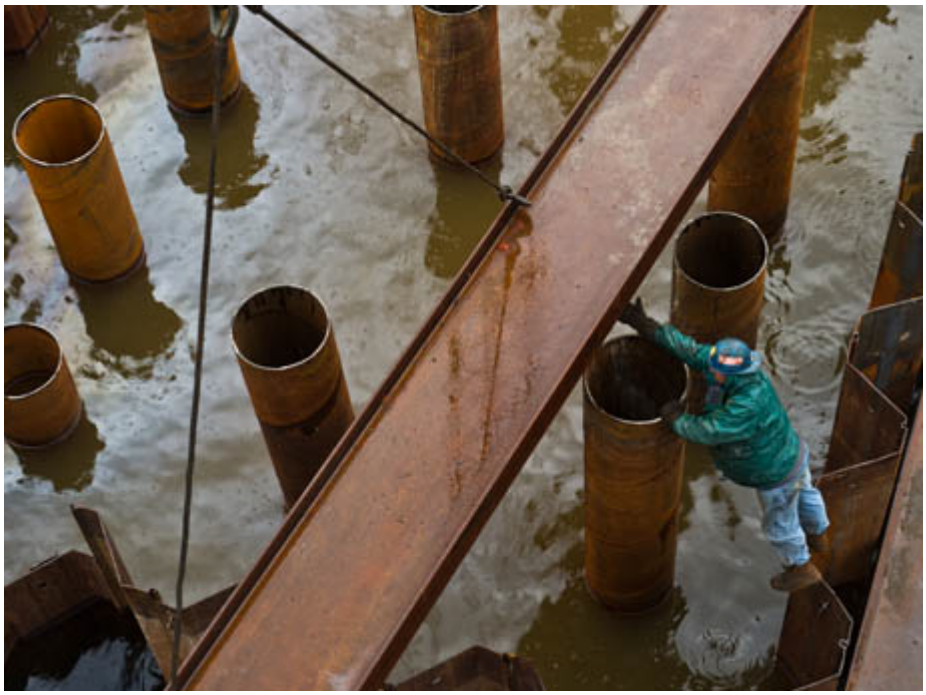
Is This a Safe Way to Work Over Water?

What's wrong with this picture?



I'll bet that water is cold. And should he fall in—a prospect made more likely by his lack of fall protection—he may drown by the time somebody fishes him out.

The Moral: Failure to provide workers working over water protection against drowning hazards is not only highly dangerous but a violation of safety standards.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

3 Things You Need to Know

If you work on or over water or another liquid deep enough to drown you:

1. You need some kind of fall protection so you don't fall in.
2. You need a life vest or personal flotation device in case you do fall in.
3. If you don't have this protection, you're in deep danger—no matter how strong a swimmer you are.

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES

The 5 Kinds of PFDs

Whether you're at work or on the water for fun, one of the most important ways to avoid drowning is to wear a device that will keep you afloat in the water. There are 5 principal types of personal flotation devices (PFDs):

Type I: Offshore Life Jackets are vests designed to keep you afloat, face-up and visible to rescuers and are suited for rough, open or remote waters where it's likely to take a long time for rescuers to arrive.

Type II: Near-Shore Vests are less bulky and thus offer less protection than Type I PFDs and are suitable for calm, inland waters where it probably won't take a lot of time to rescue you.

Type III: Flotation Aids are lighter and less bulky garments that keep you upright. Although more comfortable, you shouldn't use Type III PFDs unless you're pretty sure you can be rescued fast.

Type IV: Throwable Devices are cushions or ring buoys that rescuers throw to you if you're in the water. Type IVs are a supplement to and not a substitute for a Type I, II, or III vest or garment.

Type V: Special-Use Devices are PFDs approved only for particular activities like kayaking, waterskiing or windsurfing—always check the label to see what use the device is approved for.

DON'T BECOME A DROWNING CASUALTY

7 Drowning Safety DO's & DON'Ts

- **DO** wear drowning protection vests when working on or over water
- **DON'T** chuck away your life vest because it's bulky or uncomfortable
- **DO** use the buddy system so you and your co-workers can look after each other
- **DON'T** rely solely on buoy rings and Type IV PFDs to protect you from drowning
- **DO** learn how to swim

- **DON’T** drink alcohol when you’re working on or over water (or anyplace else for that matter!)
- **DO** know the rescue procedure and how to put it into action in case you or a co-worker fall into water