



INTRODUCTION

Workspaces on ships are replete with hazards. The layout of equipment inherently requires crew to be vigilant so as not to bump their head or trip over a pipe. Even when being vigilant, hazards exist. When working long hours carefulness may start to wane and little details are overlooked, or when a task is routine it is easy to skip a small step that could have large consequences. Slips and trips are among the largest reported type of workplace accidents and near misses. On board ships is no different, slips and trips are frequently the reported near miss type.

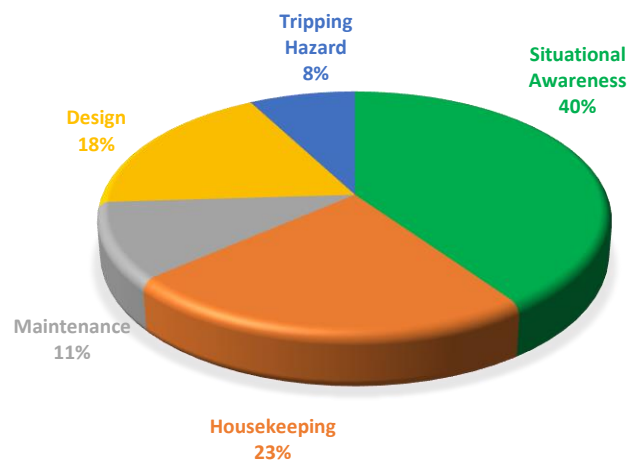


A search of the Mariner Safety Research Database of near-misses returned 264 slips and trips in interior workspaces such as the engine room, wheelhouse, and cargo spaces. Various causes were reported, among them fatigue, inadequate training, anti-skid and signage or markings to indicate hazards. The top 5 reported causes for near misses were situational awareness, housekeeping, maintenance, design and tripping hazards. As is evident, there is overlap between many of the categories, as so they were organized based on the primary reason for the near miss report.

Situational awareness refers to a lack of awareness about ones activities, whether it is climbing a ladder with two hands full, hurrying or other unsafe activity. Housekeeping issues range from tools not put away on completion of a job to oily rags left about. Maintenance refers to equipment or infrastructure on the ship not being properly maintained, such as a corroded grating, or an oil leak. Design issues are the result of either poor design on the shore side, or choosing a poor design on board when making repairs. Tripping hazards are either the result of something obstructing a walkway, such as a hose or line, or are the result of poor designs that are reported as trip hazards.

Most of these hazards must be mediated by raising awareness of the crew and emphasizing the importance of safety, the need to be diligent in maintenance routines, and awareness of one's surroundings. Remember that a task is never so urgent that it jeopardizes your own or another's safety.

CAUSES OF SLIPS/TRIPS IN WORKSPACES



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