

Safety in Ports Guidance

SiP 000 **Guidance Framework**



Produced in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive.

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External links are provided to enhance information, but Port Skills and Safety Ltd (PSS) does not guarantee the accuracy of any external links.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provided support to PSS in producing this guidance. However, it also includes industry-agreed best practice which may go further than the minimum legal requirements, this best practice is beyond the HSE requirement to comply with the law regarding health and safety.

Following this guidance is not a legal requirement, however, by following the guidance, users may ordinarily expect to be doing enough to comply with the law. HSE and other government-appointed inspectors who seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance in their investigations.

Regulations in this document are referred to by title but not year, as they may have been amended post publication. The reader should always seek the current version.

This document provides guidance only and due care and attention must be given to any operation being conducted.

Introduction

This guidance covers general health and safety in ports advice and should be used in conjunction with operation specific guidance (SiPs). The Safety in Ports guidance suite is available from the PSS website: www.portskillsandsafety.co.uk.

This SiP should be treated as the introductory section of every Safety in Ports document.

Regulatory framework and guidance

The two principal relevant pieces of law are the [Health and Safety at Work etc.](#), and the [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations](#) (MHSWR), which set out the basic requirements to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all involved. Other pieces of legislation, regulation or guidance documents are referenced where relevant, under specific operation sections.

Health and Safety at Work Act

The Health and Safety at Work Act applies on board a ship when shore-based workers are engaged in cargo handling or other tasks on board. Cargo handling may include, but is not limited to, loading, unloading, stowing, unstowing, pouring, trimming, classifying, sizing, stacking, unstacking as well as composing and decomposing unit loads; and services in relation to cargo or goods such as tallying, weighing, measuring, cubing, checking, receiving, guarding, delivering, sampling and sealing, lashing and unlashings. The Act also applies to the Master and ship's crew when working with shore-based personnel on board ship.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) enforces health and safety regulations. Under the Act, an HSE inspector can:

- Enter your premises
- Examine and investigate
- Stop work
- Take samples, measurements and photographs
- Dismantle and remove articles and substances
- Take possession of articles and substances
- Question you
- Review, take copies of and require the production of, books or documents
- Formal caution
- Issue enforcement notices
- Initiate prosecutions (or make recommendations to prosecute in Scotland)

The following regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act do **not** apply to a master or crew of a ship, or any persons employing them; in relation to safe access, plant and equipment which remain onboard the ship or any undertakings or work which are carried out on board ship solely by the master and the crew:

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations.
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations.

Instead, the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 and related Merchant Shipping Regulations impose similar duties onboard ships in UK territorial waters. Health and safety legislation for normal ship-board activities by the master and crew of any ship, are enforced by Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) surveyors.

The ship's Master has duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act in relation to the ship's crew when they are ashore performing their own tasks (eg loading stores or carrying out vessel maintenance). This responsibility extends to plant and equipment being used by ship's crew when ashore, or by shore-based workers on-board ship.

A Memorandum of understanding exists between the HSE, MCA and MAIB for health and safety enforcement activities and accident investigation at the water margin and offshore: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/memorandum-of-understanding-between-hse-mca-and-maib>.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations above Act sets out the general duties which employers have towards employees and members of the public, and that employees have to themselves and to each other, these duties are qualified in the Act by the principle of 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. In other words, an employer does not have to take measures to avoid or reduce the risk if they are technically impossible or if the time, trouble, or cost of the measures would be grossly disproportionate to the risk. What the law requires here is what good management and common sense would lead employers to do anyway, that is to consider what the risks are and to take sensible precautionary measures.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation generally make more explicit what employers are required to do in managing health and safety. The principal requirement being to carry out risk assessment.

The responsibilities of the employer:

- Provide and maintain safe systems of work.
- Provide adequate health and safety induction and training.
- Maintain safe work equipment.
- Ensure safe operation of working equipment.
- Ensure adequate welfare provisions are made.
- Provide a safe place of work. This includes safe access and egress.
- Ensure any materials are handled, transported, used and stored safely.
- Communicate with safety representatives.
- Provide PPE or any other equipment needed in the interests of health and safety.

The responsibilities of the employee:

- Take care of their own health and safety and that of others.
- Not interfere with any health and safety equipment.
- Cooperate with employers.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations

A RIDDOR is the law that requires employers, and other people in charge of work premises to report and keep records of work-related accidents. A RIDDOR must be reported by the responsible person to the HSE where they involve:

- The death of any person
- A specific type of injury ([see HSE website](#))
- If the accident results in a worker being unable to work for more than seven consecutive days as the result of their injury
- If the accident involve non-workers (eg members of the public).
- Diagnosis of certain occupational diseases ([see HSE website](#))
- Certain dangerous occurrences or near-miss event ([see HSE website](#))
- Gas incidents

Accidents must be recorded, but not reported, where they result in a worker being unable to work for more than three consecutive days

Reports can be made online via: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor, a telephone service is also available within office hours for fatal or specified incidents only - 0345 300 9923. Note that the HSE is not an emergency service and should be used for emergency response.

Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L148 Safety in Docks

This guidance (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l148.htm) covers routine port operations but does not include certain specialised or high-risk activities such as those associated with handling dangerous goods and hazardous cargoes, or major hazards sites which are subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations.

ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Ports (ILO 152)

Reference should also be made to the International Labour Organisation's Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Ports http://www.ilo.org/sector/activities/sectoral-meetings/WCMS_546257/lang--en/index.htm. This code is intended to be a concise set of recommendations based on good practice in the industry. The advice should be useful to all bodies and persons concerned with safety and health in port work.

The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977

The Health and Safety at Work Act obliges employers to make and maintain arrangements that will enable the employer to consult with employees and to enable employers and employees to cooperate effectively in promoting and developing measures to ensure the health and safety at work of the employees.

These regulations define the role of recognised trade unions have in appointing health and safety representatives and their role in the workplace.

Other relevant legislation

The wide range of activities undertaken in ports can give rise to health risks such as exposure to dusty cargoes, back injuries, sprains or strains; from handling, lifting, pushing or pulling, noise and vibration. Specific legislation deals with these issues and while there is reference to some specific health risks in the SiP guidance documents, for reasons of clarity it is not possible to cover all these issues in detail within this document.

Further information and guidance on the identification, assessment and reduction or avoidance of such risks can be found on the HSE website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/> and the port-specific pages: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/ports/index.htm>.

Hazards

Hazards typically associated with the port environment include but are not limited to:

- Being struck by work equipment involved in the operation such as lifting equipment, moving cargo, or moving vehicles.
- Being crushed against a fixed object or moving vehicles.
- Slips, trips or falls.
- Access/egress to and from deck and hold cargo.
- Working at height

The risk assessment and work planning processes (as below) should be applied to properly identify work sequencing and the associated specific hazards and risks.

Additional assessments may be required during discharge to consider damaged or moved cargo, changes in the quality of lifting strops or any other previously unseen condition.

Risk assessment

Risk Assessments must be undertaken in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. The HSE outlines the five steps to risk assessment on their website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/steps-needed-to-manage-risk.htm>

The risk assessment must consider the risks to everyone involved or affected by the activity. This includes but is not limited to non-permanent employees (NPE's), ship's crew, passengers and visitors.

The appropriate control measures must be introduced and should consider collective measures before personal or individual measures. Risks should be reduced so far as is reasonably practicable by taking preventative measures in order of priority as demonstrated in figure 1. They must be reviewed:

- Regularly.
- Immediately after any incident.
- When there are significant changes to the operation.

A risk assessment should record the significant hazards and risks of an operation together with the relevant control measures. In port operations risk assessments should additionally consider issues such as tidal changes, weather, trim, list, load/cargo and vessel dynamics.

Where a trade union is recognised by the employer, health and safety representatives may be useful in ensuring everyone involved in the activity is covered. It is also recommended that the risk assessment or a specific and recorded system of work is agreed with the Master of each vessel that visits the port, especially those that visit regularly. These are not legal requirements but may help to ensure effective coordination with other parties, particularly where activities are carried out jointly or concurrently, such as the loading/unloading and lashing/unlashing of ro-ro vessels.

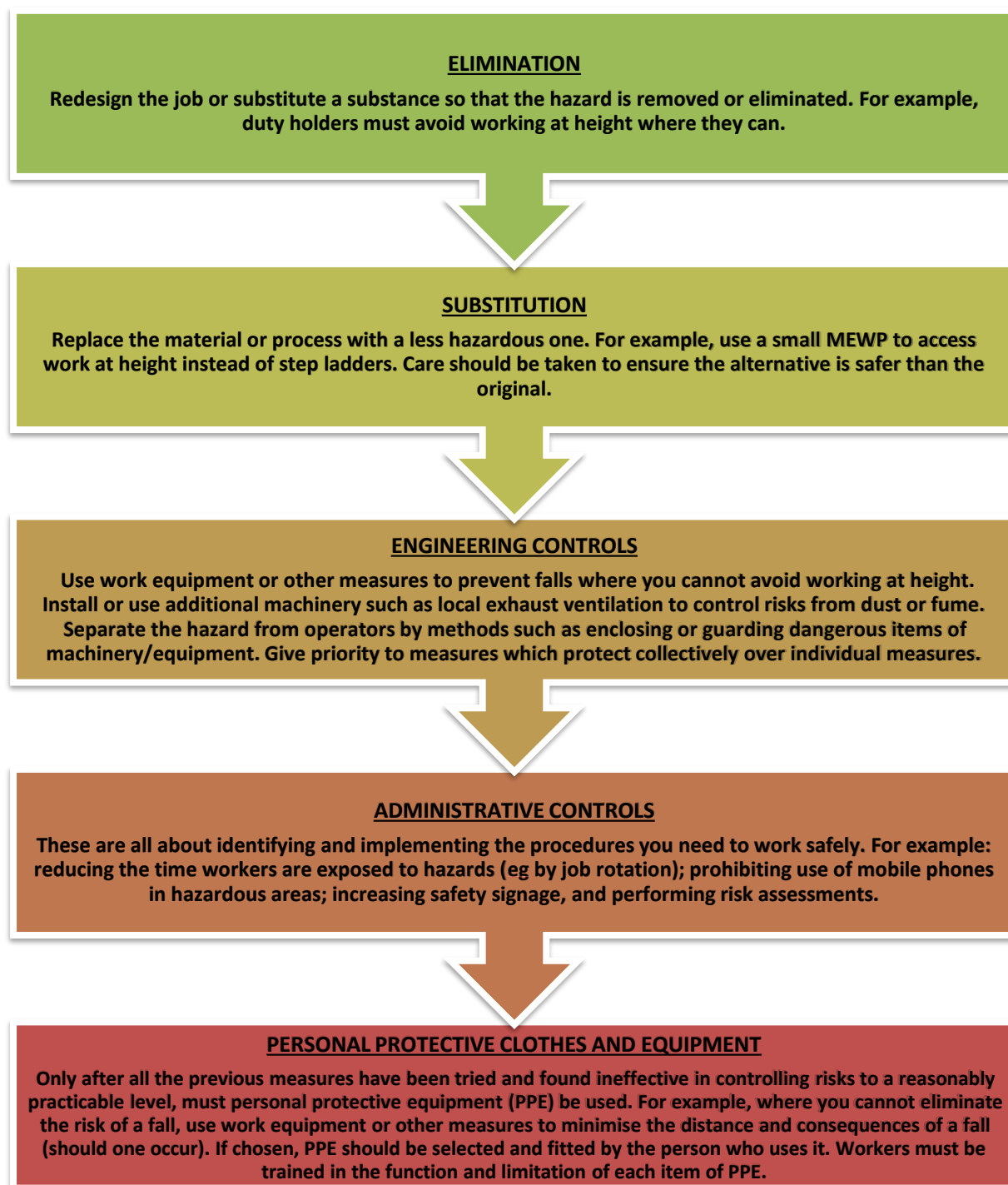


Figure 1 Elimination of risks

Consultation, cooperation and coordination

Consultation

Employers have a legal duty under the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations to consult with their employees, or their representatives, on health and safety matters.

By gaining worker involvement on health and safety, through two-way communication, concerns can be raised and solved together, and views and information can be sought and exchanged in a timely manner.

Cooperation and coordination

Cooperation, coordination and communication between shipside and shoreside employers and employees is required, therefore employers must carry out risk assessments and develop safe systems of work that all parties agree to, so that the respective employers and employees can communicate and cooperate effectively with each other. For more information on consulting and involving your workers visit www.hse.gov.uk/involvement or contact the relevant trade union.

The role of unions

Trade unions can represent individual workers in the workplace and can support good health and safety by:

- Helping reduce injuries at work.
- Communicating safe working practices.
- Encouraging the reporting of injuries and near-misses.
- Promoting a positive safety culture in the organisation.
- Developing volunteer-led safety committees
- Identifying training needs

Employers are encouraged to engage with recognised trade union representatives and engage in open dialogue.

In workplaces where the employer recognises trade unions and trade unions are recognised for collective bargaining purposes, the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) will apply.

In workplaces where employees are not in a trade union and/or the employer does not recognise the trade union, or the trade union does not represent those employees not in the trade union, the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended) will apply.

Training and competency

All people engaged in work, must be trained and assessed as competent for the role that they are required to perform, by a competent person. Workers must have their fitness for work assessed against the requirements for each task being performed and requirements for drug and alcohol monitoring should be considered.

People involved in operations must be provided with adequate information, instruction, training, and supervision. This is particularly important where Non-Permanent Employees (NPEs) are utilised, who may be generally competent but have limited experience of the port -specific procedures, particular lifting operation or type of cargo to be handled. The person in control of the operation must be clearly identified in advance, this is particularly important where NPEs are working alongside permanent employees.

It is vital that people engaged in safety critical roles within any lifting or slinging operation are trained, knowledgeable and have a thorough understanding of the task and activity to be undertaken. The banksman should not be engaged in any other activities during any part of the lifting operations.

Refer to SiP 018: [Guidance on Safety Induction and Training in Ports](#) for more information on training.

Workplace transport

You should risk assess workplace transport, considering all activities including loading, unloading and transit within the workplace.

Consider how all types of vehicles, plant and equipment and people move around your workplace, these may include:

- Mobile plant.
- Wagons.
- Visiting hauliers.
- Deliveries.
- Contractors.
- Employees personal vehicles.
- Pedestrians.

Consider the following:

Safe site

- Provide clear 'highway code' type signage for consistency.
- Consider how visitors, third party hauliers and delivery drivers will access the site and provide clear routes or maps to assist them.
- Plan your work place to separate pedestrians from vehicles, where possible, providing clear, well-lit crossing areas where they meet.
- Use one way systems wherever possible, to minimise reversing.
- Consider the size and type of vehicle using each route to ensure the route is suitable.
- Ensure safe areas for loading and unloading, with clear signage and refuge areas for drivers where required.

Best practice examples

- Coloured 'zones' to assist with giving directions and route finding eg: "follow yellow signs to the maintenance workshop" or "follow the red arrows to the quayside".
- Paper maps with site rules provided in multiple languages at the security gate or entrance to site.
- Phone apps providing check in options and site directions for visiting hauliers.

Safe vehicle

- Ensure vehicles are in good repair, with planned and preventative maintenance programme.
- Use pre use checks to ensure vehicles and plant are suitable for use.
- Provide reversing aids and vehicle warning systems such as CCTV, proximity sensors, light curtains on forklift trucks.

Safe driver

- Ensure plant operators are suitably trained, and refreshed at regular intervals.
- Assess competence at regular intervals.
- Provide inductions for visitors and third party drivers.

HSE information on workplace transport safety can be found at:
www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm

Fire Prevention

Fires in port facilities can have devastating effects as potential high and unacceptable risk is introduced to workers and port users. As many areas within ports can be difficult to access, fire containment can present difficulty to those providing emergency response. The results of fire can also be costly disruption to port operations and logistics supply chains, as well as damage to equipment.

Fire and explosion risks are interconnected. Many of the controls that are designed to prevent ignition are also applicable in the prevention of explosions. Guidance on fire and explosion should therefore be taken together for a complete understanding of the risks and controls.

Each port must have an emergency fire plan and this should consider the environmental impact of containment and run-off of firefighting mediums such as water or foam. The potential need for containment and subsequent disposal of contaminated water should be considered as part of the risk assessment along with clean-up resources etc.

Explosion

Explosion: a rapid increase in volume and release of energy in an extreme manner, usually with the generation of a high temperature.

Explosiveness: a function of particle / gas concentration, oxygen concentration and the energy of the ignition source or the temperature of the heat exerted by the dust.

Dust and gasses in certain conditions can explode. Different dust and gas profiles present different hazards. Some dust and gas accumulations may present more of a fire hazard than direct explosion hazard. Some materials which on their own are not explosive, can become explosive if stored incorrectly. Ports which handle explosive, or potentially explosive materials, should have the relevant licenses and a trained explosives officer.

PSS offers training for Explosive Officers, run in conjunction with the HSE. For more information and course dates, visit www.portskillsandsafety.co.uk.

Dangerous goods

The requirements of the Dangerous Goods in Harbour Areas Regulations (DGHAR), the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code, and other relevant legislation, which may apply to the transport, storage or handling of the cargo, must be taken into account.

ADR and IMDG

The ADR agreement allows dangerous goods travelling by road through more than one country to be exempt from the domestic legislation in force in those countries, as long as the requirements of ADR are met in full.

The IMDG code contains internationally agreed guidance on the safe transport of dangerous goods by sea, and most commonly relates to the carriage of dangerous goods in freight containers and tank containers. Primarily it is used by shipping operators, but it is also relevant to those transporting dangerous goods on journeys involving a sea crossing.

Work At Height Hierarchy of Controls

Comprehensive guidance on reducing risks from work at height, the hierarchy of controls and the use of personal protective equipment can be found in ACOP Safety in Docks (L148). The Regulations set out a simple hierarchy for managing and selecting equipment for work at height and for determining how to work at height safely. The hierarchy must be followed systematically and only when one level is not reasonably practicable may the next level be considered. It is not acceptable to select work equipment from lower down the hierarchy in the first instance.

Those responsible for planning / supervising work at height must:

- Avoid work at height where they can.
- Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid working at height.
- Where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, use equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall.
- Devise a suitable rescue plan.
- Consider how to minimise the amount of exposure time and the number of people exposed to work at height.

Discussions with customers and ships' agents at the early planning stage can reduce the risks from working at height. Consideration should be given to the type, shape and size of the vessel, the configuration of cargo stows at point of loading, splicing cargo to eliminate gaps at the end of stows.

The ship should be loaded or discharged in such a manner to reduce the risk of falls to the lowest level reasonably practicable. The height and configuration of the cargo stow is constantly changing and is therefore a risk. When loading consider how to aid safe discharge at the next port.

Appendix 1: Safety in Ports guidance (SiP)

This guidance framework should be treated as the introductory section of all Safety in Port (SiPs) guidance. The following is a list of the current suite of guidance. Check the PSS website for the most up to date versions: <https://www.portskillsandsafety.co.uk/resources>

SiP001	Workplace transport – planning and terminals
SiP002	General cargo
SiP003	Container handling
SiP004	Timber handling
SiP005	Mooring operations
SiP006	Transfer of bulk liquids and gases
SiP007	Loading & unloading of dry bulk cargo
SiP008	Storage of dry bulk cargo
SiP009	Lighting
SiP010	Workplace transport – StoRo and RoRo operations
SiP013	Management of non-permanent employees
SiP014	Safe access and egress
SiP015	Confined spaces in ports
SiP016	Emergency planning in ports
SiP017	Guidance on fitness for work and health surveillance
SiP018	Safety induction and training
SiP020	Water safety
SiP021	Access to small craft
SiP022	Biomass

Appendix 2: Legislation and Guidance

Relevant legislation and guidance include but are not limited to the following. Please note that these are the correct versions at the time of publishing, but the reader should always seek out the most current version.

Acts of Parliament

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HSWA) 1974 :

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

Regulations

Confined Spaces Regulations 1997: [Confined spaces: A brief guide to working safely \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH): www.hse.gov.uk/comah

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH): [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002 \(COSHH\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005: [Hand arm vibration at work \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Dangerous Goods in Harbour Areas Regulations 2016:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/ports/dangerous-goods.htm#:~:text=The%20Dangerous%20Goods%20in%20Harbour,ports%2C%20harbour%20and%20harbour%20areas>

Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002: [The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 - Fire and explosion \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Electricity at Work Regulations and guidance on electrical safety 1989: [The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 - HSR25 \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations; inc. schedule 1: [Safety signs and signals. The Health and Safety Regulations 1996. Guidance on Regulations - L64 \(hse.gov.uk\) www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/uksi_19960341_en_2](#)

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment) Regulations 1998 (LOLER): [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations \(LOLER\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/index.htm>

Merchant Shipping (Hatches and Lifting Plant) Regulations: [The Merchant Shipping \(Hatches and Lifting Plant\) Regulations 1988 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessel (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment) Regulations (LOLER): www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20062184

Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessel (Provision and Use of Work Equipment) Regulations (PUWER): <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/2183/contents>

Merchant Shipping (Safety at Work) (non-UK Ships) Regulations:
www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1988/Uksi_19882274_en_1

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER):
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/puwer.htm>

Work at Height Regulations 2005: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance

The Carriage of Dangerous Goods: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/cdg/manual/regenvirment.htm>

Consulting and involving your workers: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/index.htm>

Freight Container Safety: [Container safety- Ports and docks - HSE](#)

Freight Container Hazardous Atmospheres: [RR1178: Freight containers: potential worker exposure to hazardous atmospheres at ports and distribution centres \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Heat stress: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal>

Ports web pages: [Ports and docks - HSE](#)

Lifting Equipment at Work: A Brief Guide: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg290

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER): [Lifting equipment at work: A brief guide \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Lift Truck Guidance: [Lift trucks - Workplace transport - HSE](#)

Managing Health and Safety in Dockwork HS(G)177:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg177.htm>

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs): <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm>

Noise at Work: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/>

Personal Protective Equipment: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/ppe.htm>

Reporting accidents and incidents at work [Reporting accidents and incidents at work](#)

Rider-operated lift trucks: [Rider-operated lift trucks \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Safety in Docks ACOP L148: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l148.htm>

Safe Stacking of Sawn Timber and Board Materials, HSE information sheet – Woodworking Sheet No. 2, 2001: [Safe stacking of logs, sawn timber and board material \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Vibration at Work: www.hse.gov.uk/vibration

WAIT - (Work at height Access equipment Information Toolkit): [Work at height - HSE](#)

Workplace Transport Safety HSG136: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg136.htm>

Codes of practice

BS 7121, Safe Use of Cranes, Code of Practice Part 1 – General:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/lifting-operations.htm>

Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers (COSWP): [Code of safe working practices for merchant seafarers \(COSWP\) amendment 7 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-safe-working-practices-for-merchant-seafarers-coswp-amendment-7-2022)

International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Ports (ILO 152): [Safety and health in ports \(Revised 2016\) \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/iloorg/1979/0/19790152.pdf)

International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Ports (ILO 152): [Convention C152 - Occupational Safety and Health \(Dock Work\) Convention, 1979 \(No. 152\) \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/iloorg/1979/0/19790152.pdf)

Other relevant documents

Memorandum of understanding between HSE, MCA and MAIB:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/memorandum-of-understanding-between-hse-mca-and-maib>

Marine Guidance Note 175:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74c33840f0b61df47784bb/mgn175.pdf>

Work at Height Safety Association: www.wahsa.org.uk

Document Authors

This guidance document has been produced by Port Skills and Safety with input from membership across the UK ports sector. PSS is grateful for the support of the Health and Safety Executive, and trade unions for their involvement and input.

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