

TITLE:	SAFE USE OF WINCHES	DATE	17/11/2004
CATEGORY:	SAFETY	AREA:	WORLDWIDE

The Club has seen an increase in the number of personal injury claims arising from accidents involving winches.

Investigations have shown that the majority of these claims have resulted from accidents caused by short cuts being taken or a complete disregard for the winch machinery. The short cuts, one involving a block of wood used to wedge the control lever in the heave position, have been employed as a result of reduced manning levels and a desire to reduce the time spent on an operation.

In view of the increase in these related claims the Club considers it timely to reiterate safety considerations when operating winches.

- Winches should be operated by a designated person solely engaged for that purpose and who is not distracted by any other tasks. Winch operators should be fully trained and familiar with the machinery.
- The winch operator should be positioned so that he has an unrestricted view of the working area and the crew.
- An agreed system of hand signals should be agreed between the winch operator and the men on deck.
- Winches should be fully maintained, brake linings frequently examined and any broken controls repaired.
- All gearing etc. should be adequately guarded to protect personnel from injury.
- No modifications should be made to the winch operating gear.
- Emergency stops should be strategically placed and tested on a frequent basis.
- Crew guiding ropes or wires off the winch drums should stand clear of the machinery until such time as the winch is stopped.
- Snagged ropes or wires should only be cleared when the winches are stopped and no attempt made to do so when the drum is still turning.
- The lead followed by ropes or wires should not involve acute angles or use made of fixed fittings in lieu of blocks or rollers to permit a change in direction.
- Crew Members in the vicinity of turning winches should not have any loose clothing that can get caught