

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY No. 03-24

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Nautical Inspectors, Recognized Organizations

Subject: ENCLOSED SPACE ENTRY INCIDENTS

Date: 8 February 2024

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) reminds vessel managers of the need for continued vigilance regarding enclosed space entry and rescue training.

Since 2020, seven enclosed space entry incidents on RMI-flagged vessels have occurred, resulting in the loss of 11 lives.

A recent incident, currently being investigated, resulted in the loss of three seafarers. The continued loss of life due to improper enclosed space entry and rescue serves as a reminder of the dangers associated with the improper entry into shipboard enclosed spaces.

1.0 Incident Similarities

1.1 The Administrator has noted some similarities between these enclosed space entry incidents, including:

- .1 blatant disregard of the risks that exist with enclosed spaces;
- .2 lack of awareness of the hazards associated with enclosed space entry without taking proper precautions;
- .3 failure to notify senior crewmembers of the need/intention to enter an enclosed space;
- .4 Stop-Work Authority not properly exercised on board; and
- .5 entry into enclosed spaces by shore personnel without prior notification and without permission or assistance from the ship’s crew.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Administrator strongly recommends that ship managers review and amend, as necessary, their enclosed space entry procedures to ensure they comply with the requirements outlined in RMI Marine Notice [7-041-1](#).

This MSA is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

2.2 The Administrator strongly recommends that ship managers review existing procedures and where necessary, update them while considering:

- .1 the dangers of entering an enclosed space;
- .2 every entry to an enclosed space, other than for an enclosed space rescue, requires an enclosed space entry permit;
- .3 establishing a physical barrier by controlling access to prevent unauthorized entry to an enclosed space;
- .4 reviewing and, as necessary, revising the enclosed space entry permit to ensure that pre-entry checks are completed before finalizing an enclosed space entry permit;
- .5 implementing and enforcing an effective zero-tolerance policy for breaches in enclosed space entry procedures;
- .6 how to recognize an enclosed space and examples of the different types that a seafarer might encounter while performing their day-to-day shipboard tasks;
- .7 the actions that must be taken by crewmembers when it is necessary for shore personnel to enter enclosed spaces on board;
- .8 who is authorized to permit enclosed space entry on board; and
- .9 the actions that must be taken by crewmembers when shore personnel refuse to comply with the Company's enclosed space entry procedures.

2.3 The Administrator also strongly recommends that Masters:

- .1 hold a special safety meeting to review the notice or bulletin issued by ship management and share the information provided in this MSA, with particular emphasis on enforcing the responsibility that all seafarers have to prevent unauthorized entry into enclosed spaces by crew and shore personnel;
- .2 conduct periodic enclosed space entry and rescue drills in varying locations and not in the same space to reduce any potential for complacency;
- .3 remind all seafarers that the Stop-Work Authority applies to all persons on board regardless of rank, rate, or seniority;
- .4 review the ship's enclosed space entry procedures with the ship's officers and crew; and
- .5 conduct the next enclosed space entry and rescue drill emphasizing the interaction with shore personnel.