

WORKING ALOFT

Working at height is potentially dangerous but risks can be reduced. The Ship's Executive insists that work aloft be carried out safely.

There is an obligation on crew to look out for themselves and their shipmates. A Doctors certificate is required before any climbing can be undertaken.

Doctor's Certificate and Climb Approval have a currency of two years.

Crew members are required to disqualify themselves from climbing as soon as they are aware of a personal impediment that could affect their ability to climb and work aloft safely.

At all times, while climbing and working in the ship's rigging crew are to be clipped on with at least one hook. Thus the two hooks are in use all the time from the deck up, alternating hooks as you move about.

NOTE; The equipment mentioned in this Module is for Safety purposes only. It is NOT to be used to hold, support or suspend a wearer when working aloft. A special working harness is to be used for this purpose.

Assessment:

Open book written assessment on the contents of this module.

A closed book pre climb check list is to be completed prior to practical assessment.

Physical and practical assessment.

Crew will satisfactorily carry out a climbing exercise. i.e. (Climb the shrouds, futtock shrouds to the tops. Cross over and descend on the other side, 3 times. Then climb along the jib boom and return on the other side.)

Climbing assessment at sea.

Successful completion of module is recorded in 'Diary of Service and Experience Log' book.

WORKING ALOFT RULES

It is not compulsory for all crew to climb, however all crew will complete the training and be aware of the rules, especially those who volunteer and wish to be sent and go aloft on the masts and out on the jibboom. Crew are going to spend a lot of time aloft in all types of weather and the sooner they get used to it the easier it will be.

You will be shown how to put on your safety harness, and told what to do and what not to do based on the following.

Climbing.

No crewmember is to climb into the rig of the ship without approval of their watchleader who will clear with the officer of the watch or act under their instructions.

- Always use the weather rigging.
 - a. The wind is keeping it more rigid than the lee rigging.
 - b. If the ship is heeling it is at a better angle.
 - c. The yards and sails will be clear of the rigging.
- Use the shrouds as handholds, NOT the ratlines.
- It is important to “walk” up and over with legs rather than pulling up using arms/upper body.
- Do not use knees to climb onto the tops.
- Clip on to static safety lines where fitted.
- When climbing aloft never let go with one hand until you have a good grip with the other. Always remember one hand for yourself and one hand for the ship. You have four available points of contact when you are going aloft, two feet and two hands. Always have three in contact with the rig. Do not overreach.
- Use both hands when climbing. Do not carry anything aloft in your hands while climbing. Haul tools etc aloft later.
- Never use running rigging as a grip as someone on deck may let it go without warning.
- Never clip onto any running rigging or to a vertical part of the standing rigging which will merely give you a rapid guided descent to the deck. Best advice is, do not fall from aloft.
- Using clips. Reach up and clip on. Climb until the clip is level with your waist then reach up with the other clip and clip on. Un-clip the first clip and climb. Repeat the process.
- Straddle a shroud with your feet, do not have both feet on the one ratline.

- When working aloft clip your safety harness to the safety line that runs along the back of the yards or to a part of the rig that will not move, such as the jackstay on a yard, or a fitting on the mast where you are working.
- When waiting behind another crewmember, clip on and maintain a safe distance below the other climber.
- At all times, while climbing and working in the ship's rigging crew are to be clipped on with at least one hook. Thus the two hooks are in use all the time from the deck up, alternating hooks as you move about.
- When stepping onto braced yards, use both hooks. One on the shrouds while clipping the other onto yard safety wire.
- Do not drop your hooks as there may be someone below you.
- Call when clear of the tops on the way up or down.

Moving onto and along yards.

- Get on and off footropes carefully or you may bounce a shipmate off a yard.
- When laying out onto or leaving a yard, call to others "Stepping out starboard (or port)" or "Stepping off starboard (or port)". Get an acknowledgement from the climbers on the yard, do not just talk to the mast in front of you.
- Only go onto hoisted yards with the Watch Leader's approval (the Watch Leader will have or will get approval from the Officer of the Watch).

Precautions - Halyards have been made fast.

- Braces are taut

Dangers - Halyards parting

- Un-announced use of halyards.

- When going out on a hoisting yard make certain it is in its lifts and the braces are set up taut. Yards can get stuck, and your extra weight will bring it down with a jerk that can easily

throw you off. If the braces are slack the yard will jerk as the ship rolls and again this can throw you off.

- When laying out on a yard, hold on to the jackstay, which is on top of the yard.

Caution; with the sail furled on top of the yard, extreme care should be used when selecting a handhold.

- Never use the following as handholds:
 - A gasket, as it may be loose and give way.
 - The bight of a sail, as the wind may suddenly get into it.
 - The bunt-lines may not be made fast down on deck.
 - The safety line, as you can push others off the yard.
- Never stand on a yard or straddle it unless ordered to for some special task and, when you do, use great care. Think what you will do if the sail suddenly fills with wind, so always have a good grip of a part of the standing rigging.
- Climb directly up or down between the lower and upper topsail yards should only be undertaken by crew who are comfortable with the procedure.

DO NOT USE THE SAFETY WIRES AS FOOT ROPES.

Use the footrope stirrups as a good point for ascending or descending.

Working sails on the yards.

- When loosing or furling sails, remember, loose from lee, furl from windward.
- When casting off gaskets, make sure it is clear below before releasing gasket or gasket coil, call warning "Rope below" before dropping the gasket.
- Do not cast off gaskets until the timber hitches of ALL the gaskets on the yard are undone.

- When pushing a sail off a yard make certain that all the gaskets are off. If one is missed it will either carry away or more probably tear the sail.
- When loosing topsails, loose the lower topsail first then the upper topsail. The reverse applies when furling i.e. Furl the upper then the lower.
- When loosing an upper topsail make certain there is no one on the lower topsail yard before pushing it off into its gear.
- When the sail is in its gear always remember to coil the gasket and place it onto the fore side of the sail . A loose gasket can foul a clew line or buntline block and jam it. If this happens someone will have to go aloft and clear it whilst a thrashing sail tries to knock the person off.
- When calling instructions to the deck, be clear and concise. Attract attention with call “Ahoy on deck”.

Tools.

- When you take tools aloft always put them on lanyards and secures one end to your wrist or belt. You will also be working on gear aloft that cannot be attached to you such as shackles and pins, which are easily dropped with cold hands. If there is a potential danger of you dropping something shout loud and clear “Stand from under” so that anyone on deck has a chance to get out of the way.

General.

- At first you will be very careful working aloft but it is easy to relax and become over confident. Do not get casual or sooner or later you will come to grief so always obey these rules and never fool around aloft. It is a long way to the deck and few people survive the journey.
- The safety harness is a piece of equipment to protect you from hitting the deck if you slip when aloft.

- Always come on deck wearing it because you may be sent aloft without warning.
- No crewmember is to be aloft during departure from, or arrival at, a wharf.
- Do not change the position of another crewmember's hook. Only with their permission and **they** must check.
- **Remember, at all times you must be attached to the rig from the deck up.**
- Report all falls and near misses to the watch Leader or Officer. Details are to be recorded in the Incident Book kept in the Chart Room.