

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Office of the

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY No. 01-26

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

Subject: HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENT: NON-TOXIC BULK LIQUID CARGOES

Date: 20 February 2026

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) reminds vessel owners, operators, ship’s officers, and crewmembers of the need to continuously ventilate and monitor the atmospheric conditions prior to, and upon entering a ship’s cargo tank(s).

On 13 January 2026, four crewmembers on board an RMI-flagged tanker entered a cargo tank to manually clean the residues of a cargo of Crude Coconut Oil. The tank was heated during the voyage, but not during discharging operations. The tank atmosphere was tested before entry. Oxygen levels were sufficient for safe entry and there were no indications of carbon monoxide or other toxic gases. Shortly after starting the cleaning activity, the personal gas detectors of the crewmembers alarmed for the presence of carbon monoxide. The crewmembers evacuated the tank, but one crewmember became unconscious when reaching the upper platform of the stairs. A second crewmember who returned to assist was also rendered unconscious. Both crewmembers were rescued and reanimated.

Crude Coconut Oil and other vegetable oils when heated in confined spaces can decompose and release carbon monoxide. The produced carbon monoxide can remain trapped inside the cargo and rapidly released during cargo movement, changing the atmosphere within the cargo tank rendering it unsafe. This incident underlines that non-toxic bulk liquid cargoes can create a hazardous environment inside a ship’s cargo tank.

Crew members aboard RMI-flagged vessels are reminded that:

- cargo tanks, void spaces around such tanks, cargo-handling spaces, or other enclosed spaces on ships transporting cargoes regulated by the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk shall not be entered unless the requirements of §16.4.2 are complied with;

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is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

- any entry into an enclosed space must be organized and conducted in accordance with International Maritime Organization's (IMO) revised recommendations contained in IMO Resolution [MSC.581\(110\)](#), and taking into consideration RMI Marine Notice [7-041-1](#);
- continuous atmospheric monitoring of an enclosed space by crew members involved in the enclosed space entry is recommended to ensure timely detection of any changes to the atmospheric conditions throughout occupancy; and
- the risk assessment for entry into a cargo tank that contains Crude Coconut Oil or other vegetable oil should address the potential presence of carbon monoxide.