safety procedures and training programs as necessary.

### **Conclusion**

Preventing trips and falls on staircases is critical to maintaining a safe working environment onboard. Adherence to the guidelines provided in the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers, along with regular training and vigilant maintenance, will help minimize the risk of accidents. All crew members must remain proactive in identifying and mitigating potential hazards to ensure their own safety and that of their colleagues.

For any further information or guidance, please refer to the relevant sections of the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers or contact the ship's Safety Officer.

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Issue date: 21 June 2024

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