

SAFETY SCUTTLEBUTT NEWSLETTER JUNE 2025





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Embracing Change: Building a Safer, Smarter Future at Sea

Change is a constant in the maritime industry, and being receptive to it is key to maintaining safe, efficient, and professional operations. At USMMI, we are committed to evolving our Safety Management System (SMS) to meet the needs of today's mariners and prepare for the challenges of tomorrow.

Recent updates to our SMS include new policies and streamlined procedures designed to enhance operational effectiveness, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, and provide clearer, more actionable guidance for our crews. These changes aren't just about compliance—they're about empowering you with the tools and clarity needed to work safely and confidently.

As these updates roll out, strong leadership and mentorship on board are more important than ever. Senior crew members play a vital role in setting the tone, modeling best practices, and helping newer mariners understand and adapt to evolving standards. A positive safety culture thrives when everyone—from master to entry-level mariner—is engaged, informed, and respectful of continuous improvement. Being open to change doesn't mean accepting every new idea without question—it means being willing to learn, to adapt, and to contribute to a shared goal: getting everyone home safely. Your feedback, insight, and professionalism are essential to making these changes successful.

We appreciate your commitment as we continue to improve our operations. Together, we can build a safer, smarter future at sea—one step, one policy, and one voyage at a time.



VP OF LABOR RELATIONS, DAVID SLOANE



Risk Management Good Practice: Main Engine

GOOD PRACTICE

- Clean engine and bottom plates
- No loose plates, no trip hazards
- Good housekeeping leads to a safe environment

Engine rooms

are potentially dangerous

places – keeping them clean and
tidy reduces the risk of fire and
personal injury.



It's your ship and equipment

- look after them and they will look after you

BAD PRACTICE

- Engine casing very oily
- Loose oily platestrip/slip hazards
- Hose/rags lying around – trip hazards
- Bad housekeeping leads to increased risk of fire/ accidents



WAGES

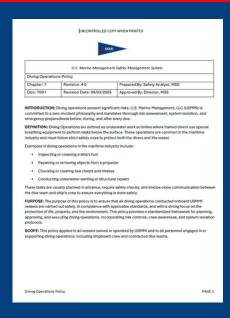
Expense Report Reimbursement and Training Wage Payment Updates

You've spoken and we've listened! The Crewing and Payroll department have been diligently working towards a more streamlined expense report reimbursement and training wage payment process. An integral part of this process update is the receipt of your certificate at the completion of training.

Effective immediately, please submit a copy of your certificate at the end of your class so we may begin processing your wages and perdiem as applicable. There is no need to wait until you have returned home and are ready to prepare your expense report. Please submit a clear scan or photo of your certificate to expensereports@usmmi.com with the Subject line of: First Name Last Name Certificate Class Name As an example: Subject: Amanda Delphia Certificate MSC Refresher

If we do not receive your certificate, your Crewing agent will be reaching out to you so we can begin processing. Your expense reports will be processed upon receipt. We look forward to many more improvements in this process and appreciate your cooperation in making USMMI the best company to sail with! Stay tuned for additional updates.

SMS Updates: Diving Operations & Diving Operations Safety Checklist





USMMI is pleased to announce the release of the updated Diving Operations Policy and the new Diving Operations Safety Checklist and Permit to Work (PTW) form. These updates reinforce our commitment to safety, compliance with regulatory standards, and operational efficiency. The revised policy provides a more structured, risk-based approach to underwater operations, ensuring that divers, vessel systems, and support teams are properly coordinated before, during, and after each dive.

Compared to the older version of the diving operations checklist, which featured basic safety prompts and limited guidance, the new checklist offers a more comprehensive, task-specific format. It separates pre-dive planning from lockout/tagout actions and is fully integrated with the Permit to Work system. This ensures that all dive-related activities are planned, authorized, and controlled with greater visibility and accountability.

The revised checklist also improves crew coordination, communication, and environmental awareness. Specific responsibilities are clearly defined for the Master, Chief Engineer, Person-in-Charge (PIC), Diving Supervisor, and supporting crew. Together, these updates form a robust framework for safe and compliant diving operations across all USMMI-managed vessels.

Key Improvements in the New Checklist and Policy

- Structured into two distinct sections: pre-dive checks and system isolation (LOTO)
- Integrated Permit to Work (PTW) documentation for better control and traceability
- Formal dive plan approval by the Master, Chief Engineer, and Diving Supervisor
- Required risk severity assessments and hazard controls before diving
- · Verification of two-way or three-way communication systems
- Display of Alpha Flag on the main mast
- Communicate PAN-PAN signal to all vessels in the vicinity
- Expanded on specific LOTO procedures for propulsion, steering, ICCP/MGPS, thrusters, and suction systems
- Mandatory review of environmental conditions (visibility, currents, weather)
- Defined responsibilities for all key personnel (Master, C/E, PIC,)
- Post-dive lessons-learned debriefings and required documentation filing

All vessels must now use the updated 7001A Diving Operations Safety Checklist and PTW. Older versions should be retired immediately, and all personnel involved in diving operations must be familiar with the updated requirements. For assistance with training or implementation, please reach out to the MSS Safety Team.



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY: TURNING MISTAKES INTO LESSONS

Mistakes are inevitable in any high-risk environment—including at sea. But how we respond to those mistakes determines whether we grow stronger or create silence and fear. At U.S. Marine Management, we believe that cultivating a psychologically safe work environment is essential to learning, accountability, and continuous improvement.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LEARN FROM MISTAKES?

Learning from mistakes means we view incidents, near misses, and errors not as grounds for punishment—but as valuable opportunities to improve. Instead of asking, "Who's at fault?" we shift to asking, "What can we learn?"

A psychologically safe workplace allows crew members to:

- Report incidents without fear of blame or retaliation
- · Openly discuss what went wrong and why
- Participate in root cause analysis and corrective action
- Share insights with the fleet to prevent recurrence

REAL GROWTH COMES FROM REFLECTION

Each mistake carries lessons that can help prevent the next one. But these lessons only emerge when we have honest, judgment-free discussions. After an incident, ask:

- What factors contributed to the event—fatigue, workload, unclear procedures?
- Were there warning signs we overlooked or misjudged?
- How can we change systems, training, or communication to prevent this again?

Blame fixes nothing. Learning fixes everything.

ACTION STEPS FOR THE FLEET

- Conduct non-punitive debriefings after incidents and near misses
- Involve all departments in discussing lessons learned
- Create an environment where reporting and asking for help are seen as strengths
- Recognize crew members who identify problems or take initiative to correct unsafe conditions

FINAL THOUGHT

Mistakes are not failures—they are feedback. When we embrace them with openness and humility, we become safer, smarter, and more resilient. Let's lead with compassion, listen without judgment, and learn without fear.

Together, we create not just a safer ship—but a stronger team.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do crew
 members feel
 safe admitting
 when
 something went
 wrong?
- When someone reports a mistake, do we listen- or do we criticize?
- What can i do to make my ship a safer space to learn?



WELLNESS CORNER: HYDRATION IN HOT CLIMATES

Why It Matters

The sun is powerful, and its effects are even more pronounced at sea, where UV rays reflect off the water and increase your exposure. While sunlight supports overall health, excessive exposure without protection increases your risk of sunburn, premature aging, and skin cancer. Mariners in tropical zones face this challenge on a daily basis.

Hydration & Electrolyte Balance

Working in hot, humid environments causes your body to lose fluids and electrolytes fast. Along with drinking plenty of water throughout the day, it helps to include sources of electrolytes like sodium, potassium, and magnesium. Powdered mixes such as Liquid I.V., LMNT, or even a splash of coconut water can be useful to keep your levels balanced and avoid muscle cramps, fatigue, or lightheadedness during long shifts or physical work. Staying sun-safe and well-hydrated protects your long-term health, energy, and performance at sea. These are some good habits and basic tools to keep you steady, focused, and safe while you're out there doing tough work in tough conditions. Small adjustments can make a big impact over time.



WATER INTAKE CALCULATOR -HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD YOU DRINK PER DAY?



The amount of water you should drink depends on various factors including, your health, activity level, and climate. However, it is recommended that you drink half your body weight each day! Click HERE to calculate how much water you should be drinking a day

SAFETY REMINDER: SECURING ONBOARD EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES



SAFETY TIPS

Why Securing Onboard Items Matters

Loose items on board can:

- Shift in heavy seas and strike personnel or structures
- Spill hazardous materials, causing fire, fumes, or contamination
- Obstruct escape routes or emergency equipment
- Lead to injuries or fatalities due to crushing, slips, or exposure to chemicals

How to Secure Equipment and Items Properly

Understand the Load

Know the weight, shape, and contents—especially with vehicles and chemical barrels. Identify items with high center of gravity or spill potential.

Use the Right Securing Gear

Chocks, straps, lashings, non-slip mats, and brackets must be serviceable and suited to the item. Avoid improvising.

Secure to Strong Points

Always lash items to designated tiedown points, not to handrails or temporary fixtures.

Keep Hazardous Materials Contained

Chemical drums and containers must have double containment and be stored upright with lids secured.
Check for leaks.

Maintain a Clean and Clear Deck

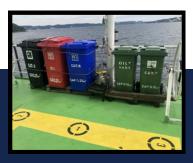
Loose garbage cans or storage bins can become projectiles. Lash, cage, or relocate them to protected areas.





When to Secure Items

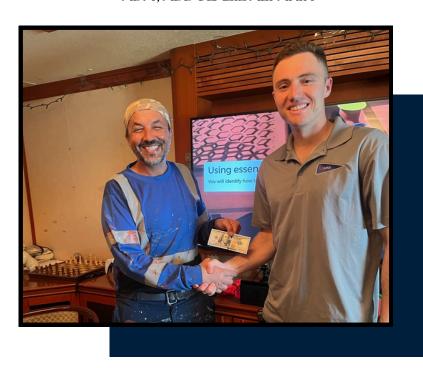
- **Before Departure:** All movable equipment, barrels, and vehicles must be properly lashed and stowed.
- Before Heavy Weather: Recheck and reinforce all lashings if rough seas are expected.
- After Internal Transfers or Maintenance: If any item has been moved, resecure it immediately.
- During Routine Checks at Sea: Periodically inspect secured equipment for slack, wear, or failure.







YOSEMITE TRADER ABM, ABDULAZIZ ALFAKIH



"Abdulaziz Alfakih (Aziz) was awarded the May safety award for his attention at the port manifold during an internal transfer. We had a jumper hose set up on 4P to the Engine HFO header and Aziz noticed a leak on the hose connection. He called in the leak to the Chief Mate and started to tighten down on the connection right away. "Aziz always stands an alert watch and is not afraid to bring issues to my attention. He is a valued member of the crew and is well deserving of this award." -Chief Mate Peter Maes

YOSEMITE TRADER WIPER, RUBEN ARRIOLA GUITY

"While stemming fuel from cargo tanks to bunker tanks the AB assigned to the manifold left the manifold while the sample bag was beginning to fill and overflow. Wiper Ruben was making rounds and saw the sample bags overflowing, shut the valve to the sampling bag and informed the 2AE and C/M."- Chief Engineer Tom Balzano





SAFETY STARS



SHENANDOAH TRADER, ABM NAHUN BERNANDEZ



"D has been an incredibly valuable member to both the deck and engine departments throughout his time on board. Most recently, he quickly and expertly repaired both the railing and tank vent bracketing on the stern damaged during our allision with the M/V Marioulios.

D is an incredible asset to have on board, coming up with solutions to and fixing problems on deck every single day.

Always happy to contribute to any endeavor, D is doing a phenomenal job and I am happy to present him with our June Safety Award!"- Chief Mate F.

Grzymkowski

"Nahun used great lifting technique using his legs, not his back, while helping remove and reinstall the port anchor pawl ensuring a safe operation for himself and the rest of the deck crew. Nahun continues to display good judgement and commitment to safety while working over the side and during CONSOL ops in addition to the daily tasks he is involved with.

Nahun exceeds expectations on a daily basis and maintains a good attitude while doing so. His actions/behaviors have a significant impact on the safety culture on deck. I am pleased to present our crew safety recognition award to him!" - Chief Mate, F. Grzymkowski

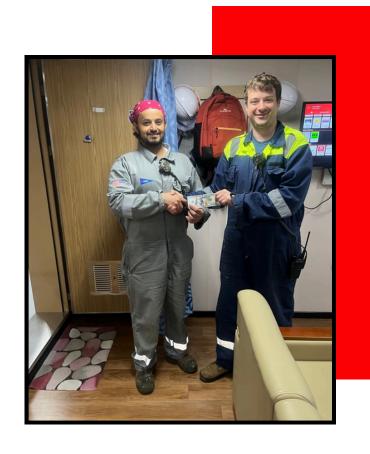
SHENANDOAH TRADER, PUMPMAN DHAHABI QURAISH





SAFETY STARS





POHANG PIONEER BOSUN, MOHAMED MOHAMED

"Bosun works safely and makes sure the guys work safely and follow the PPE matrix." -Chief Mate Roberts

POHANG PIONEER QMED, SAMUEL AYERS

"Sam works safely and keeps his head in the game. Follows all PPE requirements." - Chief Engineer James Cook



USMMI



On June 17th, the Chamber of Shipping of America (CSA) held their Safety Awards Luncheon in New Orleans. One of USMMI's tankers, the BADLANDS TRADER, was recognized by the Chamber of Shipping of America for over two years of operation without a lost time incident.

USMMI applauds the crew of the Badlands Trader for their strong safety culture onboard!

The BADLANDS TRADER'S award was presented to USMMI's Director of Marine Safety and Standards, Matthew Spolarich, and Austin Sperry, the co-founder and President of Maritime Partners, LLC (owner of USMMI) by CSA Chairman, Garrett Huffman and U.S. Coast Guard District 8 Chief of Staff, Captain Ulysses Mullins.



USMMI Safety Statistics as of 31 May 2025

In May, we recorded 34 near misses, highlighting key areas for improvement in our safety practices. The top three causal factors for these incidents were situational awareness, policy and procedure compliance, and crane lifting operations.

It is critical that we continue strengthening vigilance, enforcing policies, and enhancing operational safety standards to protect both personnel and equipment. By learning from these near misses and addressing their root causes, we reinforce our proactive safety culture and operational readiness.

Key Reflections Based on May Safety Metric

Situational Awareness

Situational awareness was a leading causal factor this month, emphasizing the importance of vigilance and hazard identification during daily rounds and inspections.

Highlights:

- During a safety area inspection, the Chief Mate identified degraded grating that requires replacement to maintain deck structural integrity.
- An SCBA was found leaking air, highlighting the need for thorough readiness checks of emergency equipment.
- During morning rounds, the Chief Mate discovered an unsecured 4-wheel moving dolly rolling on the tank top, creating a trip and collision hazard.

Crane Lifting Operations

Near misses involving crane lifting operations underscored the need for strict adherence to safe rigging practices and equipment readiness. **Highlights:**

- During stores loading using the ship's stores crane, a crew member introduced an unsafe condition by wrapping the tagline around a section of handrail, potentially causing uncontrolled load movement.
- During testing, the crane's upper lifting switch was found stuck and will require replacement to maintain operational safety.

Policy and Procedure Compliance

Failures to follow established policies and procedures were a key factor this month, creating operational and environmental risks. **Highlights:**

- The AB on watch abandoned his post, leading to a fuel sample bag overfilling and overflowing into the drip pan due to inattention.
- Contractor-related near misses included:
 - A BWSS technician leaving hazardous waste unattended after annual service, posing exposure and environmental contamination risks.
 - The same technician nearly caused a system failure by leaving a valve open overnight and arriving late, then stopping operations seconds before an unsafe startup.

Improvement Opportunities

Enhance Pre-Job and Pre-Startup Checks:

Include physical verification of equipment readiness, valve positions, and rigging setups before work begins.

Strengthen Contractor Onboarding and Oversight:

Mandate formal pre-job briefings covering vessel-specific policies, waste management expectations, and operational responsibilities.

Reinforce Situational Awareness Culture:

Use daily safety meetings and toolbox talks to encourage crew to identify and report unsafe conditions immediately.

Leadership Walkthroughs:

Increase frequency of walkthroughs by Senior Management Team (SMT) and department heads to mentor crews in hazard recognition and procedural compliance.

Reflection Questions for Crew

- Are we vigilant in identifying and correcting hazards during daily rounds and inspections?
- How confident are we that all personnel and contractors understand vessel policies and operational expectations?
- What additional training or supervision is needed to eliminate unsafe rigging and lifting practices?
- How can we better integrate contractor safety performance into our overall safety culture?

