



### **Brief Description (What Happened?):**

An ARTCO vessel dropped its mate and deckhand on a tow at the center coupling. They walked from the coupling to the inboard side of the tow and walked down towards the port stern to catch the shoreline. The deckhand retrieved the shoreline with a grab hook and pulled on the line. The mate tried to maneuver around the deckhand so they could both heave around on the line. This would allow them both to pull on the line to take up the slack. Intending to help his deckhand, the mate maneuvered around the deckhand, with his back to the water, lost his balance and consequently fell off the barge into the river. The mate was in waist-deep water and walked ashore and was recovered within a few minutes uninjured.

At the time of the incident, the location air temperature was 72°, and the water temperature was approximately 74°.

### **Root Causes (Why Did It Happen?):**

1. The captain allowed the crew to get onto the tow at the coupling, instead of at the stern.
2. The mate tried maneuvering around the deckhand with his back to the water.
3. The boat crew did not maintain situational awareness, and did not consider all hazards or consequences of their actions (getting off at the coupling, putting back to the water, body positioning).

### **Preventative Actions Taken (What steps will be taken to prevent future incidents?):**

1. Discuss this incident at the next tool box and safety meeting with all employees.
2. When possible, captains will insist on dropping crews on tows in better working positions.
3. Prevent putting your back to the water, except in the most extreme cases.
4. Take extra time and consider alternative options. . . in this case, the deckhand could have handed the line to the mate, allowing the deckhand to shift his position.

### **Lessons Learned:**

1. Use the boat's mechanical power to your advantage
2. Always be aware of your positioning in relation to the deck and equipment.
3. Take extra care when performing "routine" or common tasks. This would typically be when most serious incidents occur.