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- Anchoring evolutions are inherently dangerous and require strict adherence to all safety precautions. Significant hazards to personnel (feet, hands, head and eyes) exist when working with ground tackle.
- Anchoring Details shall comply with OPNAVINST 5100.19F, Chapter 6 for detailed precautions and safety guidance.
- Additional safety precautions are specifically outlined in NSTM 581-Anchoring, Section 1 and shall be adhered to by Safety Observers, POICs, Deck Riggers, and all personnel directly involved with anchoring operations. A sample of precautions are provided below.

Ground Tackle Precautions (NSTM 581):

- Ensure all personnel wear snug-fitting clothing, safety goggles, gloves, safety helmets and steel-toed shoes.
- Conduct prechecks on equipment to ensure it is in proper operating condition.
- Keep hands and feet off, and away from moving anchor chains and ground tackle appendages.
- Allow only the Anchor and Line Details in the ground tackle area during operations; ensure all non-essential personnel remain clear.
- When dropping anchor, DO NOT let the chain take charge; control speed by use of hand brake or lowering the anchor under power.



Recent Mishaps:

- 2022: LCS anchor stuck in the hawsepipe; multiple attempts to free the anchor led to excessive slack in chain; anchor dropped unexpectedly causing slacked chain to "snap back" causing injuries to two Sailors.
- 2024: During CVN anchoring evolution, deck rigger was attempting to manipulate the chain stopper; dropped chain stopper on foot; Sailor lost seven days of work on Light and Limited Duty.
- 2025: LPD getting underway from anchorage; while attempting to heave around and raise the anchor, anchor suddenly began to free-fall; brake was quickly engaged; an investigation following the event determined the windlass was not verified as fully engaged prior to recovery.

Special Considerations:

- Recent innovations in anchor configurations, such as the engineering design for the LCS-2 Class, present unique safety challenges.
- Naval ships equipped with the devil's claw or pawl-type chain stoppers use a split hook that engages the end of a horizontal chain link. A primary disadvantage of the devil's claw chain stopper is the inability for the chain to be safely and quickly released while under tension.
- Personnel should NEVER transit forward of the anchor winch drum without the brake set and pawl engaged.
- Safety Observers need to pay close attention to chain/wire tension prior to release of the devil's claw to prevent potential injury to personnel.



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