

WORK OVER OR NEAR WATER

ACTIVITY RAMS — ADAPT TO SITE BEFORE USE

Preventing falls in · lifejackets · throw lines and rescue boat · raising the alarm · tide and flow

KD-RAMS-GW-008 Rev A0

Statutory basis: CDM 2015 reg 26(1) — where a person is at risk of falling into water or other liquid with a risk of drowning, suitable and sufficient steps must be taken to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, the person falling, to minimise the risk of drowning in the event of a fall, and to ensure suitable rescue equipment is provided, maintained and, when necessary, used so that a person may be promptly rescued; reg 26(2) and (3) — safe transport by water, in vessels not overcrowded or overloaded; reg 28(6) — measures to prevent a vehicle falling into water. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 govern edges, staging and scaffolds over the water. This document is the recorded safe system of work required by HSWA 1974 s.2(2)(a) and MHSWR 1999 regs 3 and 5. Written for Great Britain; in Northern Ireland the equivalent Northern Ireland regulations apply.

1 DOCUMENT AND PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

RAMS REFERENCE	PROJECT / SITE REF	SITE NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE PREPARED	NEXT REVIEW DATE
CLIENT / PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR	PLANNED START	DURATION	OPERATIVES	SUPERVISING THE WORK

2 SCOPE OF WORKS

Construction work over or beside water or another liquid where a person could fall in and drown — rivers, canals, docks, lakes, lagoons, settlement ponds, tanks and deep flooded excavations — including bridge, culvert, outfall and bank works and work from pontoons and staging: preventing falls, reducing the risk of drowning if someone does fall, rescue equipment and rescue cover, raising the alarm, checks on water level, tide and flow, transport to the workplace by water, and the health risks of the water itself.

This document does not cover: diving and work in the water (specialist contractors under their own regulations), pumping out flooded excavations and basements (KD-RA-GW-005), dewatering to a design (KD-RAMS-PS-005), and the navigation, mooring and harbour permissions for work on navigable water (obtain them from the navigation or harbour authority). The briefing for the workforce is the toolbox talk KD-TBT-NW-037.

SITE-SPECIFIC SCOPE, LOCATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

3 RISK ASSESSMENT — SCORE EACH RISK FOR THIS SITE, THEN ADD WHAT IS MISSING

The hazards and controls below are the starting point for this activity, written by a working main contractor. They are not complete for your site until a competent person has scored each risk, added the site-specific hazards, and struck out anything that does not apply. Rate risks High / Medium / Low before and after controls.

1. Lifejacket zone, stop limits, crew, water watch and rescue positions not fixed for the site

At risk: Operatives

Controls: Before the permit KD-PTW-WW-034 is issued, this RAMS records for the site, in section 2: the lifejacket zone — the distance from the edge inside which lifejackets are worn; the stop limits — the water level, flow, tide, wind and visibility at which work stops and people withdraw; the minimum crew on site while anyone works at or over the edge; the named water watch, who keeps eyes on the water with no other duties while anyone works at or over the edge; and the rescue positions for throw lines, grab lines, any rescue boat and the emergency services access point. The permit confirms them on the day; if any of them is not set, the permit is not issued.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

2. Falling into the water from edges, pontoons, staging and scaffolds

At risk: Operatives

Controls: Falls prevented first (CDM 2015 reg 26(1)(a)): guardrails or barriers strong and stable enough to stop people falling at every edge people work at or pass; platforms, staging and scaffolds over water fully boarded and guarded; openings covered; the water partly or fully drained, or the work moved away from it, where that is practicable; edges kept free of mud, ice and trip hazards; nobody works at an unguarded edge alone.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

3. Drowning after a fall — cold water shock, waterlogged clothing, injury

At risk: Operatives

Controls: Where a fall cannot be prevented entirely (reg 26(1)(b)): lifejackets that inflate automatically and are designed to turn an unconscious person face up are worn at all times inside the lifejacket zone set in section 2, by people trained in their use; buoyancy aids can be used, but they may not turn an unconscious person over from face down, so a buoyancy aid replaces a lifejacket only where this RAMS records why; lifejackets checked before each use and serviced as the manufacturer instructs; lights and whistles on lifejackets for work in poor light.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

4. Rescue delayed or impossible

At risk: A person in the water

Controls: Suitable rescue equipment provided, maintained and ready so a person can be rescued promptly (reg 26(1)(c)), at the rescue positions set in section 2: throw lines along the edge — for moving water, brightly coloured line that floats — with people on every shift trained to throw them. A throw line is never tied off: in fast current a tied or snagged line can pull the casualty under, and if the pull is too great the rescuer walks down the bank recovering or letting out line rather than being pulled in. Grab lines tensioned across flowing water downstream of the work, at an angle to the flow, with the downstream end on the bank with the easiest way out. A rescue boat, suitable for the water and crewed by competent people, on standby wherever the assessment says throw lines alone cannot reach a casualty in time. The named water watch keeps eyes on the water, with no other duties, while anyone works at or over the edge. Rescue equipment is checked at the start of each shift and the rescue is practised before work starts.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

WORK OVER OR NEAR WATER

continued

ACTIVITY RAMS — ADAPT TO SITE BEFORE USE

KD-RAMS-GW-008 Rev A0

5. Nobody knows someone has fallen in

At risk: A person in the water

Controls: An obvious means of raising the alarm at the workplace — air horn, radio or alarm point — tested each shift; no lone working near water — the minimum crew set in section 2 is on site; people work in sight of each other; a head count at the start and end of each shift and at every break; phone or radio signal confirmed at the work position.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

6. Rising water, tide, fast flow, flood and weather

At risk: Operatives, plant

Controls: Tide times, river levels, flow and flood warnings checked before each shift and briefed; work stops and people withdraw at the stop limits set in section 2 and confirmed on the permit; any upstream sluice or release agreed with its operator so warning is given; escape routes from low-level work kept open; work stops in high wind, ice or poor visibility.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

7. Transport to or from the workplace by water

At risk: Operatives

Controls: Boats suitable for the water and crewed by competent people, never overcrowded or overloaded (reg 26(2) and (3)); lifejackets worn in transit; safe points to get on and off, lit at dusk.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

8. Edges and banks collapsing; plant or vehicles going into the water

At risk: Operatives, plant operators

Controls: Bank tops and quay edges checked for strength before plant approaches; plant kept back by the distance the temporary works or ground assessment sets; stop blocks where vehicles work near the edge (CDM 2015 reg 28(6)); plant refuelled away from the water with spill kits to hand.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

9. Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) and contaminated water

At risk: Operatives

Controls: Cuts covered with waterproof dressings; waterproof gloves for handling anything wet from the water; washing before eating, drinking or smoking, with washing facilities near the work; the leptospirosis card carried and any flu-like illness reported to a doctor with the card; the toolbox talk KD-TBT-LE-053 given to everyone working near the water.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

10. Cold and wet — hypothermia and lost grip

At risk: Operatives

Controls: Warm, dry rest facilities close by; spare dry clothing; breaks rotated in cold weather; a casualty taken out of the water is treated for cold and sent to hospital even if they seem well.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

11. Handling materials and equipment at the edge, on pontoons and staging

At risk: Operatives

Controls: Materials moved to and along the edge by machine wherever possible; nothing carried that blocks the view of the edge or throws the carrier off balance; pontoons and staging loaded within their stated rating with loads spread; nothing thrown between boats, pontoons and the bank; small tools and fixings kept in bags or tethered where they could be lost into the water.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

Site-specific hazards not listed above — every site has at least one:

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK	CONTROLS	INITIAL HI...	RESIDUAL...	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

4 METHOD — SEQUENCE OF WORK

- Assess the water: depth, flow, tide, levels and flood risk, bank condition, and who controls the water and any navigation.
- Design out the risk where possible — work from the bank or land, drain or divert the water, or move the work away from the edge.
- Before the permit is issued, write in section 2: the lifejacket zone, the stop limits for level, flow, tide, wind and visibility, the minimum crew, the named water watch and the rescue positions.
- Install guardrails, barriers, boarded platforms and covers at every edge before work starts; mark the lifejacket zone set in section 2.
- Set up the rescue arrangements: throw lines at stated positions, grab lines across flowing water, the rescue boat and crew where required, the alarm point, and ambulance access.
- Issue lifejackets, check them with each wearer, and brief the zone, the alarm, the rescue, the stop levels and the health precautions (KD-TBT-NW-037).

WORK OVER OR NEAR WATER

continued

ACTIVITY RAMS — ADAPT TO SITE BEFORE USE

KD-RAMS-GW-008 Rev A0

- 07 Check tide, level, flow and weather before each shift; record the reading on the permit; do not start if a stop limit set in section 2 is reached.
- 08 Work in sight of each other, with the minimum crew on site, the named water watch in place and lifejackets on inside the zone; check guardrails, rescue equipment and the alarm at the start of each shift.
- 09 If someone falls in: raise the alarm, keep them in sight, throw a line and never tie it off — in current, walk down the bank recovering or letting out line — and do not enter the water; launch the boat if provided, call the emergency services, and treat the casualty for cold.
- 10 STOP and withdraw when the water reaches the stop level, flow increases, visibility fails, a guardrail is removed, rescue cover or the water watch is not in place, or the crew falls below the minimum set in section 2.
- 11 Head count at the end of the shift; rescue equipment and lifejackets checked, dried and stored.

SITE-SPECIFIC AMENDMENTS TO THE SEQUENCE

5 PLANT, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- | | |
|--|---|
| Guardrails and barriers at edges; boarded staging | Alarm point — air horn or radio |
| Automatically inflating lifejackets with lights and whistles | Radios for the named water watch and the crew |
| Throw lines and grab lines | Stop blocks for vehicles at edges |
| Rescue boat and crew, where the assessment requires | Spill kits |

INSPECTION / THOROUGH EXAMINATION REFS

COSHH ASSESSMENT REFS

6 PPE — THE LAST LINE OF CONTROL, NOT THE FIRST

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|
| Head protection | Gloves — task-rated | Automatically inflating lifejacket inside the marked zone |
| Safety footwear | Eye protection | Waterproof gloves |
| High visibility | Hearing protection | |

RPE TYPE, FACE-FIT STATUS, AND ANY OTHER PPE REQUIRED

7 PERMITS REQUIRED BEFORE THIS WORK STARTS

A permit authorises this work in that place, on that day. It extends the safe system of work in this document — it does not replace it (HSE HSG250). The site issues the permit; record its number before work starts.

KD-PTW-WW-034 — Work Over or Near Water Permit

Before any work inside the zone where a person could fall into the water.

PERMIT NUMBER

8 EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS — COMPLETE FOR THIS SITE

FIRST AIDER AND LOCATION

NEAREST A&E

ASSEMBLY POINT

HOW THE ALARM IS RAISED

EMERGENCY ACCESS FOR THIS WORK AREA

SPILL / ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE

9 BRIEFING RECORD — EVERYONE WORKING UNDER THIS RAMS SIGNS BEFORE STARTING

By signing you confirm the contents of this RAMS have been explained to you, you understand the hazards and controls, and you will work to the sequence stated. Tell the supervisor if the work or the site does not match this document — work stops until it does.

NAME	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE

WORK OVER OR NEAR WATER

continued

ACTIVITY RAMS — ADAPT TO SITE BEFORE USE

KD-RAMS-GW-008 Rev A0

10 PREPARED AND ACCEPTED

Prepared / adapted for this site by — I confirm I have adapted this document to the site, scored the risks, and that it describes how the work will actually be done.

PRINTED NAME	ROLE / COMPETENCE	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE	TIME

Accepted for the site by — principal contractor or site manager review.

PRINTED NAME	ROLE	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE	TIME

Review this RAMS if the work, the site or the law changes, and at least before each new phase of the works. Flatten the completed PDF before filing so the record cannot be silently edited.

R REVISION HISTORY

Every revision of this document, and every review that found nothing to change. The revision on the front of this sheet is the one you are holding — check kubitdocs.com for the current one before use.

Rev	Date	Class	What changed	Authorised by
D0	2026-09-12	first-issue	First issue.	— not yet approved —
A0	2026-09-12	review	Approved for issue by the author. Content unchanged from the reviewed draft; the draft status strip is removed. No independent third-party review has been carried out.	Author — director, UK principal contractor, SMSTS. Not an independent review.

Class: first-issue · material (the law, a control, a field or the scope changed — past buyers are notified) · editorial (wording or layout only) · review (checked, nothing changed) · withdrawal. Revision prefix D = draft, not approved and not for sale; A = approved for issue by the person named, on the date shown.