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I'm excited to share some updates from the Procurement Team. As many of you know, our work keeps operations moving—making sure the right supplies reach the right place at the right time, and at the best possible value. From sourcing critical equipment to coordinating logistics, our goal is to support you so you can focus on your jobs onboard without delays or added stress.

I am honored to step into the role of Purchasing Manager, leading our purchasing efforts and continuing to strengthen the processes that keep USMMI running smoothly. At the same time, Steve Lakata will now be focusing exclusively on contracts management, ensuring our agreements are well-structured, compliant, and aligned with company needs.

For any purchasing-related questions or support in Nautical Systems (NS) related to purchasing and logistics, please know that I am available and ready to assist. More importantly, I want to hear from you—your ideas and feedback are critical. If there are ways we can simplify or improve the process to make your jobs easier, I'd like to know. This aligns directly with our company's commitment to Human and Organizational Performance (HOP): building processes that work for people, not against them.

I'm looking forward to working with all of you as we roll out improvements that save time, reduce challenges, and keep our vessels and projects moving forward. Together, we'll continue building a procurement system that supports our crews and strengthens USMMI across the board.



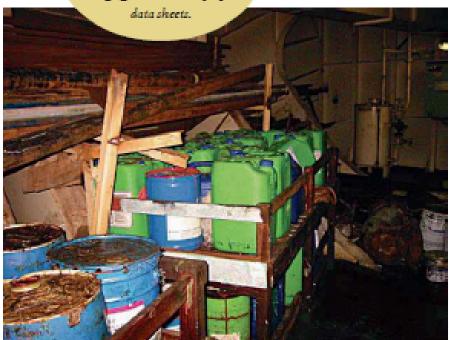


Risk Management Good Practice: Chemical Storage

GOOD PRACTICE

- Well organised
- Free from any hazards
- Secured properly
- Correct segregation stowage as per safety data sheets

Chemicals are dangerous, especially when cross contaminated stow all containers as per the segregation on the safety



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

BAD PRACTICE

- Surrounding equipment badly stowed, therefore will move in heavy weather
- Oily rags and equipment left around, causing potential fire risk
- Chemical containers thrown in at random not taking into account correct segregation



SEACAT 2025

For 13 days in September, USMMI had the unique opportunity to participate in the Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) 2025 multinational, multilateral exercise, which has occurred annually in Indo-Pacific Region for the last 24 years. SEACAT is a multilateral exercise designed to strengthen cooperation among Southeast Asian countries and provide mutual support toward a common goal of addressing crises, contingencies, and illegal activities in the maritime domain with standardized tactics, techniques, and procedures. Coordinated by Commander, Logistics Group, Western Pacific (COMLOG WESTPAC) and Combined Task Force (CTF) 73, twelve nations participated in SEACAT 2025, including Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Singapore and the United States.

After several months of preparation by USMMI's Business Development team led by Senior VP Chris Fertig, Project Lead Scott Somers and Port Operations/Logistics Coordinator Danny Bada created the detailed plans, managed contract and charter requirements, and worked closely with the owner and management team at Heung-A Shipping to provide three (3) 90-meter Product Tankers to support the exercise. Heung-A is the same Korean shipowner from whom USMMI bareboat charters the M/T POHANG PIONEER and M/T REDWOOD TRADER.

During the SEACAT Sea Phase, participating nations tracked and "intercepted" simulated "dark vessels" (ships without AIS in operation) sailing through Southeast Asian waters. This at-sea training tests the partners' ability to coordinate across borders, cueing maritime patrol aircraft and sharing operational pictures between national operation centers. By exercising these complex scenarios in real time, SEACAT participants enhanced their collective capacity to detect, deter, and counter illicit maritime activity in accordance with international law.

Missions and training occurred around the clock for almost two weeks, with each of the Heung-A/USMMI Vessels of Interest (VOIs) sailing pre-determined routes in three directions from Singapore, through the South China Sea to the Philippines, through the Strait of Malacca, and Indian Ocean reaching as far west as Sri Lanka. Training included a simulated "bunker scenario" off a major port, as well as attempts by participating nations to detect and track the dark vessels, both day and night. The ships then returned to Singapore 13 days later via the coasts of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

Based in Singapore, Danny Bada was responsible for interfacing onsite with each of the vessel Masters, as well as exercise planners in the "White Cell," the team coordinating contact movements and detection tools to locate USMMI's dark vessels. When the sun set in Singapore, Scott Somers assumed the watch in Norfolk (12 hours behind Singapore) to manage the communications and contact picture, maintaining a 24-7 day and night vigil to support the exercise.

By the end of the exercise, all participants including USMMI and Heung-A, had an increased awareness of the challenges of managing situational awareness over a vast expanse of ocean, coordinating communications and ship movements, yet deepening a shared commitment to maritime partnership, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

For USMMI, participation in SEACT 2025 heralds an additional capability for our company, and potentially similar engagements and opportunities for our shore team and U.S. Flag vessels in the future.









LESSONS LEARNED

ALARM FATIGUE



This month's Lessons Learned highlights the hidden risks of alarm fatigue—a situation where frequent or repetitive alarms cause crew members to become desensitized, respond too slowly, or accidentally press the wrong control. A recent industry case showed how a frozen alarm panel and a simple slip of the finger led to an unexpected loss of vessel control. While no one was injured, it was a reminder that alarms are designed to protect us, not overwhelm us.

We've adapted this case to reflect the types of alarms we face at USMMI—engine room, cargo, ballast, fire/gas detection, and navigation systems—and included best practices to keep our responses sharp.

Read the full article here: <u>Lessons Learned: Alarm Fatigue - Safety4Sea</u>

Why It Matters at USMMI

On our vessels, alarms are a constant part of operations—engine room pressures, fire/gas detection, cargo tanks, ballast systems, hydraulic equipment, and navigation systems. When alarms are too frequent, repetitive, or confusing, crews can become desensitized. This "alarm fatigue" means important warnings may be ignored, delayed, or mis-handled at the very moment they matter most.

Tips to Avoid Alarm Fatigue

- Report nuisance alarms so thresholds or sensors can be adjusted.
- Know your priorities—understand which alarms require immediate action versus monitoring.
- Don't silence automatically—pause, identify the source, and confirm the situation first.
- Rotate duties so one person isn't constantly exposed to the alarm panel.
- Treat drills seriously—practice scenarios with multiple alarms sounding at once.
- Speak up if you notice others rushing or overlooking alarms.

BBS Reflection

Safe behavior means resisting the urge to "tune out" alarms. Instead, pause to confirm, ask questions if unsure, and back each other up. Supporting teammates during alarm events protects the whole vessel.

Crew Reflection Questions

- Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the number of alarms during watch?
- Which alarms on your vessel go off too often or without cause?
- What steps can we take to make sure critical alarms stand out?
- How can we support each other when multiple alarms occur at once?

IMMUNE SUPPORT FOR COLD & FLU SEASON

Cold and flu season is on the way! A few simple habits can make a big difference in keeping your immune system strong:

- Prioritize rest: Aim for 7–9 hours of quality sleep to give your body time to repair. While this may not always be possible on the ship, it is a good goal during your vacation time.
- Stay active: Even light daily movement boosts circulation and supports immune health.
- Eat for defense:
 - o Vitamin C: citrus, kiwi, bell peppers
 - o Zinc: nuts, seeds, shellfish
 - o Vitamin D: sunlight, fortified foods, or supplements if needed
- Add natural supports: Garlic, ginger, green tea, and elderberry are all known for their immune-friendly properties.
- Hydrate well: Water keeps your system running smoothly and helps fight off illness.

Pay attention to early warning signs from your body. Rest when you need it, wash your hands frequently, and don't push through illness. It not only slows recovery but can also spread germs to others. Small, consistent choices can go a long way in keeping you healthy both onboard and at home.









Falls Overboard Safety Tips





Every year, falls overboard are one of the leading causes of death in the maritime industry. In most cases, the victim was not wearing a lifejacket—and was not recovered in time. Prevention, preparedness, and vigilance are key.

WHY IT MATTERS:

- 1 in 5 fatal shipboard incidents involves a person overboard.
- Recovery is difficult—especially at night, in bad weather, or when no one witnesses the fall.
- Wearing a lifejacket doubles your chances of survival.

SAFETY TIPS TO PREVENT FALLS:

1. Wear your PPE-Always.

Lifejackets must be worn when working near the ship's edge, on open decks, or during low visibility conditions.

2. Use lifelines, harnesses, and fall arrest gear.

Especially during maintenance or mooring operations near the waterline.

3. Never work alone near the side.

Ensure a spotter or partner is present—and in radio contact

4. Be aware of slippery surfaces.

Oil, rain, and seawater make decks hazardous. Wear anti-slip footwear and report spills immediately.

5. Maintain situational awareness.

Stay alert. Don't rush. Watch for trip hazards and unstable footing.

6. Use proper lighting at night.

Ensure work areas are well lit, especially near deck edges.



IF SOMEONE FALLS OVERBOARD:

- 1. Shout "MAN OVERBOARD!"
- 2. Throw a life ring or buoyant aid.
- 3. Press MOB button on GPS/radar (if available).
- 4. Announce over VHF Channel 16: "MAYDAY MAN OVERBOARD [Vessel Name] Position –

Description."

5. Maintain visual contact and begin recovery procedures.

REGULATORY ROUND-UP: SAFETY OF PILOT TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

At the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) 110th convening of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) in June of this year, amendments were passed for SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 23 regarding pilot ladder performance standards and transfer arrangements. These amendments were drafted to address increased instances where pilot ladders were insufficient or had failed while pilots were transferring. The amended regulation is connected to new performance standards for pilot ladders and would apply to USMMI ships starting in January of 2029. Although there is time before this regulation truly enters into force, it is important to note that USMMI will be developing procedures to ensure the following measures are in place:

Part D Maintenance and onboard inspection	 Instructions for care, maintenance, inspection, and stowage of pilot ladders, manropes, and associated equipment shall be provided and kept on board. (paragraph 24)
	 Pilot transfer arrangements shall be inspected by a responsible shipboard officer before and after each use, and thoroughly every three months. (paragraph 25)
	 A maintenance plan shall be developed and made available on board. The plan shall include, among other elements, a checklist, a schedule for periodic inspection and maintenance, maintenance and repair instructions, a list of sources for spare parts or replacement items, and documentation for recording inspections and maintenance ac- tivities. (paragraph 27)
	 Repair or replacement of pilot ladder steps or spreader steps is prohibited. (paragraph 28)
	 At least one spare set of a pilot ladder and manropes shall be provided onboard. The spare set will be also recorded in relevant SOLAS safety certificates. (paragraph 29, etc.)
	 Pilot ladders and manropes, including spares, shall be replaced with new ones under the following conditions
	 When not complying with the performance standards; and Upon reaching the earlier of 30 months from the date of being put into service² or 36 months from the date of manufacture.
Part E	Shipboard personnel involved in the inspection, maintenance, installation, or operation of pilot transfer arrangements shall receive familiarization training appropriate to their
Familiarization	assigned duties. (paragraph 31)

Additionally, there are measures we can take now to increase pilot ladder installation safety. Below is a link to an interactive UKMPA website that demonstrates pilot ladder rigging arrangements that comply with the new regulation and performance standards:

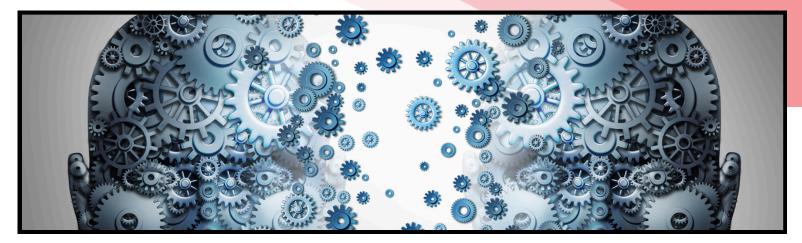
Interactive Pilot Transfer Arrangements - United Kingdom Maritime Pilots Association

If during the course of training or examination of your pilot ladder arrangements you discover a condition that is unsafe, please notify your Port Engineer and copy the HSSE department (mspolarich@usmmi.com, jdhereaux@usmmi.com).

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

CLOSED LOOP COMMUNICATION (CLC)





In maritime operations, even the smallest misunderstanding can have serious consequences. One proven method to prevent miscommunication is Closed Loop Communication (CLC).

What Is Closed Loop Communication (CLC)?

Closed Loop Communication is a three-step process that ensures instructions are both heard and understood correctly:

- 1. Sender gives the message an order, request, or instruction.
- 2. Receiver repeats the message back in their own words.
- 3. Sender confirms the message was received accurately—or corrects it if needed.

This "loop" closes the gap between what was said and what was understood.

Why It Matters at Sea

Onboard ships, communication is often challenged by background noise, stress, language differences, and time pressure. CLC eliminates assumptions and provides immediate feedback, reducing the risk of error during critical evolutions such as mooring, cargo operations, or navigation maneuvers.

Example in Action - Cargo Operations

- Without CLC:
- Chief Engineer: "Open number 2 port tank valve."
- Engine crew hears "starboard" and opens the wrong valve, starting product transfer into the incorrect tank.
- With CLC:
- Chief Engineer: "Open number 2 port tank valve."
- Engine crew: "Opening number 2 port tank valve."
- Chief Engineer: "Correct proceed."

The instruction is confirmed, the loop is closed, and an operational error is prevented.

Why It's Effective

- Prevents errors by verifying instructions in real time
- Builds consistency so all crew use the same communication method
- Strengthens teamwork by encouraging active listening and feedback
- Enhances safety culture by making clear communication a standard expectation

USMMI Commitment

USMMI encourages all seafarers to use Closed Loop Communication as a daily habit. By confirming and repeating instructions, we ensure our teams operate with clarity, confidence, and safety at the forefront.

Reflection Question for the Fleet

Think back to your last mooring, cargo, or anchoring evolution. Did your team consistently close the loop?



SAFETY STARS





SIU ENG APPRENTICE HUNTER BUSTER SHENANDOAH TRADER

"The Engineering Department has unanimously recommended Wiper Apprentice Hunter Buster for our September 2025 Engineering Safety Champion!

This month, Wiper Apprentice Hunter Buster designed and implemented a permanent board for organizing our boiler gaskets — a thoughtful and practical improvement that not only enhances our operational efficiency but also reinforces our strong safety culture. His initiative ensures safer working conditions and will be appreciated by shipmates for years to

Beyond Wiper Apprentice Hunter Buster technical contributions, he has consistently been a positive and dependable presence in our team. His dedication, attitude, and willingness to contribute makes him an exceptional shipmate and an asset to the department."-CE Gray

SIU DECK APPRENTICE DEAN BLAKE, SHENANDOAH TRADER

"Mr. Blake has consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic during his time aboard the Shenandoah Trader as an SIU deck apprentice. After departing from Lavera, France, he took initiative by securing mooring lines, stowing chafing gear, and heaving lines—all without needing direction. Properly securing the deck for sea is a critical task that can often be overlooked due to complacency, but Mr. Blake approached it with diligence and professionalism. His contributions throughout the voyage have been greatly appreciated."- CM Maes







QMED, RICARDO ESCORCIA POHANG PIONEER

"Ricky does a very good job daily and works safely. He wears the correct PPE for the job. We would like to see Ricky come back to the vessel. "- Chief Engineer Zuliani





AB, KEN LILLEY POHANG PONEER

"Ken does a very good and safe job day in and day out. He keeps a good eye on things and wears the proper PPE for the job. Reports things that are out of line. We would like to see Ken come back to the Pohang. "- Chief Mate Begley



SAFETY STARS





QMED ANIBAL LOPES, REDWOOD TRADER

"While making his nightly numbers round he noticed a small leak had developed at a pipe flange. The pipe turned out to be the suction for the economizer circ pump. Judging by the amount of water on the ground the flange had not been leaking for long. These types of steam system leaks can get worse very quickly. This would have required a full stop on the ME to repair if it had become worse. He caught it in time and the leak was stopped by tightening the bolts before the gasket blew out. "- Chief Engineer Wright

3M KEEGAN BOYLE, REDWOOD TRADER

"During commencement of cargo, 3rd Mate Keegan found a drip from an air drain that had not been fully closed. Highlighting his attention to detail and thorough cargo rounds, he identified the drip and rectified the issue before it became a mess or compounded into an even greater issue. "- Chief Mate Watkins



BREAKING NEWS



USMMI extends its gratitude to all the mariners who participated in this month's Safety Leadership Conference.

Through breakout sessions, safety discussions, a U.S. Coast Guard presentation, and communications training, participants strengthened the skills and tools needed to lead with confidence. By sharing knowledge and mentoring others, our officers continue to build a culture where safety, teamwork, and professionalism thrive. USMMI is proud to provide the training, resources, and tools that help our mariners succeed and keep safety at the forefront.

WELCOME ABOARD, NATE!

Nathanael "Nathan" "Nate" Wilhelm joins
USMMI Special Projects team as a Naval
Architect. Nathan attended SUNY Maritime
College where he graduated with a B.E. in Naval
Architecture. Nate has previous work
experience as a Naval Architect and Acquisition
Team Lead for the Combatant Craft Division
(CCD) focused on acquiring small craft for the
US Navy, Marine Corp, and Coast Guard. Most
recently at CCD, Nate was working with
acquiring a large quantity of small Unmanned
Surface Vessels for various missions.





USMMI Safety Statistics as of 31 August 2025

In August, we recorded 31 near misses that highlighted critical improvement areas across the fleet. The top three causal factors for these incidents were situational awareness, electrical machinery safety, and life-saving apparatus readiness. It is essential that we continue to strengthen our vigilance, enforce safe practices, and ensure equipment is maintained in full working order. By learning from these near misses and addressing the root causes, we reinforce our proactive safety culture and protect both crew and vessel.

Key Reflections Based on August Safety Metrics

Situational Awareness

- Engine cadet found cleaning bolts on the engine shop bench grinder where the bench rest was missing/broken and unsafe for use.
- Fork truck leaking coolant because the plug had fallen off no pre-use inspection completed.
- Excessive water accumulation in the engine room caused by incorrect sweating of sea water lines.
- Metal debris discovered in cargo tanks during tank cleaning, posing risk of contamination or damage.
- Watertight doors left unsecured and swinging, creating a hazard.

Electrical Machinery/Equipment

- Power strip mounted incorrectly by screwing into sockets severe fire/electrocution risk.
- Exposed wiring discovered on a light housing.
- Overheated and damaged power strip found aft of the house on A-deck, overloaded and not ship-issued. It was rated
 for 110V but plugged into 220V ship's power a serious hazard.

Life-Saving Apparatus

- Protruding rusty screws left inside lifeboat after SART bracket work risk of crew injury.
- SCBA compressor test revealed a damaged carbon filter spilling molecular sieve beads. Further inspection found
 residue, broken parts, and signs of repeated damage during replacements compromising air quality and safety.
- · Cracks discovered in lifebuoy rings on both bridge wings, reducing reliability in an emergency.

Improvement Opportunities

- Verify equipment readiness. Conduct pre-use checks on forklifts, grinders, and watertight doors before operations begin.
- Enforce electrical safety. Only ship-approved equipment may be used. Inspect cords, strips, and lights regularly. Remove unsafe gear immediately.
- Strengthen LSA inspections. Pay close attention to lifeboats, lifebuoys, and SCBA compressors. Report and correct deficiencies immediately.
- Prioritize situational awareness. Pause before beginning work to confirm conditions are safe and equipment is in good order.

Reflection Questions for Crew

- Are we performing proper pre-use inspections on forklifts, tools, and watertight doors before operations?
- Are we ensuring that only ship-approved electrical equipment is in service, and removing unsafe gear immediately?
- Are we giving full attention to life-saving appliance inspections, or are we deferring fixes that could compromise readiness?
- How can we better reinforce situational awareness in daily tasks to prevent oversights?

BBS Tip for the Monthly Metrics Reflection

"Pause, Inspect, Protect"

- Pause Stop before using equipment or starting an evolution. Confirm it's ready and safe.
- Inspect Look closely for signs of wear, damage, or unsafe conditions.
- Protect Correct or report hazards immediately to protect yourself and your shipmates.

