



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

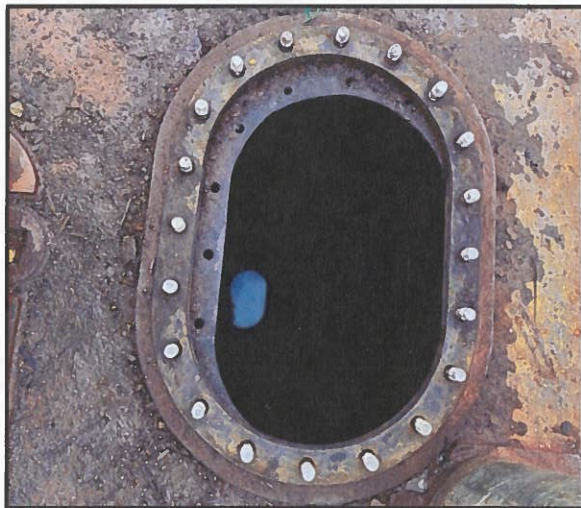
United States Coast Guard
Sector Southeast Alaska
PO Box 25517
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SEAK MSIB Number: 26-2
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Email: SectorSEAKPrevention@uscg.mil

HAZARDS OF CONFINED SPACE ENTRY, HOT WORK, AND UNPLANNED RESCUE

Purpose: This Marine Safety Information Bulletin serves as a critical reminder to all vessel owners, operators, masters, and marine employers of the extreme dangers associated with entering confined spaces and conducting hot work in or adjacent to confined spaces.

Background: Recent mariner deaths in an oxygen-deficient void aboard a barge moored near Prince of Wales Island serves as a stark reminder of the dangers associated with confined spaces. The incident involved a mariner who entered an un-tested enclosed space. The tragedy was compounded when three additional crewmembers entered the space in a rescue attempt and were also incapacitated. Ultimately, two of the four crewmembers perished. Subsequent investigation revealed a non-survivable, oxygen-deficient atmosphere was present at the time of the incident. This tragic event highlights that confined spaces can present invisible dangers, and that instinct-driven rescues can lead to additional casualties.



These images illustrate common but high-risk maritime environment where an untested space can present a lethal atmospheric hazard.

Hazards: Confined spaces, such as tanks, voids, and other enclosed structures, can contain atmospheres that are oxygen-deficient, flammable, and/or toxic. These hazardous atmospheres often provide no sensory clues; they can be colorless and odorless and can incapacitate a person in a matter of seconds.

Mitigation Measures: The Coast Guard strongly reminds the maritime community that any entry into a confined space must be preceded by a thorough and systematic approach. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Identification and Hazard Assessment: Clearly identifying all confined spaces and understanding potential hazards.
- Atmospheric Testing: Conducting proper testing with a calibrated gas analyzer prior to entry.
- Ventilation: Adequately ventilating the space to ensure a safe atmosphere is established and maintained.
- Formal Procedures: Adhering to established company safety procedures and permit-to-work systems, including the use of a trained attendant.
- All-Hands Training: Ensuring all crewmembers are trained to recognize the hazards of confined spaces.

Specific High-Risk Evolutions:

- Hot Work: Hot work (welding, cutting, grinding) must never be performed on or adjacent to confined spaces until the space has been properly tested and deemed "Safe for Hot Work" by a qualified person, such as a certified Marine Chemist.
- Unplanned Rescue: Unplanned instinct-driven rescues in confined spaces are a known killer. No person should ever enter a confined space to attempt a rescue unless they are part of a trained and equipped rescue team.

Recommendations: Vessel owners and operators are strongly encouraged to review their confined space entry and hot work procedures. Drills should be conducted to reinforce training. For additional information, consult all applicable standards, including Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) standards for permit-required confined spaces (29 CFR 1910.146) and shipyard employment (29 CFR 1915, Subparts B and D), and specific U.S. Coast Guard requirements for each vessel type as found in Title 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Follow up: Reports of marine casualties or unsafe situations requiring immediate attention should be directed to the Sector Southeast Alaska Command Center on Channel 16 or by calling 907-463-2980, 206-815-6563, or 866-759-6061. Questions and concerns about MSIB Number: 26-2 may be directed to the Sector Southeast Alaska Command Center at the numbers above, or to SectorSEAKPrevention@uscg.mil.



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