

# Working Over or Near Water



Working over and near water presents several unique occupational hazards. The most imminent risks include falls and accidental drowning. To avoid such incidents, you must wear a personal flotation device or a personal fall arrest system.

U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices must be maintained and regularly inspected for defects. Check for dry rot, mildew and water saturation. If you observe any indication of any of these three conditions, the device is unusable. Return it to your supervisor to be tagged out of service or destroyed.

Ring buoys must also be present at work sites. They are required to be set a maximum of 200 feet apart around the work area and must be equipped with at least 90 feet of line for potential rescue operations. When you arrive on site, make a note of their locations or ask your supervisor where they are.

Additionally, a minimum of one U.S. Coast Guard-approved skiff must be immediately available on the water at individual work sites. Each boat must be appropriate for carrying personnel/equipment and strictly adhere to weight restrictions. Boats must also have a line and anchor, at least one paddle or oar, a means of manually bailing water, navigation lights for night use and a cell phone or two-way radio to communicate with personnel on the shore. Again, make sure you check with your supervisor about the location of and access to all this equipment.