



Introduction

Whether working on a ship or in an office, it is important to have access to areas where a task needs to be performed. Access may be hampered due to the poor design of access points or poor housekeeping. Problems for proper access/egress may present themselves during the new construction/conversion process or when existing ships are being repaired or in dry-dock. It is important to have adequate safety procedures, appropriate planning and sufficient design criteria in place to allow for safe and easy access to and from a worksite. In this Toolbox Talk, access and egress in the work place are discussed.

Egress

Egress relates to a means of leaving a place. For egress at work, it is necessary for a jobsite to be laid out with proper egresses to allow individuals to leave the location quickly in case of an emergency. For emergency egress, the following points are of importance.

- Exit routes
- Adequate lighting
- Evacuation plan

Exit routes

The number of exit routes available must be related to the size and configuration of the workplace and the number of personnel within. Therefore, workplaces with a small number of personnel would not require as many exit routes as one that is highly populated. Similarly, a workplace of a complex shape would need to contain more exit routes than a workplace with more direct lines of egress. Other important aspects related to the exit routes are: the location, size and simplicity of exit markings.

Adequate lighting

Lighting is important with respect to egress. All exit routes must be adequately lit even in the case of power outages. The lighting in these areas must be reliable and should be checked regularly. Exit signs should be self-lighting or made of reflective material, in order for them to remain visible during power outages.

Evacuation plan

An emergency evacuation plan must be in place for the quick and safe evacuation of personnel; this plan must be adequately communicated to all employees. There should also be individuals assigned to assist with the evacuation process that are trained to do so for specific exits or muster points. It is important that all employees:

- Recognize the evacuation signal
- Pay attention to evacuation instructions
- Follow the nearest exit route
- Be aware of the designated meeting/muster area

Access

Means of access must be sufficient for the tasks that need to be completed. If a task is to take place at an elevated location, then a means to reach that height must be available and safe for use. Common means of access are listed below.

- Inclined Stairs
- Walkways and passages
- Gangways
- Vertical ladders
- Hatches
- Ramps



ACCESS AND EGRESS

Precautions and criteria related to access and egress

Listed below are some criteria and guidance that can help reduce the number of incidents pertaining to egress and access.

- Keep all stairs and walkways clear of debris and cleaned of slippery substances such as: ice, water, oil and grease
- Passageways should be clear of tools, equipment and other materials
- Walkways and stairs should be used when present; safety should not be jeopardized to save time
- Railings should have top and mid-rails, posts and toe boards; they must also be properly secured
- All exit routes must be properly lit at all times
- Emergency routes and equipment must be kept free of obstructions
- Outdoor walkways should be salted/gritted to prevent slipping
- All electrical cords or hoses crossing walkways must be properly secured and not interfering with walkways
- Evacuation drills should occur frequently enough to keep all personnel properly trained in evacuation routes and procedures
- Items should not be stored in stairways or on either side of a door
- As always, good housekeeping should be practiced at all times



Actual Near Miss (Field)

While a crew member was attending a kick-off meeting, the surveyor noted that the gangway was missing handrails. The missing handrails were temporarily replaced with several bars, which were heavily pitted, holed and wasted. (*Critical behavior: Three point contact*)

Discussion

- Report and discuss any issues pertaining to access and egress with your supervisor