



# GOOD CATCH from **The American Club**

## Tugboat – Mariner Slips on Ice

### Description

A tugboat had just returned to the company dock from assisting with berthing a ship. The temperature was below freezing, and it had been snowing and sleeting all morning. After helping to tie up the tugboat, one of the deckhands was loading groceries from the dock. The deck of the tugboat was icy and slippery in spots and the deckhand was trying to move slowly and carefully.

The engineer was on the mess deck when he heard a yell from the stern and heard a loud sound like when someone falls. He raced out to see what had happened and lend a hand, if necessary. That is when he stepped on an icy patch, lost his footing, and fell. He injured his hip and back resulting in the Captain having to call for an ambulance. The engineer subsequently missed several weeks of work.

The investigation determined that the deckhand had slipped and dropped a milk crate full of groceries. He was able to grab onto a handrail and steady himself without falling. He was not injured. The investigation documented that the engineer thought someone might have fallen and was responding to that yell and loud sound when he hurried to assist and slipped and fell. In addition to the engineer's overly rapid response, a contributing factor was the engineer's boots that were very worn and had very little tread left.

### Actual Injuries & Damages

The engineer had a large bruise on his hip and a back injury that required rest and professional medical treatment. He fully recovered and was able to return to work after several weeks.



# Potential Damages

The engineer could have been hurt much more seriously. Fortunately, there were no broken bones, and he did not hit his head when he slipped and fell.

## Prevention

- ★ Take extra care when snow and ice are present. Footing can be treacherous, and the steel decks, bulkheads, fittings, and equipment are unforgiving.
- ★ Ensure a proper risk assessment is conducted for all work on deck when snow and ice are present. That includes even the most routine work like loading groceries.
- ★ Do not accidentally practice your Winter Olympics skills on deck. There are no maritime medals handed out for “most spectacular fall” and “tugboat ice slipping.”

When you identify a hazard before something goes wrong...

**it's a Good Catch.**

When you stop an operation before something bad happens...

**it's a Good Catch.**

When you recognize that snow and ice have created safety risks that don't exist in warmer and dry conditions...

**that's a Good Catch, too!**



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