

CONFINED SPACE DEATHS HIGHLIGHT TIMBER HAZARD

Two men, a Russian chief officer and a Ukrainian chief engineer have died in a hold containing timber while a third, a Filipino second officer who attempted to rescue them collapsed by survived.



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WHAT HAPPENED?

The incident is under investigation by the UK's Marine Accident Investigation Branch while the report will not be available for some time the incident does highlight the



confined space hazards of timber in cargo holds and the continuing problem of would-be rescuers being overcome while attempting to recover victims. **Sally Ann C**

is a 9000 gt Isle of Man-registered general cargo ship operated by Carisbrooke

Shipping, based on the Isle of

Wight. At the time of the incident she was carrying a cargo of timber en route to Dakar, Senegal.

All that is presently known is that the chief officer and chief engineer entered one of the vessel's four holds and collapsed. Subsequently the second officer tried to rescue them but also collapsed. He was successfully revived.

Timber in its various forms, from pellets to logs is hazardous. Oxidation of wood reduced oxygen in the atmosphere and produces a range of potentially hazardous gases including carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulphide.

In the Suntis incident in 2014, for example, the Fire and Rescue Service analysis of the atmosphere after the accident showed normal readings (20.9%) of oxygen content at the access hatch; the readings reduced to 10% just below main deck level inside the hatch opening and to between 5% and 6% at the bottom of the ladder into the compartment (Figure 2). Such low levels of oxygen cannot support life. Anyone exposed to such levels will faint almost immediately, followed by convulsions, coma and respiratory seizure within a few minutes. It is likely that the timber cargo caused the deprivation of oxygen in the cargo hold and access compartments.

Think about this incident !

Think again!

Q: Are you ready to avoid similar case?

A: Crew monthly training for enclosed space entry procedures.



[\[Click here to add a caption\]](#)

Q: Which areas on your vessel require particular attention so that we can avoid an incident?

A: Enclosed Space register is available on board. Company SMS prescribes entry procedures.

Confined space incident are common and completely avoidable

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WHY IT HAPPENED?

New Zealand's Transport Accident Investigation Commission noted: "The dangers of the organic decomposition of logs and other organic cargos in enclosed spaces are well known in the international maritime community, and were documented on board the TPC Wellington, but in spite of this the high risk this posed to the crew had not been identified, no specific

training had been given to the crew members to heighten their awareness of the risk, and no emergency drills had been conducted in recent times for rescue from enclosed spaces".

In 2006 in Sweden 12 people were taken to hospital and five required decompression chamber treatment. Seven people have died and several have been injured under similar circumstances in Sweden over a two year period.

LESSONS LEARNED

Confined space incident are common and completely avoidable. All confined space rescue drills should be conducted as realistically as possible. You can use the many confined space accident reports to increase your crew's safety awareness.

COMMENTS

This case to be discussed on next Monthly Safety Meeting and reported in NS820.
