

# CREW WATCH

AUGUST 2023

**DRUG AND ALCOHOL INCIDENTS** ADVICE FOR CREW  
**LIVER HEALTH** DISEASE PREVENTION  
**ENGINE ROOM FIRES** OIL LEAKS OR SPILLS  
**SAFE USE OF POWER TOOLS** GUIDELINES



**BRITANNIA P&I**  
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THIS EDITION OF CREW WATCH BEGINS WITH THE ISSUE OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE IN SHIPPING AND THE PROACTIVE MEASURES THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED TO TACKLE IT. IT IS CRUCIAL FOR COMPANIES TO ESTABLISH CLEAR DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICIES, AS SUBSTANCE ABUSE CAN LEAD TO DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS, ABSENTEEISM AND DIMINISHED PRODUCTIVITY.

SEAFARERS ARE ALSO REMINDED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIVER WHILE AT SEA AND THE PREVENTIVE ACTIONS THAT CAN BE ADOPTED TO AVOID LIVER DISEASES. IT IS KEY THAT SHIP OWNERS AND MANAGERS PLAY A ROLE IN PROMOTING CREW FITNESS AND ENSURING THE NECESSARY VACCINATIONS ARE PROVIDED FOR SEAFARERS, THEREBY FOSTERING BETTER HEALTH ON BOARD.

NEXT WE SHIFT OUR FOCUS TO THE CRITICAL HAZARD OF ENGINE ROOM FIRES. THE CLUB CONTINUES TO SEE INCIDENTS CAUSED BY OIL LEAKS AND SPILLS, EMPHASISING THE NEED FOR PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO PROTECT BOTH VESSELS AND CREWS. OUR GUIDANCE OFFERS VALUABLE ADVICE ON PREVENTING ENGINE ROOM FIRES.

WE ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SAFE USE OF PORTABLE POWER-OPERATED TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT. SADLY, ADHERENCE TO SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PORTABLE POWER TOOLS ON BOARD SHIPS IS OFTEN NEGLECTED, RESULTING IN SERIOUS INJURIES. TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE AND REDUCE INCIDENTS RESULTING FROM THE IMPROPER USE OF GRINDERS AND OTHER POWER TOOLS, THE CLUB HAS COMPILED A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

**Jessie Dunn**  
Editor



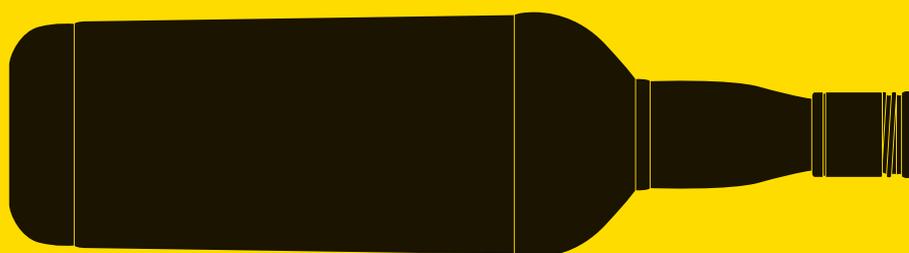
**WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS ISSUE OF CREW WATCH.** We are looking for ways to maintain and increase the usefulness, relevance and general interest of the articles. If you have any ideas or comments please send them to:  
[britanniacommunications@tindallriley.com](mailto:britanniacommunications@tindallriley.com)

# DRUG+ALCOHOL

## RELATED INCIDENTS

**THE CLUB CONTINUES TO SEE INCIDENTS WHERE THE USE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS HAS BEEN A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR.**

**DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE IS A PROBLEM THAT AFFECTS ALL INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING SHIPPING. HOWEVER, THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY CAN BE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO THE PROBLEM DUE TO THE NATURE OF THE WORK. THE LONG HOURS, ISOLATION AND HIGH-STRESS LEVELS EXPERIENCED BY MANY SEAFARERS ARE ALL FACTORS THAT CAN LEAD TO ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE.**



**THE USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL CAN IMPAIR A SEAFARER'S JUDGEMENT AND ABILITY TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES EFFECTIVELY AND SAFELY. IN SOME CASES IT CAN LEAD TO INCIDENTS, INJURIES AND EVEN FATALITIES. ALSO DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE CAN LEAD TO DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS, ABSENTEEISM AND REDUCED PRODUCTIVITY, ALL OF WHICH CAN HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE CREW AND THE VESSEL.**

While the misuse of legal drugs, or the use or possession of illicit or non-prescription drugs is prohibited, alcohol may still be consumed on some ships. The International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) STCW<sup>1</sup> convention requires companies to implement a clearly written drug and alcohol policy. Given the obvious safety risk posed by alcohol consumption, many shipowners have implemented a strict no alcohol policy on board. However, it should also be recognised that for many seafarers relaxing over a beer or a glass wine is an essential part of their social environment on board. Therefore, there is a balance to be struck when a shipowner formulates its alcohol policy. Whilst banning alcohol may enhance safety, it may also comprise a seafarer's wellbeing which can have other serious consequences beyond safety concerns.



<sup>1</sup>Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 Reg. VIII/1

# ADVICE FOR SEAFARERS

**BELOW IS A LIST OF THINGS YOU NEED TO REMEMBER AS A SEAFARER:**

-  **Always comply with your company's drug and alcohol policy** and be aware that some national jurisdictions may enforce stricter requirements
-  **Remember that your drug and alcohol policy may also extend to shore leave.** Being intoxicated ashore may lead to problems with locals, the relevant authorities and lead to the risk of missing your ship's departure time
-  **Do not consume alcohol four hours before your watch** and never be under the influence of alcohol during your work duties
-  Where alcohol consumption is allowed, it should only be purchased as authorised by your company. **Do not bring your own alcohol on board** – undeclared drugs and alcohol could cause major problems during inspections by local authorities
-  **All prescribed drugs should be declared** and handled in accordance with company procedures
-  Be aware of your colleagues. **A colleague found under the influence of drugs or alcohol should not be permitted to perform work duties** – remember an intoxicated work colleague may also compromise your safety
-  **If you notice a crew member or non-crew member who appears to be intoxicated while performing their work tasks on board, raise this with the master or officer on watch**
-  Try to live a balanced and healthy lifestyle and engage in social activities to **enhance your wellbeing.**



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## POST INCIDENT TESTING

As part of a company's incident investigation procedure the requirements for post incident alcohol and drug testing should be defined. Determining whether a casualty, as well as others involved in an incident, were under the influence of alcohol at the time may provide valuable evidence in determining the contributing factors of an incident. However, such testing should be conducted appropriately and without compromising any first aid treatment required.

## CONCLUSION

**Drug and alcohol abuse is a serious problem that can have significant consequences for the safety of the crew, the vessel and the environment. Whilst the shipping industry has recognised this and taken steps to address it, incidents still occur.**

To further address this issue, there needs to be a greater focus on prevention. This includes increasing awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse among seafarers, providing education, training and promoting a culture of drug and alcohol-free work environments. Some shipowners have established drug and alcohol counselling and rehabilitation programmes. These programmes provide anonymous support and assistance to seafarers who are struggling with drug and alcohol addiction.

However, what is also important is to ensure the wellbeing of seafarers. If alcohol is banned on board, introducing other social activities will be essential in preventing seafarers from becoming bored or stressed. If social interaction is missing this could lead to seafarers being tempted by alcohol or drugs to escape the boredom.




**ONBOARD SAFETY**  
**DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**  
**MAY IMPAIR JUDGEMENT**

RESPECT YOUR COMPANY'S POLICY

**SAFE** GUIDANCE ON DRUGS & ALCOHOL  
britanniapandi.com/topic/drugsandalcohol

BRITANNIA P&I

The club has created a poster to be used on board ships to help share the guidance on drugs and alcohol. We have sent the poster out with this issue of Crew Watch. If you require additional copies, please contact us via email: [brtanniaincommunications@tindallriley.com](mailto:brtanniaincommunications@tindallriley.com).

# THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIVER AT SEA

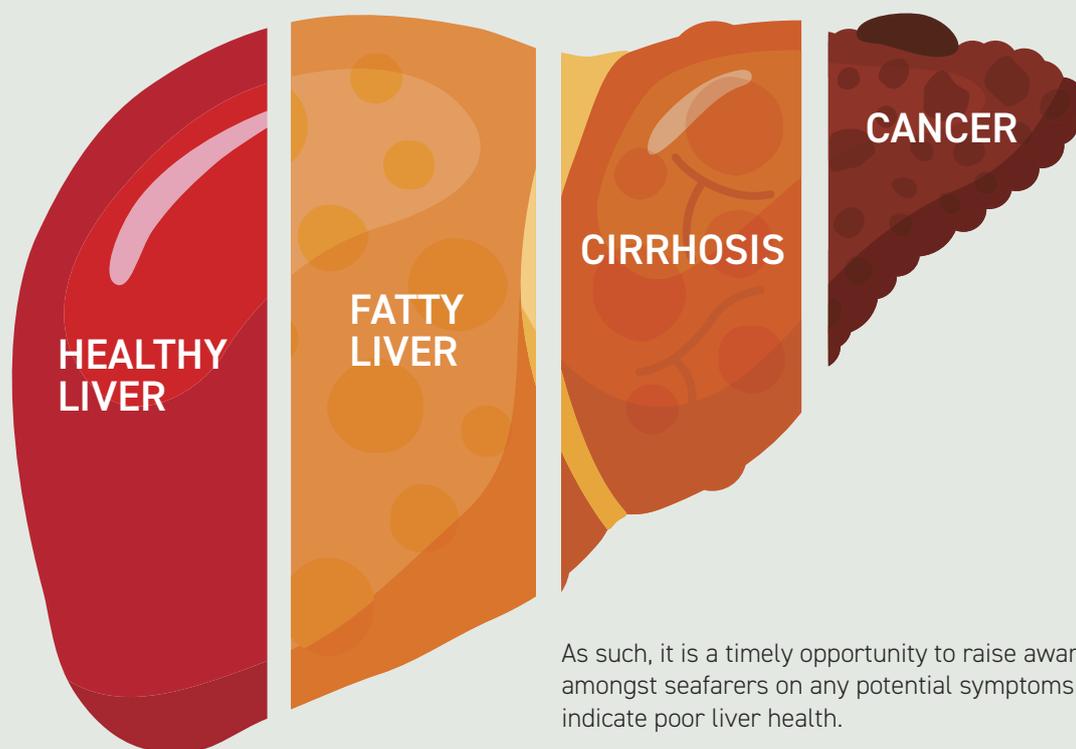
**THE LIVER PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE WITHIN OUR BODIES AND SHOULD BE CAREFULLY LOOKED AFTER FOR IT TO PERFORM ITS MANY IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS. THIS ARTICLE DETAILS WHAT SEAFARERS NEED TO KNOW TO HELP PROTECT THEIR LIVER FROM DISEASE.**

## WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE LIVER?

The liver is the largest solid organ in the body. This remarkable part of the body plays a number of vital roles such as: metabolising drugs and removing toxins, transforming food into energy, storing vitamins, fats, sugars, minerals and producing bile.

## WHAT ARE THE COMMON TYPES OF LIVER DISEASES?

The majority of liver diseases are caused by alcohol use, obesity and viral hepatitis and are therefore preventable. A recent report by Public Health England highlighted that liver diseases increased by almost 21% in 2020 due to alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic.



As such, it is a timely opportunity to raise awareness amongst seafarers on any potential symptoms that could indicate poor liver health.

**THE LIVER CAN BE AFFECTED BY VARIOUS DISEASES, INCLUDING:**

**HEPATITIS** Inflammation of the liver caused by viruses (hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E) or other factors (see poster on page 5)

**CIRRHOSIS** Scarring of the liver that occurs due to long-term damage, such as alcohol abuse or chronic hepatitis

**FATTY LIVER DISEASE** Heavy alcohol consumption can cause an accumulation of fat in the liver. However there is an increasing prevalence of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) which is caused by factors such as obesity and diabetes

**LIVER CANCER** Malignant growths that originate in the liver or spread from other parts of the body.

## HOW CAN LIVER DISEASES BE PREVENTED?

Prevention is key to maintaining a healthy liver and seafarers can take the following steps to prevent liver diseases:



**VACCINATION** Get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B to protect yourself from these viral infections



**PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE** Wash hands frequently, especially before eating or handling food and avoid consuming contaminated water or food



**AVOID EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION** Limit alcohol intake (World Health Organization guidelines recommend no more than 14 units per week). Any alcohol consumption should also comply with the company's alcohol policy, which would have been formulated with industry and medical guidance



**EAT HEALTHILY** Including a range of fruit, vegetables, legumes (e.g. lentils and beans), nuts and whole grains



**REGULAR EXERCISE** Aim for between 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity and two muscle-strengthening activities per week, using the on board gymnasium



**SAFE SEX PRACTICES** Use barrier methods, such as condoms, to prevent the transmission of hepatitis B and other sexually transmitted infections



**PRACTICE SAFE NEEDLE HANDLING** Avoid sharing needles or other equipment for injections, as this can increase the risk of contracting hepatitis C or other bloodborne infections.

## WHAT ARE THE COMMON SYMPTOMS OF LIVER DISEASES?

Liver diseases often present similar symptoms, including:

- **FATIGUE AND WEAKNESS**
- **JAUNDICE** (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- **ABDOMINAL PAIN AND SWELLING**
- **NAUSEA AND VOMITING**
- **LOSS OF APPETITE AND WEIGHT LOSS**
- **DARK URINE AND PALE STOOLS**
- **ITCHY SKIN**
- **EASY BRUISING AND BLEEDING.**

If you experience any symptoms associated with liver diseases, it is important to take action promptly – always consult a healthcare professional who can evaluate your symptoms, perform diagnostic tests and provide appropriate treatment.

### LOOKING AFTER YOUR LIVER: SEAFARERS AND LIFE ON SHIPS

To protect your liver from diseases, be sure to take care of your overall health by following the prevention methods mentioned. Vessel operators should also consider investing in crew fitness as a way of promoting health on the vessel and seafarers should get any necessary vaccinations in their home countries.

Liver disease can be a potential risk for all of us, but by understanding how to protect your liver and keep it healthy, knowing the common symptoms of liver disease and seeking medical care early, you can take proactive steps to safeguard the health of your liver.



This advice was compiled in collaboration with Future Care & International SOS, who implement health and security solutions to tens of thousands of global clients. They provide commercial vessels with high quality medical advice and assistance wherever they are in the world, 24/7/365, improving the overall health and wellness of the seafarers onboard.

# VIRAL HEPATITIS IS AN INFLAMMATION OF THE LIVER

The poster below produced by International SOS highlights the key facts. It can be downloaded at: <https://bit.ly/cwhepatitis>

## VIRAL HEPATITIS FACTS

Hepatitis is an **inflammation** of the **liver**



A person dies every **30 seconds** due to causes related to hepatitis.\*



Hepatitis is present **worldwide**\*

There are **5 main viruses** that can cause hepatitis:



### HOW IS HEPATITIS SPREAD?

 <p><b>Faecal-oral route</b> Contaminated food and water Raw or undercooked food Contaminated objects</p>	 <p><b>Blood-borne route</b> Exposure to infected body fluids - blood or semen Through sharing needles and syringes From an infected mother to her unborn child</p>	 <p><b>Person-to-person contact</b> Sexual contact with infected person From patient to parent or caregiver</p>
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### Common symptoms of hepatitis



- > Fever
- > Fatigue
- > Loss of appetite
- > Nausea/vomiting
- > Abdominal discomfort/pain
- > Jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes); dark urine



### Visit your doctor and get tested!

Many people do not show symptoms of hepatitis, yet can spread the illness.

### PREVENT HEPATITIS!

 <p>Wash your hands with safe water and soap</p>	 <p>Choose safe food and water</p>	 <p>Practise good sanitation and proper waste disposal</p>
 <p>Only use needles once and ensure they are sterile</p>	 <p>Don't share personal items such as toothbrushes and razors</p>	 <p>Practise safer sex, use condoms</p>



### There are vaccines to protect people from hepatitis A and B

There is a vaccine for hepatitis E but only available in China.\*\*

Know your risks, speak to your doctor and get vaccinated.



Source:  
\* World Hepatitis Day 2022 <https://www.worldhepatitiday.org/>  
\*\* World Health Organization - Hepatitis E Fact sheet

This infographic has been developed for educational purposes only and is correct at the time of publication. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Should you have any questions or concerns about any topic in the infographic, please consult your medical professional.

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# ENGINE ROOM FIRES: OIL LEAKS OR SPILLS



ENGINE ROOM FIRES ARE A MAJOR HAZARD ON SHIPS. THEY CAN CAUSE SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO THE VESSEL, ENDANGER THE CREW AND LEAD TO COSTLY DELAYS.

THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION'S (IMO) RESEARCH FOUND **BETWEEN 30% AND 50% OF ALL FIRES ON MERCHANT SHIPS ORIGINATE IN THE ENGINE ROOM AND, OF THOSE FIRES, 70% ARE CAUSED BY OIL LEAKS.**

THIS IS AN AREA IN WHICH THE CLUB CONTINUES TO SEE INCIDENTS AND THIS GUIDANCE WILL THEREFORE FOCUS ON THOSE ENGINE ROOM FIRES CAUSED BY OIL LEAKS OR SPILLS.

Oil fires can occur when hot surfaces or sparks ignite flammable oil vapours. Oil vapours can be created when oil is heated, spilled, or splashed. The minimum temperature at which an oil vapour will ignite is called its minimum autoignition temperature (MAIT). The MAIT for different types of oil varies, but it is typically around 250°C.

High-pressure sprays of oil can ignite immediately, while liquid leaks can take a few seconds to ignite. This is because it takes time for the oil to evaporate and form a flammable concentration of vapour.





**TO PREVENT OIL FIRES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP ALL OIL WITHIN ITS INTENDED SYSTEMS. THIS WILL HELP TO PREVENT THE BUILDUP OF FLAMMABLE VAPOURS. THE FOLLOWING SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED:**

- Oil levels in engines and other equipment should be kept at the recommended levels
- Bilges should be kept clean and dry
- Oil soaked rags should be disposed of in accordance with the vessel's garbage management plan
- Hoses and seals should be regularly inspected for leaks and minor leaks should be repaired without delay
- Connections on fuel systems should be properly maintained to prevent leakage
- Hot surfaces should be cladded or shielded so that they do not become a source of ignition. Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires surfaces that come into contact with oil and have temperatures above 220°C to be insulated.

**ADDITIONALLY, OIL FIRES MAY OCCUR WHEN OPERATING THE VESSEL'S INCINERATOR PLANT TO BURN SLUDGE STORED IN WASTE OIL SETTLING TANKS. WHEN CARRYING OUT THIS PROCEDURE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE:**

- Drainage of oil from open systems is never to be left unsupervised and never in the vicinity of hot surfaces that may cause an immediate fire hazard
- System functions, such as quick closing valves, should not be tampered with and should be functioning as designed and regularly tested
- Oil should not be drained from an open system
- Incinerators should not be operated during rough seas
- Drip trays and save-alls should be kept clean and dry
- Wire gauze fitted in drains or tundishes should be fitted so as to not obstruct flow
- Drain lines should be kept clear.

**ENGINE ROOM FIRES CAN BE A SERIOUS HAZARD TO VESSELS AND THEIR CREWS. THEY CAN CAUSE SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE, LOSS OF LIFE AND FINANCIAL LOSS. BY CONSIDERING THE ABOVE GUIDANCE, VESSEL OWNERS AND OPERATORS CAN HELP TO PREVENT ENGINE ROOM FIRES AND PROTECT THEIR SHIPS AND CREWS. MEMBERS REQUIRING ANY FURTHER GUIDANCE ARE ADVISED TO CONTACT THE BRITANNIA LOSS PREVENTION DEPARTMENT.**

**ADHERENCE TO SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PORTABLE POWER TOOLS ON BOARD SHIPS IS OFTEN NEGLECTED AND THIS CAN RESULT IN INJURIES TO THE EYES, CHEST AND HANDS. UNFORTUNATELY SOME OF THESE INJURIES HAVE BEEN FATAL, DESPITE BEING AVOIDABLE THROUGH TAKING APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS DURING ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS INVOLVING POWER TOOLS.**

# **THE SAFE USE OF PORTABLE POWER-OPERATED TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT**



**THE MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED ARE THE REMOVAL OF SAFETY SLEEVES FROM NEEDLE SCALERS, THE REMOVAL OF SAFETY GUARDS, OR THE INEFFECTIVE MODIFICATION OF SAFETY GUARDS. INDIVIDUALS HAVE ALSO BEEN TAMPERING WITH OR BYPASSING SAFETY CUT-OUT DEVICES ON TOOLS, USING METHODS LIKE WIRING, TAPING OR OTHER MEANS. ELECTRIC TOOLS SIMILARLY SUFFER FROM POOR GENERAL MAINTENANCE, INCLUDING WIRING FAULTS.**



**TO REDUCE INCIDENTS OCCURRING FROM THE INCORRECT USE OF GRINDERS AND OTHER POWER TOOLS, THE CLUB HAVE COMPILED THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH ARE NOT TO BE CONSIDERED EXHAUSTIVE:**

■ PRIOR TO USE, ALL TOOLS SHOULD UNDERGO DAILY INSPECTION AND SAFETY CHECKS

■ SAFETY GUARDS SHOULD NEVER BE MODIFIED OR REMOVED FROM ANY TOOL

■ BEFORE OPERATING EACH TOOL, ENSURE THAT SAFETY CUT-OUT DEVICES ARE FUNCTIONAL

■ TEST AND VISUALLY INSPECT THE WIRING AND OVERALL CONDITION OF ELECTRICAL TOOLS TO ENSURE SAFETY

■ ALL USERS MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH AND WEAR APPROPRIATE FACE SHIELDS, EYE PROTECTION, HEARING PROTECTION AND THE CORRECT TYPE OF SAFETY GLOVES WHEN USING ANY POWER TOOL ON BOARD

■ PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING ON THE SAFE USE OF TOOLS TO ALL PERSONNEL AND CONDUCT PRE-WORK RISK ASSESSMENTS

■ WHERE POWER SUPPLY WIRES PASS THROUGH DOORWAYS, THE DOORS SHOULD BE SECURED OPEN

■ DURING TEMPORARY INTERRUPTIONS TO WORK, EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE ISOLATED FROM POWER SOURCES AND LEFT SAFELY OR STOWED AWAY CORRECTLY



■ SEAFARERS SHOULD BE ADVISED NOT TO USE HIGH-SPEED ROTATING TOOLS FOR MORE THAN 30 MINUTES WITHOUT A BREAK UNLESS THE RISK ASSESSMENT INDICATES A SHORTER PERIOD OF USE

■ ENSURE THAT THE RIGHT DISC IS BEING USED FOR THE RIGHT MATERIAL AND AT THE CORRECT SPEED - DISCS COME WITH A MAX ROTATIONS PER MINUTE (RPM). THIS SHOULD NOT BE EXCEEDED

■ DISCS ON GRINDERS SHOULD BE CHANGED WHEN THEY ARE WORN TO PREVENT KICKBACK

■ INSTALL CHAIN LINKAGES OR COMPARABLE MECHANISMS BETWEEN HOSE SECTIONS TO AVOID PNEUMATIC HOSE BREAKAGE AND SUBSEQUENT HOSE WHIPLASH. SAFETY VALVES THAT SHUT OFF THE LINES CAN ALSO BE USED

■ TOOL ACCESSORIES (DRILL BITS, DISCS ETC) SHOULD BE PROPERLY SECURED IN THE TOOL.



**THE ABOVE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF A DETAILED RISK ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT PRIOR TO THE START OF ANY WORK USING ANY POWER TOOLS ON BOARD.**



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