



## MARITIME ENGINEERS PTY LTD

A Member of James Fisher and Sons plc

# CONFINED SPACE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

## Engineer enters barge tank, dies

He is believed to have suffocated while inside the confined space

BY BEN NADARAJAN  
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MARINE engineer Joseph Ho Swee Hee went aboard a barge berthed at a shipyard in Tuas on Wednesday afternoon to check how much repair work it needed.

He was supposed to join his colleagues for lunch later, but he never made it out.

Soon after entering a tank in the vessel MR 3002 owned by Marina Offshore, Mr Ho, 47, collapsed.

He was found a while later lying face up in the 5.4m-high steel tank.

The ship surveyor, who was working alone at the time, was pronounced dead at about 2.30pm.

The police and the Manpower Ministry are probing the circumstances leading to his death.

Preliminary investigations reveal that Mr Ho was likely to have suffocated while inside the tank.

Before a surveyor goes into a confined space in a vessel, a gas test should be conducted to ensure he will have enough oxygen. It is also to detect the presence of any flammable gas.

However, no such test was said to have been carried out before Mr Ho went in.

## Lessons of Viking Islay deaths seem to go unheeded

David Osler, London

MANY seafarers continue to lose their lives working in enclosed spaces, despite the lessons learned from the three fatalities in the *Viking Islay* incident almost two years ago, Nautilus International has revealed.

In UK waters and on UK ships alone, there have been at least six deaths in enclosed or confined spaces since the tragedy, which led to a fine of £280,000 (US\$457,800) for operator Vroon Offshore Services in May, according to the Anglo-Dutch officers' union.

Data from marine accident investigators covering 18 flag states shows a total of 120 deaths and 123 injuries in confined spaces since 1991, while more recently, the UK P&I Club has noted four fatalities on ships in ports in Spain, Indonesia and the US between April and June last year.

All told, statistics show that enclosed spaces remain one of the most common causes of work-related seafarer death, Nautilus assistant general secretary Marcel van den Broek told the recent annual assembly of the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations in Rio de Janeiro.

The union used the platform to press for the mandatory carriage of oxygen analysis equipment on board ships.

"Apart from the tragedy caused by the loss of life of so many seafarers, the second biggest tragedy is the fact that

despite our high-tech knowledge, despite our safety systems, despite good training and despite loads of information being provided, we seem unable to stop it," Mr van den Broek told a presentation at the gathering.

He highlighted the *Viking Islay* case, in which three seafarers were killed in September 2007 after entering the oxygen-deficient atmosphere of chain locker. The lack of oxygen had been caused by natural ongoing corrosion of the steel structure and the anchor chain within the space.

Because the crew did not know that the environment was potentially dangerous, well-established permit-to-work measures were not enacted before the space was entered. Mr van den Broek argued that the present approach of the industry is simply inadequate in many instances, with masters frequently made the scapegoat in the aftermath of accidents.

For instance, there is no mandatory requirement under either UK or international regulations for ships to carry atmosphere analysing equipment.

Furthermore, the UK Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen does not explicitly refer to chain lockers as enclosed spaces.

A spokesman for Nautilus International said that the union will continue to push the issue onto the agenda at representative meetings of the shipping industry.

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PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE CLIENT UNDERTAKING FORM ON THE REVERSE SIDE



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# CONFINED SPACE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Maritime Engineers Pty Ltd company policy on confined space entry is strictly in accordance with Australian Standard code AS2865.2001 – “Safe Working in a Confined Space”.

Surveyors shall not enter tanks or other designated confined spaces unless the following procedures are in place:

- The tanks shall be clean and dry.
- A certificate of entry current for 6 hours issued by a responsible person as defined in the code, using properly calibrated equipment.
- Tanks are adequately ventilated by ducted forced air supply.
- Adequate lighting is provided – inspections using torch only are not acceptable. Low voltage lighting to be provided.
- Safe ladder access is to be provided.
- A certified sentry remains at the tank access in constant contact with the surveyor at all times.
- Certified rescue personnel on site during all confined space entries.
- In the case of ballast tanks or other spaces which can be remotely flooded, a tag-out isolation procedure shall be employed on relevant pumps and valves.
- An emergency escape compressed air breathing apparatus shall be available for use at the tank to be inspected.
- Where internal temperatures within the spaces exceed 30°C forced draft ventilation is required whilst the surveyor is inside the space.

**If the client cannot provide these services, the surveyor shall not, under any circumstances, proceed with the survey and the client shall be charged for additional costs involved.**

### CLIENT UNDERTAKING

**I have read and understood these requirements and accept full responsibility for all items to be properly prepared PRIOR to arrival of the surveyor on board.**

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Mobile Phone No.</b>
<b>Print Name:</b>	<b>Client:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	