



Safety Chains / Lifelines

Safety chains and lifelines are critical protective barriers used to prevent personnel from falling overboard on ships and elevated platforms. These systems, including secured ropes and chains, serve as physical restraints along decks and work areas, reducing the risk of serious injury or loss at sea.

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STRONG LINES, SAFE LIVES: ENSURING LIFELINE INTEGRITY

Naval Safety Command has frequently observed material degradation and procedural non-compliance in lifeline and guard line assemblies during Local Area Assessments onboard ships. Failure to properly maintain and adhere to safety procedures for these critical fall protection systems significantly increases the risk of serious injury or fatality.

NAVSAFECOM has identified an overall lack of adherence to fundamental policy, proper maintenance, and personnel training when installing and inspecting safety chains and lifelines. The most prominent concerns are:

- Material degradation due to improper maintenance, corrosion, or environmental exposure
- Excessive slack or incorrect tensioning, reducing effectiveness in preventing falls
- Missing or improperly secured snap hooks, shackles, or end fittings
- Use of incorrect materials or sizes that do not meet required strength and safety standards
- Lack of personnel training on proper inspection, installation, and maintenance procedures



SECURE LINES, SAFE CREW: SAFETY CHAIN & LIFELINE MEASURES

Safety chains and lifelines are critical protective systems designed to prevent falls overboard. Proper installation, maintenance, and adherence to safety protocols ensure their effectiveness and protect personnel from serious injury.

1. Inspect safety chains and lifelines regularly to identify signs of wear, corrosion, or missing components before they become hazards.
2. Maintain proper tension and slack to ensure effectiveness—excessive sagging or improper tensioning can reduce their ability to prevent falls.
3. Use the correct materials and fittings as specified in safety regulations to guarantee strength and reliability in high-risk environments.
4. Secure all snap hooks, shackles, and end fittings to prevent unintended detachment and ensure a continuous protective barrier.



NAVSAFECOM RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

1. Ensure proper training and awareness
2. Maintain and inspect safety chains and lifelines regularly
3. Secure and store safety equipment properly
4. Handle safety chains and lifelines with caution



AFLOAT SAFETY, NAVAL SAFETY COMMAND - Keeping our sea warriors informed and ready

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