

S32 – Opening Statement

Working on Open Bodies of Water & Lagoons

The Working Near Water Procedure covers the management and control of open bodies of water and lagoons in the workplace.

The procedure outlines the potential hazards associated with lagoons, and suggests some control measures to consider when completing a risk assessment.

Additionally, there are pointers for completing a permit to work. The procedure should be read in conjunction with the permit to work procedures. There is guidance on what should be included in an emergency rescue plan.



S32 – Working on Open Bodies of Water & Lagoons

What is this?

This is a written procedure which covers the management and control of open bodies of water and lagoons.

The person responsible for implementing this procedure is:

What do responsible managers need to do?

Responsible managers must ensure that:

- Through a risk assessment, they identify all hazards associated with working on open bodies of water or lagoons;
 - They attempt to eliminate the necessity to work over water or silt;
 - All employees are informed of the risk assessment findings;
 - Any improvements identified through the risk assessment are transferred onto a site action plan to monitor compliance;
 - Relevant employees are given training on the safe access to, and work on, water and lagoons;
 - Suitable equipment and resources are provided for the work;
 - An emergency response plan is put into place and has been communicated to all employees (and, if applicable, contractors); and
 - All employees and contractors are aware that a permit to work must be issued prior to any person working on open bodies of water or lagoons.
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What do employees and contractors need to do?

Employees and contractors must:

- Co-operate with the responsible manager so far as it is necessary to ensure that the work is safe;
- Use the safety equipment provided for the task;
- **Not** work on open water or lagoons unless they have received suitable training and have been authorized to do so;



- Never work alone on open water and lagoons;
 - Report and not use any defective equipment used for the work; and
 - Ensure they understand the emergency response plan.
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Open bodies of water and lagoon hazards

Potential hazards on open bodies of water and lagoons are:

- Water
- Adverse weather
- Cold temperature
- Unstable working platforms
- Soft ground and silt
- Slip, trips and falls.

Note: The above is not an exhaustive list, but it provides an overview of the general hazards people may be faced with when working on open bodies of water or lagoons.

What controls are required to work on open bodies of water or lagoons?

The following control measures should be considered:

- Avoid the need to work on open water or lagoons by either modifying the area or undertaking the work from alongside.
- Reduce the exposure time of people working over the water or on the lagoon. Ensure regular rest breaks are taken.
- Ensure all persons working on open bodies of water or lagoons have received specific training.
- Write a specific safe system of work (including an emergency plan) to be used whilst operating on open bodies of water or lagoons. The emergency plan should be tested at least once every year.
- Appoint a competent person to supervise the work being undertaken.
- Ensure that any walkways and access platforms are safe to use.
- Ensure the working area is well lit.
- Where a safety boat is provided, check the equipment at the start of each shift.
- Provide employees with two-way radios or other communication methods.
- Ensure suitable access is available in regularly accessed areas.
- Ensure all personnel wear a life jacket whatever task is being performed if there is a likelihood of falling into the water.
- Ensure lifebuoys are available at the water/lagoon edge.



- Issue other items of personal protective equipment to persons entering and working.
- Ensure the open body of water or lagoon has a suitable boundary to stop unauthorised access.

Note: A permit to work system must be introduced prior to undertaking any work on open bodies of water or lagoons.

Permit to work

A permit to work is a tool used to document the completion of a hazard assessment each time access is made onto water. The permit should include the:

- Length of time for which the permit is valid.
- Name(s) of the person(s) that will work on the water.
- Name(s) of the supervisor.
- Location of the lagoon or open water.
- Work being undertaken.
- Personal and emergency equipment available for use.
- Signatures of all relevant persons, along with the date.

Note: The permit should be held by the person undertaking the work and remain in place until the work is completed. An additional copy should be kept by the responsible manager.

Emergency plan

A systematic rescue plan should be developed specific to the lagoon or open body of water. The following should be included within the plan:

- The responsibilities of the safety watch/supervisor.
- How to retrieve people from the water in an emergency.
- The rescue equipment that should be used to perform a rescue operation.
- The first aid provisions which are required (including the names of first aiders).
- The names of the people to be notified in an emergency situation.
- The arrangements for the emergency services (location, map reference, etc)

Note: It should be emphasised in the emergency plan that under no circumstances should a person attempt to rescue somebody unless he/she is competent and it is safe to do so.

Legislation

- Quarries Regulations 1999
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

