

Code of Practice

Working On, Over or Adjacent to Water

OSHJ-CoP-38



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1 Introduction

Work on, over or adjacent to water happens as: construction work on bridges, docks, ports, piers etc.; working on bridges, docks, ports, piers etc.; commercial fishing; commercial vessels; Marine enforcement and rescue. Work on, over or adjacent to water impose additional risks due to the nature of the work environment which requires entities to consider additional control measures to provide safe and healthy workplace for the employees and others affected by their work.

2 Purpose and Scope

This Code of Practice (CoP) has been developed to provide information to entities to assist them in complying with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah.

This Code of Practice (CoP) defines the minimum acceptable requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah, and entities can apply practices higher than, but not lower than those mentioned in this document, as they demonstrate the lowest acceptable level of compliance in the Emirate of Sharjah.

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

No.	Item	Page Number
1.	Entities:	Government Entities: Government departments, authorities or establishments and the like in the Emirate. Private Entities: Establishments, companies, enterprises and economic activities operating in the Emirate in general.

2.	Risk:	Is the combination of likelihood of the hazard causing the loss and the severity of that loss (consequences).
3.	Risk Assessment:	The systematic identification of workplace hazards and evaluation of the risks associated. This process takes existing control measures into account and identifies and recommends further control measures where required.
4.	Hazard:	Anything that has the potential to cause harm or loss (injury, disease, ill-health, property damage etc).
5.	Competence:	The combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply all of them to perform their work.
6.	Workplace:	A place that the entity allocates for the performance of the work. This term shall also include the employees' resting places, their accommodation and similar places that the entity allocates to his employees.
7.	Manufacturer's Manual:	The instructions, procedures and recommendations provided by the manufacturer to ensure the safe operation, maintenance and repair of the equipment.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Entity Responsibilities

- Identify work locations and activities that are on, over or adjacent to water and undertake an assessment to identify all significant hazards to employees and others.
- Implement effective control measures to manage risks to ensure work activities are conducted safely and without risk to health.
- Ensure risks from falling into water and drowning are adequately managed.
- Ensure working on, over or adjacent to water is adequately planned and supervised.
- Have an adequate emergency response plan in place.
- Ensure that the employees involved in the rescue process are adequately trained and competent.
- Provide emergency rescue equipment which is adequately maintained, inspected and available for the planned work activities.
- Ensure employees are provided with the necessary safety information, instruction, supervision and training.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- Not endanger themselves or others.
- Follow precautionary control measures to ensure work activities are performed safely and without risk to health.
- Cooperate with the entity and receive safety information, instruction, supervision and training.

- Report any activity or defect which they know are likely to introduce risks to the safety and health of themselves or that of any other person.

5 Requirements

The entity should ensure that they identify the specific hazards and control measures required for the activities and locations working on, over or adjacent to water that affect employees and others affected by their work.

Employees working on, over or adjacent to water should not be working alone.

5.1 Planning

The entity should plan their work activities, ensuring they are appropriately supervised and carried out safely. Planning includes conducting a risk assessment, the selection and use of work equipment and preparation for emergencies.

The entity should ensure those affected by working on, over or adjacent to water understand the hazards and risks associated, control measures in place, emergency procedures and what they must do to comply with it.

5.2 Risk Assessment

The entity should assess working on, over or adjacent to water and the hazards arising from these work activities and implement effective control measures to reduce the exposure to employees. Risks associated with working on, over or adjacent to water, include but not limited to:

- People slipping, tripping or falling into water from edges.
- Inadequate lighting and poor visibility.
- Working at height over water.
- Employees working in heat.

- Electrical equipment encountering water.
- Water current and working environment.
- People unable to swim.
- Conducting rescues.

The following points should be taken into consideration when undertaking a risk assessment, including but not limited to:

- Type of work to be performed.
- Duration of work.
- Weather conditions.
- Review of required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Review of emergency procedures and contact numbers.
- The preparation and competence of the employees performing work.

Further information on risk assessment can be found in OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control.

5.3 Safe Means of Access and Egress

The entity should ensure that employees and others working on over or adjacent to water have safe access and egress including, but not limited to:

- Access and egress routes should be free from any obstruction and kept clear of substances likely to cause a slip, trip or fall.
- Adequate lighting should be provided at all access and egress routes.
- All walking and working surfaces should be kept clean, dry, and unobstructed.
- A process for reporting and cleaning up spills should be in place.

- Where practical, provide open areas of water with a barrier and/or handrails.
- Secure ramps during loading and offloading operations.
- Repair leaks from hoses, pipelines and valves immediately.
- Paint the perimeter and tripping hazards in a contrasting color.

5.4 Working at Height

When working on, over or adjacent to water there can be a risk of falling into water from height. The entity should control these activities in the same manner as other work at height activities, including but not limited to:

- Suitable guard rails and toe-boards should be installed at edges to make a work platform or other place of work safe by preventing falls.
- Safe access and access should be provided for the working platform.
- Stairs shall have handrails at an appropriate height to assist people when ascending and descending the stairs.
- If a safe working platform cannot be provided, then suitable personal fall protection systems should be implemented.
- Suitable safety signage should be prominently displayed at all edges working on, over or adjacent to water to warn people of the danger of falling.

Further information on working at height can be found in OSHJ-CoP-04: Work at Height Safety.

5.5 Barricading and Signage

The entity should provide adequate physical barriers to prevent people falling into water, these control measures could include but not limited to:

- Mesh or hoarding fencing panels.
- Scaffolding tube and fitting to construct temporary walkways and handrails.
- Free standing A-frame barricades.

Barricading should be erected by competent persons with suitable hazard warning signage prominently displayed.

Further information on barricading can be found in OSHJ-GL-24: Barricading.

5.6 Lighting

The entity should provide adequate lighting, including but not limited to:

- For the any work to ensure work can be conducted safely.
- For work at night ensuring work areas, access and egress points, stairways and edges to water.
- Is sufficient for the work activities being performed and positioned to avoid glare and shadowing.
- Spotlights are available on rescue boats to assist in the search for people in water.
- On working platforms afloat or sited near to shore, including navigation lighting.

Further information on lighting can be found in OSHJ-CoP-15: Employee Welfare and Wellbeing.

5.7 Electrical Equipment

The entity should ensure the electrical equipment selected for working on, over or adjacent to water are suitable for the nature of the work activities and the

working environment. Where electrical equipment is used additional control measures will be required, including but not limited to:

- Residual current devices should be used with portable electrical equipment and tools.
- Electrical cabling should be supported and tied up to prevent cabling falling into water.
- Electrical cabling should be of a length that if they fall from their support, they do not come into contact with water.
- Cabling is managed to keep walkways clear and to not present a tripping hazard.
- The use of electrical equipment should be adequately controlled and supervised.

Further information on electrical equipment can be found in OSHJ-CoP-05: Electrical Safety at Work.

5.8 Housekeeping

The entity should ensure the workplaces on, over or adjacent to water should have good housekeeping arrangements to reduce slips, trips and falls and the build up of waste materials, including but not limited to:

- Equipment, tools and materials are adequately stored when not in use;
- Waste materials are removed and stored in a designated area.
- Any spillage of liquids and substances are cleaned up immediately to prevent slips.
- Spill kits should be available to immediately treat any spillage of oils and grease.

Further information on handling and disposal of waste materials can be found in OSHJ-CoP-19: Waste Management.

5.9 Weather and Water Conditions

The entity should monitor the weather conditions and advise of any potential dangers that are forecast. Should weather conditions deteriorate during work activities that could affect the safety of employees then the work should be stopped by the entity.

The entity should consider the weather conditions, including but not limited to:

- Wind speed.
- Water conditions.
- Working in heat.
- Timing of high and low tides.
- Any other weather conditions could affect safety and health.

5.10 Life Saving Equipment

The entity should provide the employees working on, over or adjacent to water with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) including but not limited to:

- Suitable personal fall protection systems when collective protection control measures and prevention of falls cannot be achieved.
- Lifejackets and/or buoyancy aids.
- Lifebuoys fitted with a 30 meter buoyant life line.
- Lifelines, grab lines or throw lines which are of a sufficient length, allowing for tidal movements, the working height above the water or for the person being carried downstream by a current.

- Suitable safety helmets to provide head protection with chin straps to prevent the safety helmet falling off.
- Suitable footwear to protect feet and provide a good grip.
- Ring Lifebuoy are available in different locations working on, over or adjacent to water and are provided for emergency rescue operations.
- Any other PPE identified as being required in the risk assessment.

Further information on PPE can be found in OSHJ-CoP-27: Personal Protective Equipment.

5.11 Water Transport and Rescue Boats

All transportation to and from work places situated on water are subject to relevant Authority requirements for controlling the movement of boats and vessels in the Emirate of Sharjah, including but not limited to:

- Are operated by competent employees.
- Are not overloaded with passengers or cargo beyond its safe carrying capacity.
- Operate at a safe speed suitable to the weather and water conditions.
- Have effective two way communication available at all times between the boat and shore.
- Have adequate navigation lighting to enable other water users to recognise the boats position and what the boat is doing.
- Have adequate firefighting and life saving equipment for the size of the boat and the number of people onboard, including but not limited to:
 - Life jackets.
 - Lifebuoys and rescue lines.

- Distress flares.
- First aid equipment and trained first-aiders.
- Fire fighting equipment, including appropriate fire extinguishers.
- Other equipment required to rescue people from the water.
- All safety equipment carried onboard should be:
 - In good condition and meet appropriate standards or specifications.
 - Maintained and serviced according to the manufacturer's manual.
 - Replaced before the expiry date listed in the manufacturer's manual, if applicable.
 - Stored in easily accessible locations.

5.12 Maintenance and Inspection

The entity should ensure a competent person determines the nature, frequency and extent of any maintenance and inspection, taking account of such factors as the type of equipment, how and where it is used and the likelihood of deterioration. Periods between maintenance and inspection should be chosen on the basis of risk assessment, the type of equipment and manufacturer's manual.

All equipment used on over or adjacent to water, should be inspected:

- Before first use.
- Before each use, such as a visual pre-user check.
- After each time it is re-installed.
- After any event that could affect equipment.
- At specific intervals with a detailed thorough examination.

Maintenance and inspection should include boats, work at height equipment, accessories, rescue equipment and PPE. The entity shall record and retain records of maintenance and inspection.

Further information on the selection, inspection and maintenance of work equipment can be found in OSHJ-CoP-13: Safe Work Equipment.

6 Training

The entity should provide information and training in languages and in a format that employees understand. Training for employees performing work activities on, over or adjacent to water, should consider the following, including but not limited to:

- How to raise the alarm.
- How to rescue people from water.
- Information on emergency rescue procedures.
- Training on how to use rescue equipment.
- First aid.
- Information and training on personal protective equipment identified as required for the work activities.

Periodic refresher training should be conducted to ensure employees' competence is maintained, including but not limited to:

- Where training certification has expired.
- Where identified as part of a training needs analysis.
- Where risk assessment findings identify training as a measure to control risks.
- Where is there a change in legal requirements.

- Where incident investigation findings recommend refresher training.

The entity must record and maintain accurate training records of OSH training provided to employees.

Further information on training can be found in OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence.

7 Emergency Preparedness and Response

A written emergency response plan appropriate to potential emergencies when work is conducted on, over or adjacent to water is required. The entity should consider the following factors when developing an emergency preparedness and response plan, including but not limited to:

- The location of the work.
- The nature and type of work activities being conducted.
- The type of body of water, for example tides, currents, water depth and temperature.
- Control measures in place to protect employees from falling.
- The number of people involved.
- The planned work schedule.
- Weather conditions.
- The type of working platforms that will be available.
- How employees and equipment will be transported.
- The procedures to be followed when a person falls into the water, including the type of boat, rescue equipment needed, first aid procedures, etc.

The entity should ensure that, including but not limited to:

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- Emergency equipment is immediately available to rescue a person from water.
- Employees are competent to perform an emergency rescue, without endangering themselves.
- Emergency response personnel are available, who can take charge and make decisions on behalf of the entity during an emergency and liaise with emergency services.
- Adequate first aid and any rescue equipment identified as required, is available at the location prior to the work being conducted.
- Employees are trained and receive periodic refresher training in emergency responses, including information on first aid arrangements and where first-aiders, first aid equipment and facilities are located.
- Employees are appointed as first-aiders and available at each location and on each working shift where work is being conducted.

Further information on first aid can be found in OSHJ-CoP-16: First Aid at Work.

Further information on developing an emergency plan can be found in OSHJ-CoP-18: Emergency Preparedness and Response.

8 References

OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control

OSHJ-CoP-04: Work at Height Safety

OSHJ-CoP-05: Electrical Safety at Work

OSHJ-CoP-13: Safe Work Equipment

OSHJ-CoP-15: Employee Welfare and Wellbeing

OSHJ-CoP-16: First Aid at Work

OSHJ-CoP-18: Emergency Preparedness and Response

OSHJ-CoP-19: Waste Management

OSHJ-CoP-27: Personal Protective Equipment

OSHJ-CoP-37: Barricading

OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence

9 Document Amendment Record

TITLE		Working On, Over or Adjacent to Water	
DOCUMENT AMENDMENT RECORD			
Version	Revision Date	Amendment Details	Pages Affected
1	15 SEP 2021	New Document	N/A
2	04 JUL 2024	The document changed from a guideline to a code of practice. The document code was changed from OSHJ-GL-25 to OSHJ-CoP-38.	19
2	04 JUL 2024	Checklist Added	
3	01 MAY 2026	The name has been changed from the Prevention and Safety Authority to Sharjah Police Headquarters	
3	01 MAY 2026	The logo has been changed	Applied throughout the entire document

APPENDIX 1. Checklist

The inspection checklist is used by Sharjah Police Headquarters to monitor compliance levels during audit and inspection operations. It is not intended for use by government entities or private establishments.

Each code of practice or guideline issued by Sharjah Police under the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System includes mandatory requirements that employers operating in the Emirate of Sharjah must comply with. Each manual is accompanied by an inspection checklist that summarizes the essential items used by Sharjah Police Headquarters auditors to verify compliance by government entities and private establishments. Auditors may add additional essential items where necessary.

The inspection checklist includes a reference to the relevant section of the manual for each essential item, along with examples of acceptable compliance evidence. Auditors may request additional compliance evidence based on the condition of the item, as well as the severity and potential impact of any non-compliance.

Sharjah Police Headquarters auditors use the inspection checklist to prepare a comprehensive report on the compliance status of the entity. The same checklist is also used to monitor violations of manual standards. Non-compliance with these standards constitutes a violation of Executive Council Resolution No. (15) of 2021 concerning the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System. Where non-compliance is identified, violations may be issued in accordance with the approved violation list.

This manual provides requirements and standards that employers conducting activities in the Emirate of Sharjah must adhere to in order to ensure the safety of workers, property, and the environment. Compliance with the requirements of this manual contributes to improving occupational safety and health performance in the workplace and helps protect entities from violations or financial penalties resulting from non-compliance.

The Executive Council Resolution of the Emirate of Sharjah requires employers to exercise due diligence to ensure the safety and health of workers, contractors, visitors, and all persons affected by the employer's activities. To prevent non-compliance, employers must ensure full adherence to the requirements of the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System. Entities are expected to develop their own internal procedures and inspection checklists in accordance with their activities, nature of work, and risk level.

Based on recorded or reported incidents, and where necessary, Sharjah Police may amend the requirements of this manual. Accordingly, the associated inspection checklist may also be updated. Occupational safety and health practitioners must ensure they remain informed of all published standards and any amendments to the inspection checklists issued with each manual.

Audit/Inspection Checklist

Code Title	Working On Over Or Adjacent to Roads	Code No.	OSHJ-CoP-38	Rev. No.	3.0
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Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
1.	Is the risk associated with working on, over, or adjacent to water identified and assessed?	5, 5.1, 5.2, 7: Guidelines, Planning, Risk Assessment, Emergency Preparedness and Response	Check risk assessment Document.
2.	Are there proper arrangements for access and egress?	5.3: Safe Means of Access and Egress	- Check the safety of access and egress routes - check if walking and working surfaces are kept clean, dry, and unobstructed. - Verify the presence of barriers and/or handrails in open areas of water - verify the availability of ramps during loading and offloading operations.
3.	Are the risks related to work at height identified and assessed?	5.4 : Working at Height	- Check if guardrails and toe boards are appropriate - check if the access and egress in the working platform are safe

Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
			- Verify the presence of stairs and handrails - check the suitability of the safety signage
4.	Are there adequate physical barriers to prevent people from falling into the water when working On, over, or adjacent to water?	5.5:Barricading and Signage	- Verify the presence of mesh or hoarding fencing panels. - Verify the presence of scaffolding tube and fitting to construct temporary walkways and handrails. - Verify the presence of free-standing A-frame barricades.
5.	is there adequate lighting for working on, over, or adjacent to water?	5.6: lighting	Check the lighting in work areas, access and egress points, stairwells, and water Edges.
6.	Are the risks related to Electrical equipment identified and accessed?	5.7: Electrical Equipment	- Check the use of Residual current devices - Check the length and the support of electrical cabling - check the clearness of walkways

Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
7.	Are there proper arrangements for housekeeping?	5.8: Housekeeping	• Check the workplace Housekeeping • check if waste materials are removed and stored in a designated area. • verify the presence of spill kits
8.	are there weather and water conditions monitoring conducted before working On, over or adjacent to water?	5.9: Weather and Water Conditions	
9.	Is there suitable and worn PPE?	5.10: Life Saving Equipment	• Verify the presence of PPE • Verify the suitability of personal fall protection system • Verify the presence of lifejackets and buoyancy aids. • Verify the suitability of the footwear
10	Are there safe water transportation and rescue boats?	5.11: Water Transport and Rescue Boats	• Check the load of the boat (passengers and cargo) • check if operating at a safe

Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
			speed and suitable for the weather and water conditions from records. • Check the way of communication between the boat and the shore. • visual verification of the navigation lighting • verify the presence of firefighting and life-saving equipment
11	Are the equipment related to working On, Over, or Adjacent to water-maintained properly and are maintenance records retained?	5.12: Maintenance and Inspection	• Check inspection and maintenance records
12	Are the employees trained in the use, risk, and safety measures related to working On, Over or Adjacent to water?	6: Training	• Check training materials/certificates/records
13	is there an emergency response plan when working On, Over, or adjacent to water?	7: Emergency Preparedness and Response	• Check Emergency response plan • Verify the presence of emergency equipment

Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
			Verify the presence of Emergency response personnel