

Winch Gear #4

HSWA FOR SMALL
FISHING VESSELS

Why worry about winch gear?

Commercial fishing is one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. About one in four accidents on a trawler involve a winch.

Many risky situations involve hauling gear. A winch can cause serious accidents if not worked properly.

Winch gear and lifting gear has to cope with heavy loads in wet and salty conditions. Keeping gear safe and well maintained is vital to the performance of the vessel and the safety of the crew.

Inspect hauling and lifting gear regularly and fix it if something is wrong. This includes trawl blocks, hauling blocks, guide-on gear, emergency stop devices, davits, derricks, booms, cranes, rigging gear and rigging. It includes both fixed and portable components (i.e. eyes, shackles and blocks).

What HSWA says about safety

Winch gear and lifting gear are risky and must be managed.

Crew (both those on wages and those who are self-employed) must take reasonable care to ensure that nothing they do at work harms themselves or any other person. You are responsible for taking sensible safety precautions – like letting your skipper know about any issues with the gear and following safe operating procedures.

Operators and skippers must make sure the boat is safe (so far as is reasonably practicable). Operators must involve workers in managing risks on the boat. This is a good opportunity for you to raise any concerns you have about winch gear or lifting gear on your vessel.

The main reasons for accidents

- › Lifting gear is not fitted properly
- › Gear is not maintained
- › Loose clothing
- › Standing in a dangerous position

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Being safe with lifting gear

Inspections that you should do

Make sure the gear fitted is of the correct size and capacity to do the job safely.

Carry out inspections to check that;

1. The eyes on the eyes haven't elongated.
2. Shackles and alike aren't worn too thin.
3. There are safety chains attached to blocks.
4. The block sheaves are not too worn.
5. The wire is not showing signs of wear (i.e. fraying, crimped or rusting).
6. The pins and bushes in blocks are running smoothly and there is not too much movement between them.

Upkeep points

Maintain equipment regularly by:

1. Keeping moving parts well lubricated with salt water resistant grease.
2. Keep paint on exterior of blocks and hanging eyes in good condition.
3. Lubricate wire regularly.
4. Keep a record of all maintenance undertaken on lifting gear.

Operation

1. Make sure that all personnel involved in lifting and slinging operations both at sea and alongside know the correct signals.
2. Make all movements smooth and gradual.
3. Avoid sudden shocks or strains and beware of side pulls.
4. Avoid dangerous positions – stepping on a taut line or standing in a bight or standing in the “line of pull” of a taut rope or cable that might give way.

5. Never walk or stand under a load.
6. Keep your load within the Safe Working Load (SWT) limit.
7. Remember the load may be low but the FORCE is where the load is slung from. THIS AFFECTS STABILITY.
8. Stay out from under booms and cranes while lifting operations are in progress.
9. Avoid swinging a load.
10. Attach steady lines to heavy or unwieldy loads.
11. Don't stand between the load and fixed objects.
12. Wear hard hats and safety shoes.

Appropriate Clothing

Think sensibly about the clothes you and your crew wear to sea, and remember your personal protective equipment (safety gear).

1. Wear close-fitting clothing, which is less likely to get caught in nets, lines or machinery.
2. Keep long hair tucked under a hat and tied back.
3. Avoid wearing rings and other jewellery.
4. Wear good footwear. Make sure the soles of your safety boots are still in good condition. Your favourite boots may be comfortable after years of wear, but if the soles are too smooth you could slip and fall.
5. Wear cotton or wool in case you have a fire or fall over board.
6. Dirty or oily clothing can cause skin problems. You should wash your working clothes frequently and keep them as clean as possible.

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Report any accident

A master or skipper must report any accident, incident or serious harm injury under section 31 of the Maritime Transport Act 1994. This applies to all New Zealand vessels. You must report an accident “as soon as practicable”. This means as soon as you are able to do so after you have secured the safety of people, your boat and the environment, and when you have communication available.

Sometimes people are concerned that reporting an accident or incident to MNZ will result in prosecution. In exceptional circumstances, MNZ may use the information provided to support an investigation, however this is very rarely the case.

SAFETY =  + HSWA

For tips on safe fishing go to
www.maritimenz.govt.nz/winches

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