



# SAFETY SCUTTLEBUTT

## MARCH 2025

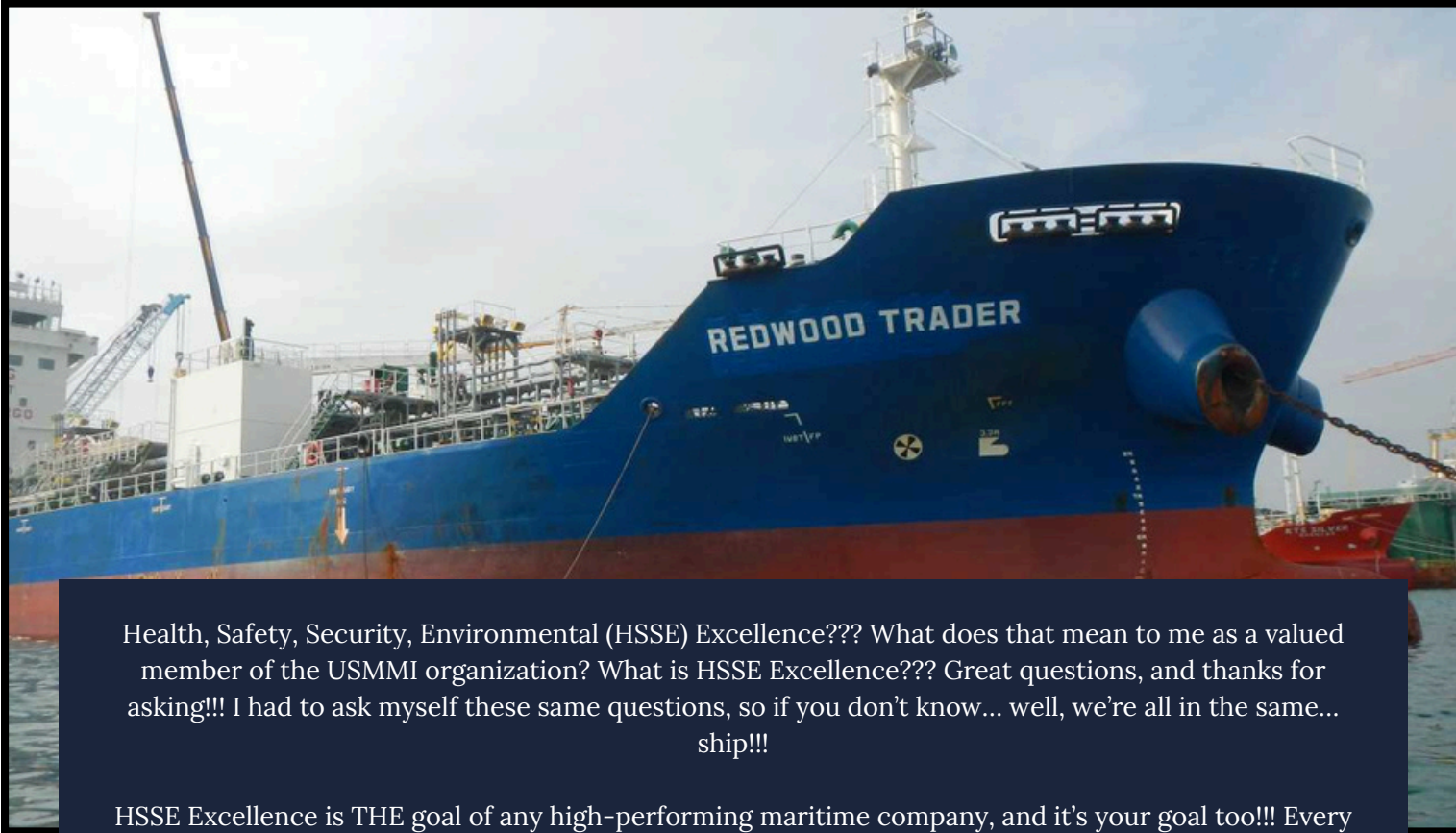
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Health, Safety, Security, Environmental (HSSE) Excellence??? What does that mean to me as a valued member of the USMMI organization? What is HSSE Excellence??? Great questions, and thanks for asking!!! I had to ask myself these same questions, so if you don't know... well, we're all in the same... ship!!!

HSSE Excellence is THE goal of any high-performing maritime company, and it's your goal too!!! Every day we strive for HSSE Excellence by consistently prioritizing and upholding the highest level of health, safety, security, and environmental performance. USMMI undertakes HSSE excellence in a holistic and comprehensive approach. Our policies originate at the highest level of the company, our President and CEO, Mr. Stephen Carmel, personally signs and endorses our Safety, Environmental, Quality policy and posts it for all hands to refer to, both ashore and afloat. It's not a secret what the goal is... the policy states USMMI leadership is committed to:

1. Promoting safe work practices in a safe working environment
2. Operating our ships in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.
3. Safeguarding against all identified risks
4. Continual improvement in the effectiveness of the Safety Management System
5. Continual improvement in the skill and performance of USMMI colleagues ashore and on the ships

USMMI Leadership can't achieve these goals alone. The Safety Management System, which is available to everyone on the ships and ashore, provides guidance on improving safety at sea, and encouraging a culture based around safety. But the System is nothing without the people that execute the ship's mission.

Our shore and afloat colleagues must follow the SMS, and must NOT be afraid to improve the system, provide feedback to shipboard management on what can make the system better or correct errors in the system. Nobody's perfect, and neither is the SMS and that's okay!!! As long as we strive to make improvements wherever we can!

So, what does HSSE Excellence mean to me? It means I get to work in a safe place where we do things the right way, I'm supported by Leadership, when I go home from work I'm better than when I arrived, and if I see something that needs to be fixed, there's a process to do that and USMMI Leadership wants to hear from me!



DIRECTOR OF TANKER OPERATIONS,  
TRAVIS HANSEN





# Risk Management Good Practice: Safety Markings

## GOOD PRACTICE

- ✓ Trip hazard marked and highly visible

*To avoid personnel injuries and claims, all trip/height/slip hazards should be highlighted with safety markings.*



## BAD PRACTICE

- ✗ Trip hazard unmarked
- ✗ Blends into the same colour deck



**It's your ship and equipment  
– look after them and they will look after you**



# ONLINE WELLNESS PROGRAMS



Long hours, limited personal space, and the demands of living at sea can make prioritizing your health and wellness difficult. However, staying mentally and physically well is crucial for your well-being and maintaining focus and resilience on the job.

Fortunately, free and low-cost online wellness programs are available that you can access from anywhere, including onboard! These courses cover various topics, such as stress management, sleep improvement, nutrition, mindfulness, and overall mental well-being.

These programs can help you build healthier habits, manage stress more effectively, and improve energy levels. Many of these courses are developed by top universities and experts in the field, ensuring high-quality guidance and practical tools you can apply to your daily life. Whether you're looking to improve your sleep, learn relaxation techniques, or adopt healthier eating habits, there's a program for you.

Check out these online wellness courses:

**[Coursera - Health & Wellness Courses](#)**

**[Harvard Online - Wellness Programs](#)**

**[Class Central - Free Wellness Courses](#)**

Investing in your well-being doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. A little time spent learning new wellness strategies can make a big difference in how you feel and perform each day. Try a course today and see how small changes can lead to lasting improvements!



# Lessons Learned: Applying the Hierarchy of Controls Effectively

The International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) issued Safety Flash 03/25, emphasizing the critical importance of applying the hierarchy of risk controls in safety practices.

## What Happened?

During a docking operation, a grating was removed from the mezzanine level in the bow thruster space to facilitate the lifting of machinery components. Barriers and signs were installed to protect the worksite and the area around the hole. However, once the lifting operation was completed, the lifting equipment and some barriers were removed, but the grating was not replaced. The Chief Engineer, unaware of the open hole, entered the mezzanine level using a vertical access ladder that had not been signed or barriered off. He stepped into the hole and was only able to prevent a fall of 4-5 meters by instinctively reaching out to break his fall, sustaining only minor injuries.

Red box showing where grating was removed; red line shows route of Chief Engineer



CREDIT:IMCA

## Lessons Learned:

1. Adequate Barrier Installation: While the main access to the worksite was properly barriered and signed, the vertical access ladder, which was a potential secondary route to the mezzanine, was not considered during planning. This lack of foresight led to a safety hazard.
2. Immediate Replacement of Grating: Once the lifting operation was completed, the grating should have been replaced immediately to eliminate the hazard. Leaving it off, even with barriers in place, created an ongoing risk that could have been easily mitigated.
3. Planning and Risk Awareness: There was a gap in hazard awareness regarding secondary access routes. A more thorough risk assessment during the planning phase could have identified the potential for workers using the vertical ladder, leading to more effective safety measures.
4. Hierarchy of Controls: The incident highlighted the need to apply the hierarchy of controls more effectively. Replacing the grating would have removed the hazard entirely and eliminated the need for additional barriers and signs.
5. Vigilance in Task Planning: The investigation led to a reminder about the importance of vigilance in planning tasks and the need to consider all potential hazards, including less obvious access points, during the planning phase.

## Follow-up Questions:

1. Hazard Identification: Could the incident have been avoided if a more thorough hazard assessment had been performed before and during the operation?
2. Barrier Effectiveness: Should there have been a more comprehensive barrier system to account for all possible access points, including secondary routes like the vertical ladder?
3. Grating Replacement: What procedures can be put in place to ensure that grating or other critical safety components are replaced immediately after work completion?
4. Training and Awareness: How can workers be better trained to recognize and report potential safety hazards, particularly in situations involving secondary access points?
5. Ongoing Monitoring: What systems or practices can be implemented to ensure that all safety measures, including barriers and signage, are maintained throughout the operation and after completion?

## Relating to Safety Awareness:

This incident underscores the critical importance of proactive safety awareness in both planning and execution. All potential hazards—especially those that arise unexpectedly, such as secondary access routes—must be identified and mitigated before work begins. Regular reviews of safety measures, such as ensuring all barriers and necessary equipment are in place and maintained, should be part of a culture of continuous safety improvement. The importance of hierarchy of controls—where eliminating the hazard entirely is the most effective solution—should be emphasized in safety training and worksite planning.

# TOOLBOX TALKS

A toolbox talk is a brief, informal safety meeting held on worksites, typically before starting a task, to discuss specific hazards, safety procedures, and proper techniques relevant to the job. The purpose of a toolbox talk is to raise safety awareness, provide workers with necessary training, foster communication between workers and management, and ensure compliance with safety regulations. These talks are important because they help prevent accidents by addressing potential risks before starting work, increase workers' safety knowledge, and promote a culture of safety on-site. Additionally, they contribute to cost-effectiveness by reducing injuries and their associated financial and legal costs, while improving team communication and fostering a proactive approach to safety.



## **A few tips to keep in mind when conducting a toolbox talk:**

- Read the toolbox talk to yourself a couple of times before you hold the actual meeting with workers. That way you will be more familiar with the content to be covered and therefore less prompted to stumble while reading to the group.
- Try to hold the toolbox talk in an area that is free of noise and other distractions. If crew members cannot hear you talking, or are distracted by other activities in the area, they won't be focusing on your talk.
- Speak clearly and directly. Mumbling or reading too fast makes it difficult for the workers to understand you. Just take a deep breath, and then speak clearly and at a natural pace.
- Use a prop when possible to help you keep the crew members attention. If you are giving a toolbox talk on setting up a portable step ladder, have one set up nearby so you can point out things as you read the toolbox talk.
- Always give crew members an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the toolbox talk. Don't make snide remarks to crew members who do ask a question, as this will discourage others from asking questions later.
- Always document your toolbox talks. Document all toolbox talks as a "Meeting" within USMMI's fleet management system, ABS Nautical System's (NS). See NS Toolbox Talk Work Instruction for more details.
- Last but not least, practice what you preach. Nothing makes a trainer lose credibility faster than to have a crew member see them doing something that violates the safety precautions that were covered in a previous toolbox talk. Always set a good example for others.



# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



**JOB SAFETY ANALYSIS (JSA)**

**VS**



**TOOLBOX TALK**

A formal job task/operation meeting to go over and discuss one or more hazards in the workplace



**GOAL**

Informal conversation usually on the job site designed to refresh people's knowledge, cover last-minute safety checks, and exchange experienced workers' information.

30 minutes - 1 hour  
Frequency varies dependent on job tasks/operations



**FREQUENCY**

5-10 minute  
Frequency varies dependent on job tasks/operations

Focuses on one issue at a time assigning risk and mitigating proposed initial risk assessment of hazards associated with job task/operation.  
Document everything formally



**BEST PRACTICES**

Conversations on the job task/operations pertaining to safety should be done in a quiet area, utilize props when possible, and leave time for questions.  
Document the talks.





# Review Your Spring Safety Checklist: A Reminder as We Spring Forward

Daylight Saving Time begins every year on the second Sunday in March, and in 2025, it starts on Sunday, March 9. As we "lose" an hour when the clocks are set forward (except in Hawaii and most of Arizona), many of us experience a couple of days of fatigue while our bodies adjust. This time change is a good opportunity to refresh your spring safety checklist. Fatigue can have serious consequences, so be sure to plan accordingly and take extra care during this adjustment period.

Here's a spring safety checklist to keep in mind as you prepare for the season:

## Smoke Alarms

According to the National Fire Protection Association, three out of every five home fire deaths occur in homes without smoke alarms. Test your smoke alarms monthly and replace the battery at least once a year. If your alarm starts "chirping," replace the battery immediately.

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom and in common areas on each floor.
- Mount them at least 10 feet from the stove to reduce false alarms, and no more than 12 inches from the ceiling, away from windows, doors, and ducts.
- Consider interconnected smoke alarms that sound simultaneously across the home. This is one of the best ways to notify everyone in the event of a fire. Be sure to purchase alarms with a reputable testing agency label (like Underwriters Laboratories, UL).

## Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Any appliance that burns fuel, such as fireplaces, dryers, stoves, and furnaces, can produce carbon monoxide (CO)—an invisible, odorless, and potentially deadly gas. Install CO detectors in a central location outside each bedroom and on every level of the home.

- Like smoke alarms, test your CO detectors, change the batteries, and consider interconnecting them if possible.
- Ensure vents for your gas appliances are clear of snow or debris to avoid CO buildup.

## Family Emergency Plan

Spring is an ideal time to review your family's emergency plan. It's recommended to have a plan in place for natural disasters or other emergencies, along with a well-stocked emergency kit.

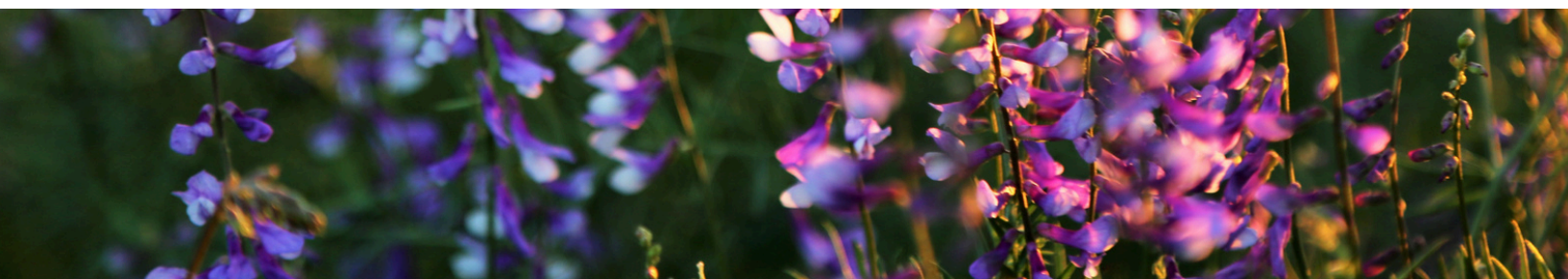
- Your emergency kit should include at least one gallon of water per person per day, a three-day supply of non-perishable food, a flashlight and batteries, a first aid kit, filter masks, plastic sheeting and duct tape, and necessary medications.
- Make sure your family has a communication plan for staying in touch during an emergency, as well as a shelter-in-place plan.
- Have multiple escape routes and destinations mapped out in case you need to evacuate.

## Get Rid of Unwanted Medicines

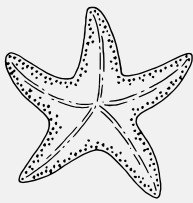
The National Safety Council recommends safely disposing of expired or unwanted medications to prevent the risks of accidental ingestion, misuse, or poisoning. Old or unused medications, especially those stored in your home, can be dangerous if they fall into the wrong hands, such as children or anyone looking to misuse them. Additionally, expired medications may no longer be effective and could pose a health risk if taken. To dispose of them safely, take your unwanted medications to a prescription drop box or participate in a local take-back event. This helps keep your home safe and protects the environment from improper disposal.

## Spring Cleaning with Safety in Mind

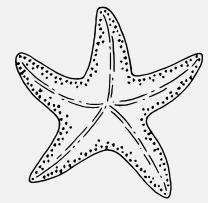
With warmer weather comes the urge to clean. However, be mindful of safety when using cleaning chemicals. Ensure that chemicals are stored securely and out of the reach of children or pets. Always read warning labels and never mix chemicals that could cause dangerous reactions.







# SAFETY STARS



OCEAN TRADER,  
3 A/E GEORGE PERRY

"I am writing to formally acknowledge and express our gratitude for your outstanding commitment to fostering a safe and supportive environment at Ocean Trader. Since joining our team, you have truly exemplified what it means to embrace and promote our safety culture. Your proactive approach to safety, not only by adhering to established protocols but also by taking the time to assist and guide your colleagues, has had a significant and positive impact on the team. Your willingness to help others, share knowledge, and ensure everyone is working safely makes you an invaluable member of our organization. As a token of appreciation for your hard work and dedication, we are pleased to reward you with a \$100 gift. This is just a small gesture to recognize your exceptional contributions. Thank you once again for your efforts, and we look forward to seeing you continue to thrive and lead by example in maintaining the high safety standards we value so highly. Congratulations, and keep up the excellent work!" - 1 A/E Alex Gray

OCEAN TRADER,  
COOK/BAKER DONATO QUAIZON

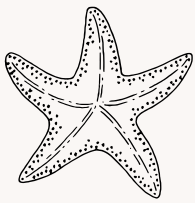
"It is with great pleasure that i recommend Cook/ Baker DONATO QUAIZON be granted safety award for his excellent daily demonstration of work place safety, hard work and team work within Steward Department."- Chief Steward, Agnes Gamboa



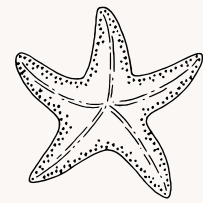
OCEAN TRADER,  
AB MARTHA WALL

"Congratulations to Martha Wall for being recognized as safe crewmember of the month! Martha has gone above and beyond in training new crewmembers, especially in steering the vessel. She not only shares her knowledge but also adheres to and promotes safe working practices, ensuring safety remains top priority for the entire crew. Thank you, Martha, for your hard work, leadership, and commitment to excellence!" - CM Darryl Atwood





# SAFETY STARS



## SHENANDOAH TRADER AB, MOHAMMED “MO” MOSED



“During the vessel first CONSOL with the USNS Arctic, AB Mo was stationed on the "inshore" side of the manifold. AB Mo noticed that the hose connecting the header to the CONSOL pipping had slipped slightly from the coupling, immediately calling the officer on deck over. When it was determined the hose condition was still safe, Mo was tasked to continue to monitor the hose for the remainder of the transfer.

AB Mo was also extremely helpful during the vessels recent port call to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Mo was used by the vessel to translate with the dock personnel. In Saudi Arabia things to not progress efficiently, so avoiding a language barrier helped the vessel to accomplish the tasks at hand during our very short port stay. This was the vessels first port call in over a month, so it was imperative we were able to complete our busy schedule. “- Chief Mate, T. Knizewski

“We are proud to announce that Wiper Ethan Bertke is our February 2025 Safety Award Winner! Ethan has consistently demonstrated exceptional teamwork, positive energy, and dedication to safety, making him a standout member of our team. One of Ethan’s most notable achievements this month was his outstanding work in cleaning the SCAV Air Spaces for the Main Engine. His meticulous attention to detail and commitment to ensuring the highest standards of cleanliness have directly contributed to the overall safety and performance of the engine. His efforts played a key role in maintaining optimal engine conditions, ensuring smooth operations, and preventing any potential hazards. Beyond his technical skills, Ethan’s positive attitude and strong teamwork have had a significant impact on those around him. He is always ready to lend a helping hand, offering support to colleagues with a smile. His energy is contagious, creating an atmosphere of collaboration and encouragement on the team. Ethan’s dedication to safety, combined with his ability to bring out the best in others, exemplifies the values we strive for every day. Congratulations, Ethan, and thank you for your hard work, positive spirit, and commitment to excellence. Your contributions are truly appreciated!”-  
Chief Engineer, Andrew Gray

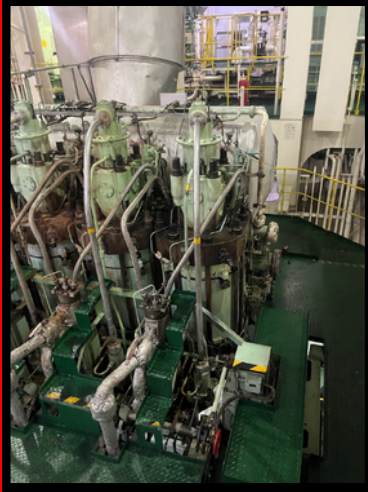
## SHENANDOAH TRADER WIPER, ETHAN BERTKE







# YOSEMITE TRADER PISTON PULL



Under the leadership of Chief Engineer Ben White, the engineering department successfully completed two piston pulls and refurbishments in just two days. This impressive feat was accomplished safely, with all protocols followed meticulously. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the entire team, the vessel is now able to continue operations and meet contract requirements without interruption.

Great job to the crew for their outstanding effort and teamwork!



# USMMI Safety Statistics as of 28 February 2025

In February, we recorded 32 near misses, highlighting key areas for improvement in our safety practices. The top three causal factors for these incidents were machinery, the ship's intact structure, and situational awareness.

It's crucial that we continue to focus on maintaining equipment, ensuring structural integrity, and enhancing crew awareness to prevent accidents. By learning from these near misses and addressing the underlying causes, we can strengthen our safety culture and continue to protect both personnel and operations.

Here are some key reflections based on the safety metrics for February:

## **Machinery Maintenance and Monitoring:**

- The frequency of machinery-related near misses underscores the importance of proactive maintenance and thorough inspections. Are we ensuring all critical systems are regularly checked and calibrated to prevent unexpected failures?
- Are crew members receiving sufficient training to identify early signs of mechanical issues before they escalate?

## **Ship's Intact Structure:**

- The number of near misses related to the ship's intact structure points to the need for ongoing structural integrity assessments. Are we conducting regular checks to ensure the vessel's framework is secure and free from damage?
- How can we improve the effectiveness of our inspections to identify potential risks related to the ship's structural condition?

## **Situational Awareness:**

- Situational awareness was a major factor in the near misses. This suggests a need for enhancing crew vigilance and communication, particularly in high-risk situations. Are we regularly reinforcing safety protocols and providing scenarios for crew members to practice their decision-making skills?
- What more can we do to ensure that every crew member is mentally prepared and focused on safety at all times?

## **Improvement Opportunities:**

- What changes can be made to our current safety practices to address these top causal factors?
- Can we implement more real-time monitoring tools or advanced technology to help reduce machinery-related incidents?
- How can we improve our training programs to further enhance situational awareness and structural safety?

By reflecting on these factors and addressing them proactively, we can work toward a safer working environment and reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

