

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Office of the

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY NO. 23-18

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

Subject: CONFINED SPACE ENTRY INCIDENTS

Date: 30 August 2018

This Marine Safety Advisory (MSA) supersedes MSA No. 53-13, which is now revoked.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) has recently received reports of confined space entry incidents on an RMI-flagged tanker and an RMI-flagged bulk carrier. These incidents, which occurred within approximately 24 hours of each other, resulted in the deaths of three (3) seafarers and two (2) seafarers losing consciousness.

Although the details of these incidents differ, based on the Administrator’s preliminary investigations, both involved:

- experienced officers directing junior seafarers to enter a confined space that they knew was not safe for entry and without complying with the vessel’s established confined space entry procedures;
- the officer not informing the Master that a confined space was going to be entered; and
- seafarers, including senior officers, ignored their training and instead entering the confined space on their own initiative and without use of proper equipment to assist a fellow crewmember who had entered the space and gotten into difficulty.

The Administrator’s preliminary investigations also determined that:

- on one (1) of the vessels there was an established history of the vessel’s Master knowing that confined spaces were entered without complying with the established confined space entry procedures; and
- on one (1) of the vessels an experienced officer entered the confined space after the rating, who had been directed to enter the space, refused to do so because the proper procedures were not being followed.

This MSA expires one (1) year after its issuance, unless otherwise noted, extended, superseded, or revoked.

These incidents serve as a stark reminder that entering a confined space without following proper procedures can result in seafarers being killed and/or seriously injured. They are also reminders that a well-intentioned seafarer who enters a confined space to assist a fellow crewmember will likely become a victim requiring assistance. This may also delay a proper rescue operation and increase the potential for one (1) or more deaths.

The Administrator strongly recommends that ship managers review their confined space entry procedures and, if necessary revise them, to ensure they comply with the requirements outlined in RMI Marine Notice [7-041-1](#). The Administrator also strongly recommends that ship managers send a letter or bulletin to all vessels in their managed fleet addressing:

- the dangers of improperly entering a confined space;
- how to recognize a confined space and examples of the different types of confined spaces a seafarer might encounter while performing their day-to-day ship board tasks;
- that all seafarers, regardless of how junior or senior, must not enter a confined space without permission and then only in accordance with ship management's established procedure;
- who on-board is authorized to permit entry into a confined space; and
- that the best way for a seafarer to assist a fellow seafarer inside a confined space is to immediately raise the alarm so that an organized rescue can be conducted in accordance with ship management's established procedure.

The Administrator also strongly recommends that Masters:

- hold a special safety meeting to review the letter 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 confined space entry related incidents and the need for crewmembers to resist their natural urge to immediately enter a confined space in order to try to assist a fellow crewmember;
- review the vessel's confined space entry procedures with the vessel's officers and crew and then conduct confined space entry training; and
- conduct a confined space rescue drill.

Enclosed is a poster intended to provide a visual reminder to seafarers that they should not enter a confined space without proper authorization. This poster can be downloaded from the Marine Accident Investigators' International Forum (MAIIF) website in [PDF format](#) for printing and distribution, and in [JPG format](#) for computer desktop use. Ship managers are encouraged to use the poster and/or computer desktop image as part of their efforts to reduce the potential for future confined space incidents.

Enclosed Space Entry



STOP

You must not open or enter an ENCLOSED SPACE unless authorized by the master or the nominated responsible person and unless the appropriate safety procedures laid down for the particular ship have been followed

THINK

Before entering an ENCLOSED SPACE, you must have a Permit to Enter completed by the master or responsible person and by any persons entering the space

ASK

Have I received instructions or permission from the master or nominated responsible person to enter the enclosed space?

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A PERMIT TO ENTER AND HAVE NOT RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS OR PERMISSION FROM THE MASTER OR NOMINATED RESPONSIBLE PERSON, THEN DO NOT ENTER ANY ENCLOSED SPACE

What is an ENCLOSED SPACE?

ENCLOSED SPACE means a space which has any of the following characteristics: limited openings for entry and exit; inadequate ventilation; and is not designed for continuous worker occupancy.

Adapted from, and in support of, IMO Resolution A.1050(27) – Revised recommendations for entering enclosed spaces aboard ships.



A Marine Accident Investigators' International Forum project, sponsored by: Bahamas Maritime Administration; Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator; Norwegian Maritime Directorate; St. Kitts & Nevis International Ship Registry; South African Maritime Safety Authority; Swedish Transport Agency; United States Coast Guard; and supported by The Nautical Institute