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 MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY NO. 08-21

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

Subject: ENCLOSED SPACE ENTRY INCIDENTS INVOLVING SHORE PERSONNEL

Date: 1 June 2021

This Marine Safety Advisory (MSA) supersedes MSA No. 23-20.

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. In 2020, two seafarers and three shore personnel died in enclosed space entry incidents on RMI-flagged vessels. The continued loss of life due to improper enclosed space entry and rescue serves as an unfortunate reminder of the dangers associated with the improper entry into shipboard enclosed spaces.

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

- lack of awareness of the dangers of enclosed space entry without taking proper precautions;
- failure to notify senior crewmembers of the need/intention to enter an enclosed space; and
- entry into enclosed spaces by shore personnel without prior notification and without permission or assistance from the ship’s crew.

Two enclosed space entry incidents on RMI-flagged vessels involved shore personnel entering cargo holds. In the first incident, the shore personnel were warned by the crew of the dangers and told that entry was not permitted. Despite this, the shore personnel entered cargo holds and were overcome by the hazardous atmosphere within. In the other, the shore personnel did not inform the ship’s crew before they entered. In both cases the shore personnel entered the cargo hold very soon after the hatch covers had been opened and before the atmosphere had been checked.

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 includes adequately prohibiting entry into enclosed spaces by shore personnel prior to the necessary precautions being implemented.

This MSA is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.
The Administrator also strongly recommends that ship managers send a notice or bulletin to all ships in their managed fleet addressing:

- the dangers of improperly entering an enclosed space;
- how to recognize an enclosed space and examples of the different types of enclosed spaces a seafarer might encounter while performing their day-to-day shipboard tasks;
- the actions to be taken by crewmembers when it is necessary for shore personnel to enter enclosed spaces on board;
- who is authorized to permit enclosed space entry on board; and
- the actions to be taken by crewmembers when shore personnel refuse to comply with the Company’s enclosed space entry procedures.

The Administrator also strongly recommends that Masters:

- 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;
- review the ship’s enclosed space entry procedures with the ship’s officers and crew; and
- conduct the next enclosed space entry and rescue drill, with emphasis on the interaction with shore personnel.