



Boat Docking Safety Guidelines

This guideline summarizes pertinent information about the safe docking of boats for workers and employers. The guidelines were designed to avoid an injury through the practice of safe handling procedures. By preventing future problems through compliance with both the mandatory standards and dock safety guidelines, employers can help provide a safer and cleaner environment for everyone.

1. Communication

- It is critical the dock office and incoming boat communicate its location and docking plans.
- As the incoming boat approaches, if it appears they are not prepared to dock, communicate with the boat operator.
- As the boat approaches, dock employees should stay off the dock until they have the lines ready and fenders set properly.
- When possible, it is preferred to have the boat's bow facing into the current.

2. Employee Position

- Ensure the captain is aware of which slip the boat is supposed to dock. Dock employees should repeat the slip number to the dock office for accuracy. Employees should verify over radio if necessary.
- Dock employees are responsible for good housekeeping on the dock.
- Dock employees are required to wear closed toe shoes.
- Under normal weather conditions, 1-3 employees assist with docking the boat. More employees may be sent out during inclement weather, or if the size of the boat is a factor.
- Once the employee(s) are in place and ready for the boat, the dock employee(s) should radio to the dock office.

3. Docking the Boat

- Speeding Boats – If a boat comes in too fast, move back from the docks edge. DO NOT attempt to stop the boat by hand. Instruct the captain to back off/reverse/slow down.
- If the boat misses the slip, employees should assist with fenders if possible/practical to minimize damage. Employees should NEVER put themselves between the boat and another object (dock, pile-on, etc). Dock employees should provide instructions to assist the boat captain to navigate.
- If necessary, communicate with the boat captain if engine thrust is needed (power up/down; starboard/port; side thrusters). If the boat captain accelerates in the wrong direction ensure your feet are clear of the slack. Release the line if looped and allow the boat to motor away from the dock. Dock employees DO NOT attempt to control a boat powering in the wrong direction.
- Out of Control Boat – Dock employees are instructed to stand back from the edge of the dock until the captain has control of the vessel. Dock employees should provide communicate to the boat captain to discuss current and weather conditions as well as give necessary instructions.



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4. Securing the Boat

- Dock employees should secure the boat by cleating or looping the boats lines.
- Communicate with the boat crew to ensure you're ready for the line prior to it being tossed.
- Wear safety glasses or safety sunglasses.
- Wrong Line – If the boat crew throws out the wrong line, dock employees should throw the line back and instruct on the correct line to ensure the boat can be safely secured.
- Dropped Line – If you drop the line after it's thrown, communicate to the boat crew to re-throw the line. DO NOT try to retrieve the line from the water.
- DO NOT wrap the line around your hands.
- DO NOT allow slack on live side of line (between cleat and boat) to coil up on the dock. If slack is needed on the live side of the line, it is to be set in the water. The dead side of the line (excess line after the cleat) is coiled neatly next to the cleat.
- NEVER stand on top of or inside the coiled line.

5. Securing the Bow, Stern, Spring, and Midline Lines (order is dependent on tide and wind conditions)

- If the lines are obviously damaged or dry rotted, supplement with marina loaner lines until the captain/boat owner can provide suitable lines.
- If mechanical means are used to tighten lines, inspect the cleats, consider the use of pile-ons and stand back while the lines are secured.

I have been provided with the Safe Boat Docking Procedure. I understand my responsibilities and the hazards associated with docking boats. All of my questions in regards to how to dock a boat safely have been answered by my supervisor.

Employee Name _____

Employee Signature _____

Date _____

Supervisor Name _____

Supervisor Signature _____

Date _____

This information is proprietary and is intended to assist you in your safety efforts. It must not be assumed that every unsafe condition or procedure has been covered in this document, nor that every possible loss potential, and legal violation has been identified herein. This document is not a substitute for the establishment of risk management programs by your management.

To access additional resources, visit the Risk Management Resource Center on www.eains.com, or contact your Regional Eastern office 1.855.533.3444.