

Falls Overboard Safety Standdown Day

A Nationwide Pause to #StopFallsOverboard - August 28, 2026



What is the Falls Overboard Safety Standdown Day?

On **August 28**, U.S. tugboat, towboat, and barge companies will pause briefly to **discuss falls overboard prevention and safety** with vessel crews and stakeholders. Participants will:

- Review falls overboard prevention procedures with crew;
- Reinforce safe deck behavior, buddy systems, fall restraint use, and proper PPE; and
- Encourage mariners to post to social media about their discussion using the hashtag **#StopFallsOverboard** to show industry unity and raise awareness.

How To Participate:

Gather your crew and safety leadership to **discuss falls overboard prevention and safety** on **August 28** and **share your participation on social media** using the hashtags **#StopFallsOverboard** and **#AWOSafety**.

Don't forget to tag AWO on **Twitter/X: @AWOAdvocacy** and on **Facebook, Instagram & LinkedIn: @American Waterways Operators**.

Use These References to Prepare for your Falls Overboard Safety Standdown Day Discussion:

[AWO's Falls Overboard Prevention Report](#) is a comprehensive, industry-informed resource designed to help vessel operators and mariners:

- Identify contributing causes of falls overboard and prioritize controls;
- Apply practical, scalable safety improvements across different vessel types; and
- Strengthen Safety Management Systems (SMS) with proven, layered defense strategies.

Access the report **[here](#)** or email **safety@americanwaterways.com**.

The attached **Falls Overboard Safety Standdown Day Discussion Sheet** provides a framework to facilitate safety discussions and social media posts.

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Discussion Sheet

Use this discussion sheet to guide a **10–15 minute safety conversation** focused on **falls overboard**, the leading cause of mariner fatalities in the tugboat, towboat, and barge industry.

Why This Matters:

- Falls overboard remain the **#1 cause of mariner fatalities**.
- 84% of reported falls overboard incidents involved **slips, trips, or loss of balance at night or near unguarded edges**.
- Most falls overboard incidents happened on **barges**, not boats, and affected **both new and experienced crew**.

Discussion Prompts (Choose 2–4):

- Where on our towing vessels or barges are falls overboard most likely to happen?
- What changes have we made in the past year to reduce falls overboard risks?
- Are we using PPE or other systems to prevent falls overboard? How well are they working?
- How can we make work near an unguarded barge edge safer?
- What's one thing we can start doing this week to improve safety on deck?

Follow-Up Actions:

- Share your discussion on social media using the hashtags **#StopFallsOverboard** and **#AWOSafety**. The examples below can help you craft your post.
- Submit feedback or suggestions to your company safety lead.
- Share insights and best practices with your peers in safety working groups such as **[AWO's Safety Committees](#), your local Harbor Safety Committee, or the [National Safety Council's Waterborne Transport Group](#)**.

Social Media Post Examples

- Today our crew paused operations to participate in the **#StopFallsOverboard** Standdown and reinforce our commitment to safety on deck. **#AWOSafety**
- We joined mariners across the country in the Falls Overboard Safety Standdown to protect every crew member — because one fall overboard is one too many. **#StopFallsOverboard #AWOSafety**
- Our team took time today to talk about risks, review procedures, and recommit to preventing falls overboard. **#StopFallsOverboard #AWOSafety**
- Falls overboard are preventable — that's why we took part in the national **#StopFallsOverboard** Standdown today. **#AWOSafety**
- We paused today to talk about falls overboard prevention and safety to ensure every mariner goes home SAFE. **#StopFallsOverboard #AWOSafety**

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