Eastport Downtown Piers
Safety & Maintenance Issues
A Photographic Report

Prepared by Robert Godfrey

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Eastport Downtown Piers Maintenance & Safety Issues

A Photographic Report

by Robert Godfrey

The Port of Eastport has an important economic and quality-of-life role in the community. It provides employment and is also responsible for pier assets downtown. Those piers play an important role for residents and visitors, and contribute to community quality of life.

Downtown piers in Eastport, Maine, are suffering from multi-year neglect. Commercial fishermen and public safety is at risk, but would not be that way with regular inspection and resolution. Since 2016, this writer has regularly walked the Fish Pier and Municipal Pier, including floating piers when in place, while exercising, conducting marine-related surveys, providing specimens to marine scientists, and providing inspection and electronics services to the NOAA[1] tide sensing station. When on the piers, conditions have become obvious.

In a responsible effort to provide useful information to the Eastport Port Authority, observed safety and maintenance problems have been provided to Port Authority personnel. However, those observations have been seen as "picayune"[2] annoyances, with many reported issues being ignored or not attended to until the issues have been escalated via "squeaky wheel" strategy. Ultimately, due to continuing reports of ongoing, unresolved safety and maintenance problems on the Fish Pier, the Port Authority Board's solution is to make the Fish Pier off limits to the general public. Punishing the public does not resolve the existing issues. Commercial activities on the Fish Pier are not dissimilar to commercial activities on the Municipal Pier, where unrestricted public access is allowed. The precipitating reason for closing the Fish Pier to the public seems to be the ongoing reporting of unaddressed safety and maintenance problems there.

Picayune issues, or not, in an additional effort for community safety and maintenance improvement, observed problems have been photographed and are provided here, along with some potential solutions.

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[1] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Tides and Currents

[2] Term used by the Eastport Port Authority director when addressing this writer on 2022 July 29.

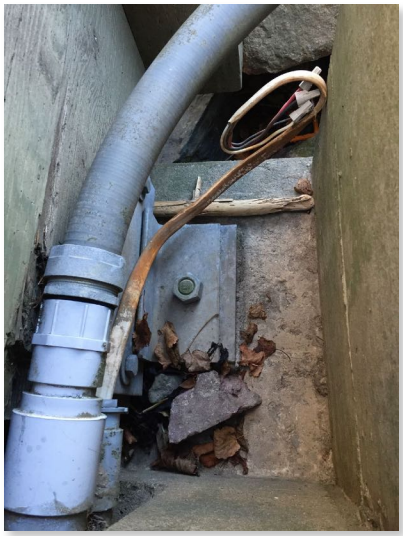
Fish Pier Disorder & Cause for Concern

Photograph above is from March 2022. The fallen pole was not removed until four (4) months later.

Image to the right is from April 2016. Eventually, after reporting, the rope was replaced with chain and the refuse was removed.

Improper Electrical Wiring

The exposed wiring (left) is from January 2016. After reporting the issue the wiring was eventually removed.

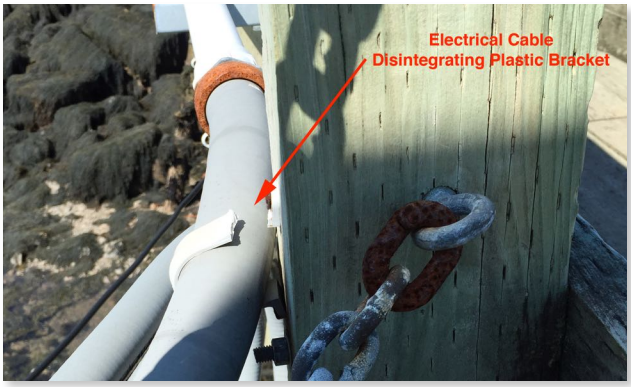


In late 2019, electric wiring at the Fish Pier base (above left) existed *outside* an enclosure. The exposed wiring and conditions (above right) were reported on 2016 April 22, and were eventually fixed.

This improper ground wire connection at the Fish Pier crane is from March of 2016.

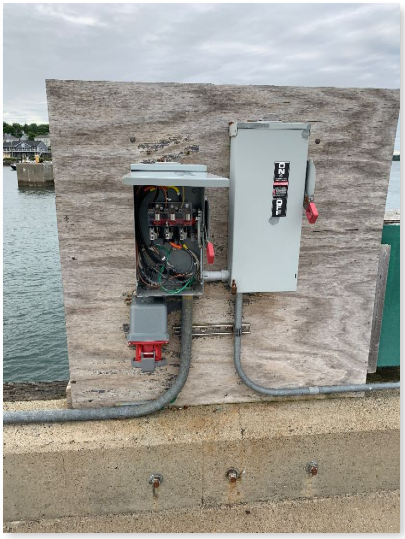
Suggestion: Whether wiring is "live" or not, and since wiring may become electrically charged in the future, comply with good electrical practices and keep all wiring within approved enclosures, with appropriate wiring connections.

Disintegrating Plastic Conduit Brackets



There are a great number of plastic conduit brackets on the south side of the Fish Pier. Many broken brackets remain, even while absent any conduit. The plastic disintegrates, dropping plastic into the water, adding to plastic pollution in the sea, endangering sealife.

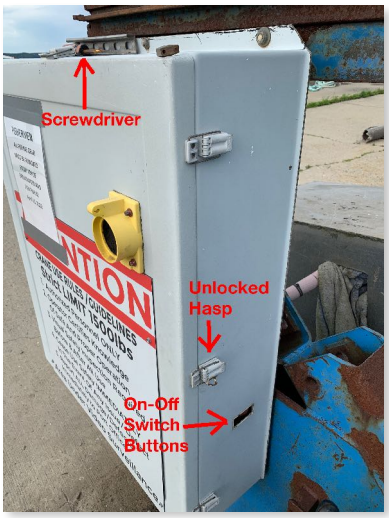
Suggestion: Remove all plastic brackets, and replace with metal brackets.

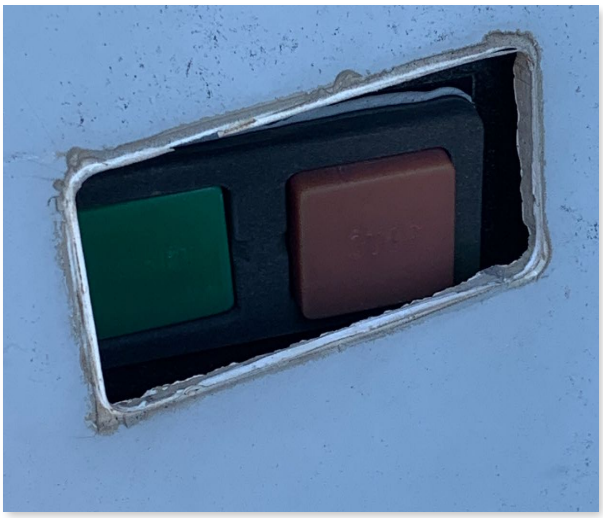


Unlocked Electrical Circuit Boxes

Several incidents of unlocked circuit boxes have occurred since 2016 (box on left photo was 2022 Jun 25); crane box (right) was unlocked from at least 2022 May 20 to Jun 5). Recently, the box on the left has had a padlock reinstalled. After escalating the issue, **the box on the right was finally replaced** on 2022 August 1st or 2nd with one identical to the Municipal Pier's south crane circuit box, illustrated later in this document (page 9).

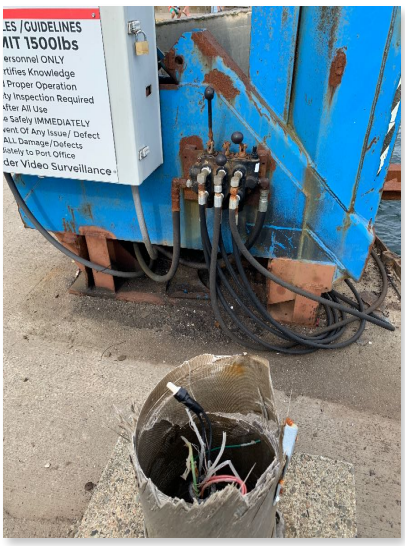
Compromised Crane Keylock & On-Off Switch Buttons

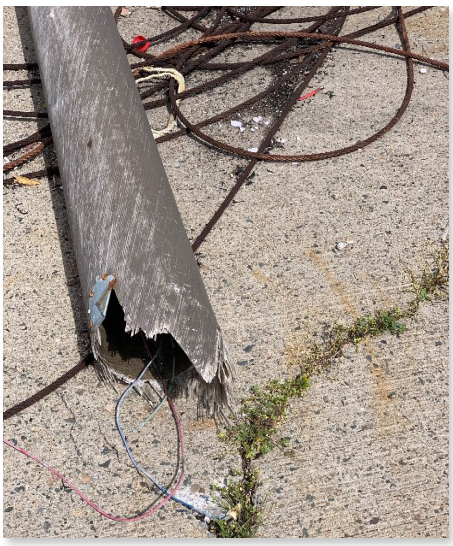




Keyswitch was being switched on and off with a screwdriver (seen atop the box) since 2021. On-off switchbuttons on the bottom right side of the box (closeup view is photo on the right) were loose, pushed inside the box, allowing rain and salt spray to enter the box. This box was replaced on August 1 or 2 after the issue was escalated.

Jagged Impailment Hazards





Crane operator could stumble and fall backwards onto jagged fiberglass light pole base. Also, exposed electrical wiring presents an electrocution hazard. Anyone could have impaled an ankle on the jagged end of the pole. This condition has existed from around 2022 March 27. The fallen pole was removed four months later.

Compromised Crane Pneumatic Hose

The heavy metal cover atop the crane's pneumatics has been resting atop the hoses since at least 2016, cutting into the top hose. Instead of preventing the cover from resting on, and cutting into the hoses, shoddy solutions have been substituted.

Suggestion: Add legs to the cover to keep weight and cover's edge off the pneumatic hose.

Municipal Pier & Floating Piers

Dilapidated Parking Guardrail at Edge of Water

The land portion of the Municipal Pier along a dropoff has a derelict parking guardrail in serious long-existing need of repair.

Unlocked Bottom of Circuit Box

Anyone has access to the wiring inside this circuit box that has been unlocked since at least 2021.

Falling & Drowning Hazard

A young boy (above), and his father (obscured by car) were standing on the pier's curb while fishing, presenting a danger of falling into the bay below.

Suggestion: Paint "**Danger–Keep Off Curb**" along top of curb.

Cracked Concrete Curb every 1–4 Feet, Approximately 500 Cracks; No Expansion Joints.

Rain & winter conditions will cause disintegration of curb.

Pier Wall Nut & Bolt Covers

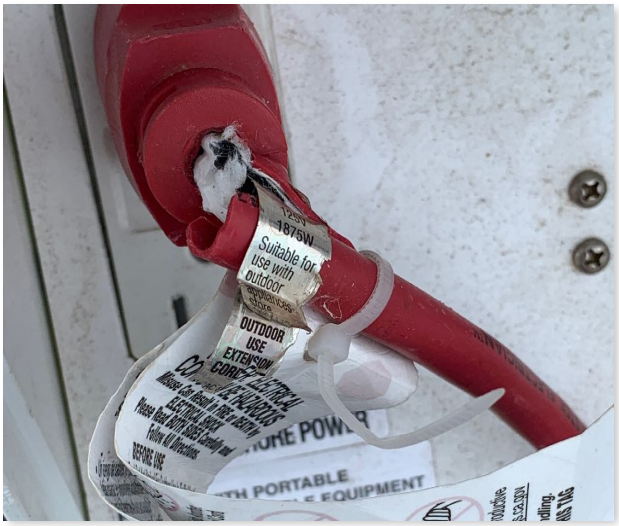
The following image shows a bolt & nut cover properly in place:

Many of the covers have fallen off (right & below), advancing corrosion of nuts and bolts holding the pier wall in place.

North Crane Poor Maintenance & South Crane Unlocked Circuit Box

The north crane 480-volt control circuit box (above left) is in poor condition. The unlocked 480-volt south crane control circuit box (above right) is the same kind that has just replaced the 480-volt box on the Fish Pier crane (shown on pages 4 & 5).

Non-Marine Electric Cables & Broken Cable Insulation



Insulation on this cable is broken down to the internal wiring. At this writing the female end of this cable is submerged along the west edge of the inner basin (see image on page 14). This condition has existed for over a month, even after informing the Eastport Port Authority director in person on 2022 July 29.

Outlet Boxes & Conduit

This is **one of six (6) outlet boxes that have lost their weather covers,** allowing water and salt spray to corrode plug connections and circuit breakers. They are still missing protection from the elements—some missing since a year after pier reconstruction.

This outlet box has an intact weather cover, protecting outlets and circuit breakers from rain, ice, and salt spray. All outlet boxes should have this weather cover protection

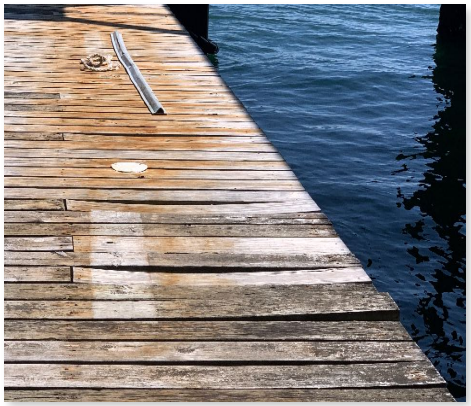
Shown (above left) are conduits on the Municipal Pier with caps in place.

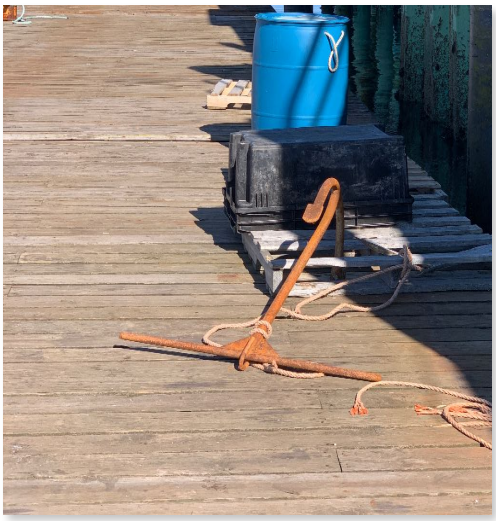
(Above right) Since pier construction, twelve (12) conduits on the Municipal Pier have never had caps installed, allowing rain, salt spray, gull guano, and refuse to accumulate inside. Duct tape had initially been used to cover the openings. Naturally, that did not last.

Floating Piers

Hazards & Maintenance Issues

There are more such tripping hazards than shown below. These problems did not just suddenly arise, have developed over time, but have not been attended to.

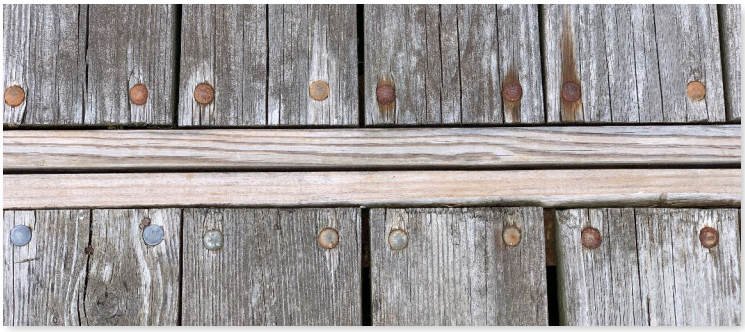




On 2022 Jul 30, as a boat excursion disembarked, this writer witnessed a young boy trip on this anchor that was left on the north floating pier.

The following is a gap between floating pier segments, presenting tripping and sprain or broken bone hazards. It has been reported that people have gotten their feet stuck on multiple occasions.

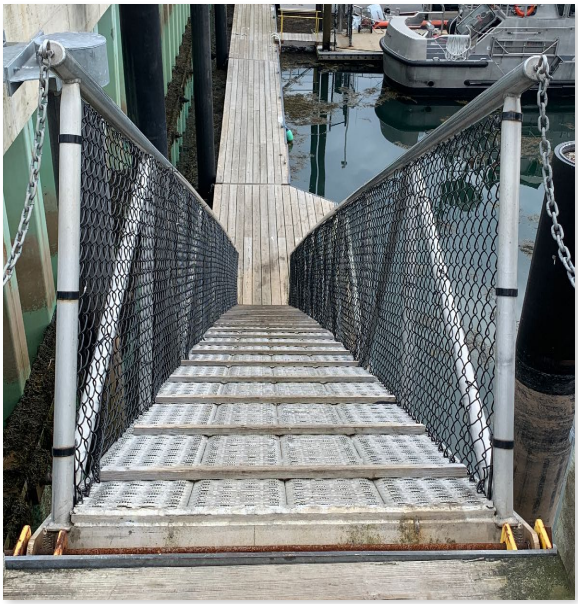
Below left shows how two segments of floating pier are properly constructed to prevent feet from getting caught in the gap between segments.

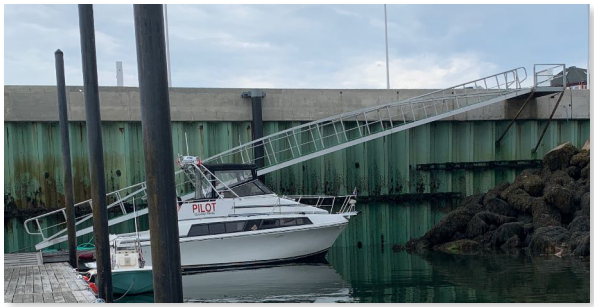


A loose edge bumper (right) on an inner basin float may eventually fall in the water, causing pollution and losing protection for any docked boats.

Inner Basin

Steep Ramp, Slippery When Wet

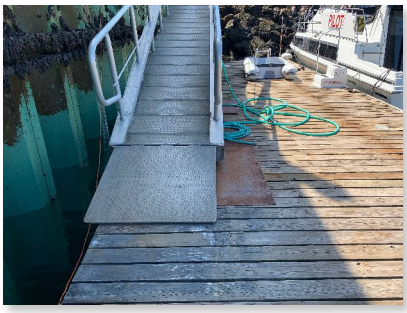




The inner basin ramp (above left and top) is considerably shorter than the north floating piers ramp (above bottom right), making the inner basin ramp very steep at low water, and dangerously slippery when wet from rain. Winter conditions make it even more hazardous. **Suggestion:** Extending the inner basin ramp would make using the ramp much safer.

North Floating Piers

Ramp Falling & Drowning Hazard



Many people of all ages use this ramp to board and depart whale watching and fishing excursions, as well as pleasure boaters and fishermen. The end of ramp sometimes moves sideways at the bottom due to the length of the ramp and the changing tide, and can present the pictured falling and drowning hazards.

Suggested Solution: Add a rail along the inside of this section of the floating pier. The rail would guide the bottom of the ramp away from water's edge as the tide changes, protecting the public from falling into the water.

Immersed Electric Cables & Cable Management

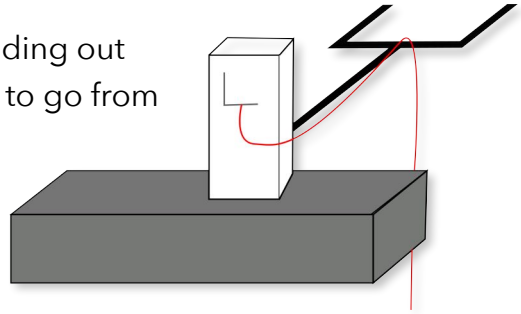
Multiple non-marine quality electric extension cords are partially immersed in the water due to dropping straight down from the Municipal Pier into the saltwater between the main pier and the floating pier.

The red cord (photo at right) has two serious problems: **the female receptacle end is completely submerged, and the male end that is plugged into the outlet box on the Municipal Pier has broken insulation,** as shown previously in this document (page 9). The Port director was informed of this on 2022 July 29.

Suggestion: Require and enforce use of marine-grade electrical cords.

Suggestion: Inspect pier conditions on a regular basis.

Suggestion: A bracket at each outlet station extending out over the floating pier would enable electric cables to go from the outlet box, over the bracket, and drop directly onto the floating pier, avoiding the water even with the changing tide.



Non-Waterproof Splices

Although these may be marine-grade electric cables, the non-marine, non-waterproof junction boxes present fire and electrocution hazards.

Suggestion: Require and enforce use of only marine-grade cables, splices, and connections.

Conclusion

As stated earlier, the Fish Pier and Municipal Pier are an economic draw and quality of life asset. The Eastport Port Authority website, under Cargo Management, refers to, "… Our safety-first staff…."[3] The same safety-first philosophy and practices should extend to the Municipal Pier and Fish Pier. Regular scheduled inspections and attention to safety and maintenance would avoid the multitude of hazards and deterioration illustrated in this publication.

Hopefully, with support of the City of Eastport[4], Harbor Advisory Committee[5], and Maine Port Authority[6], with appropriate leadership and resources, the Eastport Port Authority will adopt such measures.

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[3] https://www.portofeastport.org

[4] https://www.eastport-me.gov

[5] https://www.eastport-me.gov/harbor-advisory-committee

[6] https://www.maineports.com