

**§ 1918.26 Access to barges and river towboats.**

(a) With the exception of § 1918.25(b)(2), ramps used solely for vehicle access to or between barges shall meet the requirements of § 1918.25.

(b) When employees cannot step safely to or from the wharf and a float, barge, or river towboat, either a ramp meeting the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section or a safe walkway meeting the requirements of § 1918.22(f) shall be provided. When a ramp or walkway cannot be used, a straight ladder meeting the requirements of § 1918.24 and extending at least three feet (.91 m) above the upper landing surface and adequately secured or held against shifting or slipping shall be provided. When neither a walkway nor a straight ladder can be used, a Jacob's ladder meeting the requirements of § 1918.23 shall be provided. Exception: For barges operating on the Mississippi River System, where the employer shows that these requirements cannot reasonably be met due to local conditions, other safe means of access shall be provided.

(c) When a barge or raft is being worked alongside a larger vessel, a Jacob's ladder meeting the requirements of § 1918.23 shall be provided for each gang working alongside unless other safe means of access is provided. However, no more than two Jacob's ladders are required for any single barge or raft being worked.

(d) When longshoring operations are in progress on barges, the barges shall be securely made fast to the vessel, wharf, or dolphins.

**Subpart D—Working Surfaces****§ 1918.31 Hatch coverings.**

(a) No cargo, dunnage, or other material shall be loaded or unloaded by means requiring the services of employees at any partially opened intermediate deck unless either the hatch at that deck is sufficiently covered or an adequate landing area suitable for the prevailing conditions exists. In no event shall such work be done unless the working area available for such employees extends for a distance of 10 feet (3.05 m) or more fore and aft and athwartships.

(b) Cargo shall not be landed on or handled over a covered hatch or 'tween-decks unless all hatch beams are in place under the hatch covers.

(c) Missing, broken, or poorly fitting hatch covers that would not protect employees shall be reported at once to the officer in charge of the vessel. Pending replacement or repairs by the vessel, work shall not be performed in the section containing the unsafe covers or in adjacent sections unless the flooring is made safe.

(d) Hatch covers and hatch beams not of uniform size shall be placed only in the hatch, deck, and section in which they fit properly.

(e) Small trimming hatches in intermediate decks shall be securely covered or guarded while work is going on in the hatch in which they are found, unless they are actually in use.

**§ 1918.32 Stowed cargo and temporary landing surfaces.**

(a) Temporary surfaces on which loads are to be landed shall be of sufficient size and strength to permit employees to work safely.

(b) When the edge of a hatch section or of stowed cargo may constitute a fall hazard to an employee, the edge shall be guarded by a vertical safety net, or other means providing equal protection, to prevent an employee from falling. When the employer can demonstrate that vertical nets or other equally effective means of guarding cannot be used due to the type of cargo, cargo stowage, or other circumstances, a trapeze net shall be rigged at the top edge of the elevation or other means shall be taken to prevent injury if an employee falls. Safety nets shall be maintained in good condition and be of adequate strength for the purpose intended.

(c) When two gangs are working in the same hatch on different levels, a vertical safety net shall be rigged and securely fastened to prevent employees or cargo from falling. Safety nets shall be maintained in good condition and be of adequate strength for the purpose intended.