

How much do you know about the safety of dangerous confined spaces on ships?

Illegally entering the ship's dangerous confined space Behavioral special governance actions

In recent years, accidents such as suffocation, poisoning, and falling caused by crew members, maintenance construction personnel, and dock operators illegally entering the dangerous confined space of ships have occurred from time to time, seriously threatening human life. From January 15, 2025 to October 14, 2025, the Maritime Safety Administration of the Ministry of Transport will carry out a special governance action, aiming to standardize the behavior of entering the dangerous confined space of ships, improve the safety management level of ships, and prevent and curb the occurrence of accidents.

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Promote the implementation of safety responsibilities, build a solid sense of safety and responsibility of personnel, improve the quality and efficiency of ship safety management, improve the level of intrinsic safety, promote industry coordination and joint prevention and co-governance, and promote the benign interaction of high-level safety and high-quality development.

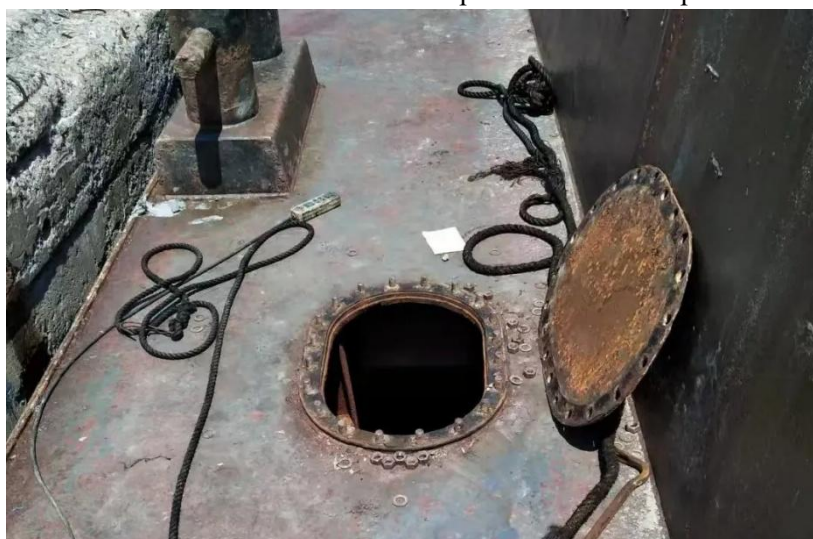
2. BASIC DEFINITION

Ship dangerous confined space also refers to the ship's enclosed premises, i.e. the ship's premises that meet one of the following conditions:

- a) There are restricted entrances and exits;
- b) inadequate ventilation;
- c) Not designed to operate continuously with personnel.

These include:

Cargo holds, double-bottom, fuel tanks (cabinets), ballast tanks, cargo pump rooms, cargo compressor rooms, isolated empty tanks, anchor chain tanks, empty tanks, box-shaped keels, protective inter-layer premises, boilers, engine crank boxes, engine scavenger tanks, sewage tanks (tanks), and adjacent premises that are not used for placing cargo but may have the same air environment characteristics as the enclosed premises of the ship and are not ventilated.





3. PRECAUTIONS

ON PREPARATIONS BEFORE THE JOB

First of all, it is necessary to check the cargo information and confirm whether the ship is carrying dangerous goods that are prone to produce toxic and harmful, combustible gases or other non-dangerous goods that are prone to cause the risk of hypoxia, so as to make a preliminary judgment of the operational risk. At the same time, check the operation information of the closed premises to determine whether the target ship has any operations involving entering the closed premises, such as tank washing, air dispersion, etc. It is also necessary to control the personnel operating outside the ship, including registration, information verification and safety disclosure.

VERIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

Closed premises need to be identified, assessed and inventoried on a regular basis. Ships should formulate emergency rescue plans for anoxic dangerous operations in closed places, safety procedures for entering closed places, and emergency response procedures such as emergency evacuation and accident rescue.

Before entering the operation, there must be a risk assessment record, an entry permit and authorization record of the captain or designated person in charge, a record of adequate ventilation and air testing using calibrated gas detection equipment.

Competent personnel should receive safety training in closed premises, crew members with rescue and first aid duties should have regular training records, and ships on international voyages should have records of closed premises entry and rescue drills.



INSPECTION OF SHIP STRUCTURES AND EQUIPMENT

The mechanical and natural ventilation equipment of the ventilation system of the enclosed premises should be in good condition. The opening state of the entrance door, manhole, passage and other openings and the structural integrity and tightness of the closed premises must meet the standard.

Internal facilities such as stairways, lighting, water level detectors, etc. should be normal. Gas detection and monitoring equipment should be intrinsically safe and functional, equipped with operating manuals, and stationary gas monitoring systems should be functional.

Emergency rescue and protective equipment such as personal safety protection equipment, communication equipment, rescue equipment, etc. should be in good condition.



COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS OF THE OPERATOR

Operators should be familiar with the identification and risk assessment of closed premises, including being familiar with the list, being able to accurately identify closed premises, smooth emergency communication between personnel, and competent personnel being able to conduct risk assessment and identify potential hazards. Familiarize yourself with the procedures for safe access to enclosed premises, such as arranging a coordinator or mechanical barriers at the entrance, clarifying the frequency of communication methods and testing the communication system, equipping the entrance with rescue and first aid equipment, and locking or warning signs at the entrance and exit that does not need to be entered.



The crew responsible for gas detection is familiar with the operation of testing instruments, the crew members with relevant responsibilities are familiar with the operation and training content of safety protection equipment, the crew members with rescue and first aid responsibilities master the corresponding procedures, and the entry of closed premises and rescue drills must meet the requirements of the Convention, regulations and specifications.



4. Check the Points

- Are the responsible crew aware of the risk of entering enclosed premises?
- Does the ship have effective control over the personnel who enter the enclosed premises?
- Does the ship have a complete list of enclosed premises?
- Is the ship's enclosed premises properly identified and controlled?
- Is the gas detection and monitoring equipment regularly tested and calibrated?
- Is the emergency rescue and protective equipment in good condition?
- Are operators familiar with the risk assessment of enclosed premises?
- Are the operators familiar with the operation of equipment such as safety protection equipment?
- Do enclosed premises access and rescue drills comply with the requirements of the Convention?
- Are the relevant system documents for the operation of closed premises effectively implemented on the ship?

Epilogue

In order to improve everyone's safety awareness, the Shanghai Maritime Safety Administration will use a variety of ways to publicize and implement this governance action to shipping enterprises, boarding operation units, and ships arriving at the port, so that everyone can fully understand the risk of entering the dangerous confined space of the ship. At the same time, typical cases will also be collected, experience will be summarized and widely publicized, and special governance actions will be carried out in depth.

Let us work together and actively participate in the special action to control the illegal entry into the dangerous confined space of ships, jointly protect the safety of water traffic, and ensure the life safety of every crew member and operator!