



EHL ACCESS SYSTEM ASSURANCE GUIDE

Maritime Gangways & Accommodation Ladders

Risk, Compliance & Operational Readiness Checklist

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This audit guide is designed to help vessel operators, technical managers, and offshore teams:

- Identify **hidden risks in gangways and access systems**
 - Assess **compliance with inspection and safety standards**
 - Evaluate **operational readiness**
 - Move from **reactive maintenance** → **structured risk management**
-

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

For each section, score your vessel/system:

- **Compliant / Fully in Control**
- **⚠ Partial / Needs Improvement**
- **✘ At Risk / Non-Compliant**

Any **✘** indicates **immediate operational and safety exposure**

1. STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY & CONDITION

Key Question:

Is the gangway/accommodation ladder physically fit for safe and continuous use?

Checklist:

- No visible cracks, deformation, or structural fatigue
- Welds are intact with no signs of stress failure
- Steps/treads are secure, flat, and non-slip
- Handrails and stanchions are firmly secured
- Pivot points and hinges operate without restriction
- Corrosion is identified, controlled, and treated
- Load-bearing components show no signs of overloading

Risk if unmanaged:

- Structural failure during use
- Crew injury or fatality
- Immediate operational shutdown

NOTES:

2. MECHANICAL & FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Key Question:

Does the system operate reliably under all expected conditions?

Checklist:

- Winches, hoists, and lifting systems function smoothly
- Cables, sheaves, and pulleys show no excessive wear
- Locking mechanisms engage securely
- Hydraulic systems (if applicable) show no leaks or pressure loss
- Emergency/manual operation is tested and functional
- Deployment and retrieval operate without delay or sticking

Risk if unmanaged:

- Equipment failure during deployment
- Inability to safely rig gangway
- Emergency situations with no backup functionality

NOTES:

3. SAFETY SYSTEMS & PROTECTIONS

Key Question:

Are all safety-critical features present, functional, and compliant?

Checklist:

- Safety nets are correctly rigged and in good condition
- Lifelines and fall prevention systems are in place
- Non-slip surfaces are effective in wet conditions
- Lighting is sufficient for night operations
- Safe working load (SWL) markings are visible and correct
- Safety signage is present and legible
- Anti-tilt and stabilisation systems functioning

Risk if unmanaged:

- Increased likelihood of slips, trips, and falls
- Non-compliance during inspection
- Elevated crew transfer risk

NOTES:

4. COMPLIANCE, CERTIFICATION & DOCUMENTATION

Key Question:

Can you prove compliance instantly during an audit or port inspection?

Checklist:

- Valid inspection certificates are current
- Maintenance records are complete and up to date
- Load testing records are available
- Manufacturer guidelines are accessible onboard
- Inspection routines align with regulatory/class requirements
- Any repairs or modifications are documented and traceable

Risk if unmanaged:

- Port State Control deficiencies
- Vessel detention
- Insurance and liability exposure

NOTES:

5. MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

Key Question:

Is maintenance planned and preventative—or reactive?

Checklist:

- Scheduled inspection intervals are clearly defined
- Preventative maintenance plan exists
- Critical components have replacement timelines
- Common failure points are monitored
- Spare parts availability is confirmed
- Condition-based monitoring (if applicable) is implemented

Risk if unmanaged:

- Unexpected failures
- Increased long-term cost
- Operational disruption

NOTES:

6. CREW KNOWLEDGE & OPERATIONAL READINESS

Key Question:

Can your crew safely operate and respond under all conditions?

Checklist:

- Crew trained in gangway deployment and recovery
- Emergency procedures are clearly understood
- Roles and responsibilities are defined
- Pre-use inspections are consistently conducted
- Incident reporting procedures are in place

Risk if unmanaged:

- Human error
- Unsafe deployment
- Poor response during failure

NOTES:

7. ENVIRONMENTAL & OPERATING CONDITIONS

Key Question:

Is the system reliable across real-world maritime conditions?

Checklist:

- Equipment suitable for vessel operating environment
- Wind, tide, and vessel movement considered in use
- Corrosion protection suited to marine exposure
- System remains stable under dynamic loads
- Adjustability for varying port conditions

Risk if unmanaged:

- Equipment instability
- Accelerated degradation
- Operational limitations

NOTES:

8. DOCUMENTATION, TRACEABILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Key Question:

Do you have full visibility and control over your access systems?

Checklist:

- Single, centralised record of inspections and maintenance
- Clear ownership of system responsibility
- Service providers are documented and consistent
- Historical performance and issues tracked
- Audit trail available on demand

Risk if unmanaged:

- Gaps in compliance
- Lack of accountability
- Increased audit failures

NOTES:

SCORING & INTERPRETATION

Low Risk (Strong Control)

- ✓ Majority compliant
- ⚠ Minor improvement areas only

Systems are well-managed and audit-ready

Medium Risk (Exposure Building)

- ⚠ Multiple partials
- Some gaps in documentation or maintenance

Risk of failure or compliance issues increasing

High Risk (Immediate Attention Required)

- ✗ Any critical failures
- Multiple gaps across categories

Immediate action is required to avoid:

- Operational disruption
 - Safety incident
 - Compliance failure
-

THE CRITICAL QUESTION

Most operators ask:

“Is our gangway compliant?”

But the better question is:

“Is our access system risk fully under control?”

HOW EHL SUPPORTS THIS PROCESS

EHL doesn't just perform inspections.

We help operators:

- Identify and prioritise real risks
- Implement structured maintenance strategies
- Ensure full compliance and documentation
- Reduce downtime and operational uncertainty

Turning access systems from a **reactive liability into a controlled asset**

YOUR NEXT STEP

If this checklist has highlighted gaps—or simply raised questions—

EHL can conduct a structured access system audit and risk review, including:

- Full condition assessment
- Compliance verification
- Risk identification report
- Recommended corrective actions

Email return: solutions@ehlsolutions.com

Phone: +64 6755 2412

