



**Virgin Islands Shipping Registry**

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# **SAFETY ALERT**

## **NOTICE TO MARINERS**

No.1/2016

Applicability: All vessels in Virgin Islands waters

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### **SAFETY ALERT – ENCLOSED SPACE ENTRY**

This Safety Alert is circulated as a reminder to all seafarers and the maritime community of potential dangers of entering an enclosed space. Recently an Engineer lost his life in an Enclosed Space on board a vessel in the Virgin Islands. This notice has been prepared with an intention to raise awareness of dangers in enclosed spaces and safety measures to be taken prior entry.

#### **Enclosed spaces** on ships have

- limited opening for entry and exit
- inadequate ventilation and
- are not designed for continuous worker occupation

Some of the example of enclosed spaces on ships is

• Tanks • Cargo holds • Cargo pump room • Cofferdams • Engine crankcase • Fore & Aft Peak Tanks • Void space • Chain locker • Battery lockers • Ballast Tanks • Sewage Tanks • Fuel Tanks

This is not an exhaustive list and awareness of potential risks is necessary for all spaces onboard ship. It is absolutely important that correct procedure is followed strictly before making entry into enclosed space(s).

It is also extremely important that Enclosed Spaces are identified and marked with signs such as shown below:



### **Hazards in an Enclosed Space**

The atmosphere in an Enclosed Space may be hazardous due to oxygen depletion or enrichment. There could be toxic gases or liquids present. Particularly in Fuel and Cargo Oil Tanks there could be a flammable atmosphere. Additionally there would not be a free flow of air.

The way the enclosed space is configured could also pose significant hazards. The spaces may have slicks, wet surfaces and worn out ladders. The openings could be very small or narrow inhibiting emergency escape or rescue. There could be risk of fall from unguarded heights. The structure of the space could be such making illumination difficult. The space may be difficult to clean prior to entry and there could hazard from objects falling from a height.

## Enclosed space entry precautions

### Prior entry

- Understand and discuss the job to be done – be aware
- Risk Assessment – hazards – mitigation by safety measures
- Make sure atmosphere is safe – Carry out ventilation and testing of atmosphere (The normal air contains 21% of Oxygen. The acceptable range of Oxygen inside an Enclosed Space is between 19.5% and 23.5 %. Entry should be prohibited beyond this range.
- Complete Permit to Work - follow your vessels procedure.

### During entry

- Make sure the enclosed space is well illuminated;
- Continue with the ventilation of the space
- Keep rescue equipment ready
- ensure proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) is worn by everyone including Oxygen, flammable and toxic gas meter.
- establish and maintain communication

### After entry

- close the permit
- bring back all systems to normal

Please be reminded that as per the Virgin Islands Merchant Shipping Act 2001, all matters relevant to the safety of the ship, is the responsibility of the Master and the Owner and both are held liable in respect of unsafe ship. The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers provides guidance on enclosed space entry and many other activities carried out on a daily basis on board ships and should be consulted when any procedure is unclear.

If in doubt, do not enter an enclosed space.

Captain Raman Bala.

Ag. Director of Shipping

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