

Appendix A.5: Guidelines for Safe Handling of Floating Aids to Navigation

These recommendations are not intended as a complete list but as an illustration of the type of precautions that should be taken for the safe handling of buoys. The hazards identified are not intended to be a complete list, therefore contractors are to utilize due prudence and display good seamanship. It is the responsibility of the contractor to identify all potential hazards associated with the handling of navigational buoys and to ensure strict compliance with all relevant Federal and/or Provincial legislative requirements.

1. Contractors are to ensure that vessels used for aids to navigation buoy work are suitable and have the capability of handling aids to navigation in a safe manner. In addition, the vessel(s) must comply with all applicable relevant acts and regulations.
2. Contractors are to ensure that all equipment utilized in the handling of floating aids to navigation is in safe working condition and operated only by a qualified and experienced individual. In accordance with Canada Shipping Act (CSA) regulations, all lifting equipment working loads and safety factors are to be calculated, marked and adhered to. All straps and slings must be thoroughly inspected for any defects prior to use; damaged straps and slings shall not be used to lift buoys. At no time shall a load be raised over the heads of individuals.
3. Contractors are to ensure that persons performing buoy work are wearing appropriate protective/safety equipment e.g. PFD, safety boots and safety hat, as well as other equipment deemed necessary.
4. Contractors are to ensure that weather and sea conditions are suitable for buoy handling. If weather and sea state are not suitable, contractors should wait for appropriate conditions.
5. Contractors should have local knowledge of the area, have experience with marine operations, and know the state of water levels, water depth, and strength of current in the area.
6. Contractors are to assess the on-site conditions prior to handling operations to determine the safest means possible to approach the aid to navigation.
7. Contractors should ensure that moorings, anchors and other buoy equipment are outside the vessel and well clear of persons before dropping on position.
8. Prior to placing buoys on position, contractors must:
 - Ensure that all moorings, shackles and anchors are visually inspected and are in good order. Any equipment not in good order is to be reported and new replacements will be issued.
 - Ensure that moorings, shackles and chafing equipment are properly fastened to the anchor and buoy.
 - Know the precise locations of where buoys are to be placed. If unsure, contractors shall wait until the proper positions have been determined.
9. For lifting or repositioning buoys, contractors must:
 - Remain aware of their surroundings to ensure that the vessel does not drift on top of the shoal that is being marked by the floating aid.
 - Safely raise the buoy out of the water using a strap or sling through the lug located on top of the buoy. The strap or sling must be of sufficient strength to safely lift the buoy, fittings and chain out of the water.
 - Once the slack has been taken out of the buoy chain, lay the buoy on the deck. Use a “choker chain” to attach on to the buoy chain to lift the anchor out of the water. Note that the buoy is NOT to be used to lift the anchor; the anchor must be raised by attaching to the mooring under the buoy.
 - Individuals should use caution not to step in the bight or mooring as this could possibly slip.
 - Ensure that the mooring anchor is not fouled to the bottom; use caution that the mooring doesn't get tangled in the propeller.