

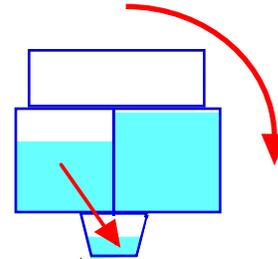


# U.S. COAST GUARD MARINE SAFETY OFFICE PORTLAND, MAINE

# SAFETY ALERT

## Use of Hatches in “Wet” Fish Holds

Commercial fishing vessel operators cross rigging their vessels for fisheries that require “wet” (flooded) fish holds are advised to carefully inspect hatches which may be located in the fish hold to ensure that they are designed for use in under water applications, and if installed, to ensure that they are in good condition.



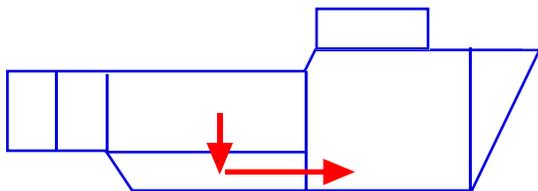
U.S. Coast Guard personnel have recently observed a number of trawlers rigged for mid water herring trawling with aluminum hatch covers installed in the fish hold deck to provide access to the vessel’s shaft alley. These vessels, normally employed in the ground fishery, have operated with “dry” fish holds. In this service minimal weight is placed on the hatch covers. When these vessels are utilized for mid water herring trawling, the weight of the water and fish stowed above the hatch cover places tremendous weight onto the aluminum hatch covers in the fish hold deck.

Depending on the configuration of the vessel, the loss of a shaft alley hatch cover may also result in a transverse shift of weight, which would create a heeling moment (list). While longitudinal bulkheads are considered extremely important in safe operation of “wet hold” vessels, the loss of a shaft alley hatch from one fish hold compartment might create an exceptionally dangerous condition for deeply loaded vessels.

Not all aluminum hatches are designed for service where they are placed under water or under significant load for extended periods of time. Operators of vessels fitted with aluminum hatches designed to withstand this service should carefully inspect shaft alley hatches and ensure that the hatches are not damaged, and that the hatch dogs are properly adjusted so that the hatch fits securely to the deck ring without distortion.



This hatch cover’s broken dog handle indicates damage that may affect performance of the hatch.



Commercial fishermen operating in fisheries requiring wet fish holds are requested to contact the manufacturers of hatch covers installed in their fish holds to ensure that they are designed for use in wet holds. If your hatch cover manufacturer advises you that their hatches are designed for that service, request the manufacturer’s inspection and adjustment instructions to ensure that the hatch is in top condition.

The failure of a shaft alley hatch while the vessel is loaded would result in the dropping of water and herring into the shaft alley. This could create a free surface condition in the fish hold. If the vessel did not have a watertight bulkhead between the shaft alley and the engine room, the loss of a shaft alley hatch would result in a dangerous shift of water and fish into the vessel’s engine space.

**For more information please contact:**

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Photo USCG