

ABYC H-41.5.1 requires that weather decks intended for use while underway ...shall be provided with handhold devices or grab rails. An exception to this requirement is in areas fitted with life rails installed in accordance with H-41.6

ABYC H-41.6.1 requires the outside periphery of weather decks, normally intended to be occupied while the boat is underway shall be equipped with one or more of the following: life rails, deck rails, life lines, handhold devices, grab rails, stern rails, bow rails, coaming, gunwale bulwark or enclosures at least 24 inches above the deck. The exception to this requirement is an open boat.

- A. A bass boat that has a flat forward or aft deck from which to stand on and cast. The boat is usually propelled by a small electric motor attached to the casting deck gunwale in order for the boat to maintain or change station while casting. This boat is underway in this operation but the speed of the boat is usually 0-5 mph.



Is this boat an open boat and therefore exempted from the handhold or life rail requirement (i.e. is this casting deck part of the cockpit and not a weather deck)?

ANSWER: The committee determined that as per the definitions this casting platform is not a weather deck and is part of the cockpit. Therefore 41.5.1 does not apply to cockpits and the exception to 41.6.1 would apply.

- B. A flats boat that has a platform higher than the cockpit, sometimes over the outboard engine, from which the operator can pole the boat to a desired fishing area. This boat has its engine shut down and the propulsion is manual, by pole. This boat is underway in this operation but the speed of the boat is usually 0-5 mph.



For the purpose of this standard, is this boat manually propelled and therefore exempted from the handhold or life rail requirement?

ANSWER: The committee felt that this boat is Not manually propelled, however it never intended to address this situation and felt that handholds were never contemplated for poling platforms.