



Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB) 04-25

Date: 05 MAR 25

Time: 1225

Seafarer Welfare Awareness

Over the past few months, Sector Houston-Galveston (Sector) has initiated vessel control measures following substantiated reports involving seafarer welfare issues that either created hazardous circumstances or violated U.S. laws or international conventions. This MSIB reminds both ship and facility owner and operators of their duty to monitor conditions on their respective platforms and take decisive action to mitigate hazards or remedy deficiencies. Failure to do so will prompt Coast Guard investigation or intervention that could result in a wide range of enforcement actions including, but not limited to, deficiencies documented on a CG-835 or CG-5437B, operational controls (ex. cessation of operations or movement restrictions), civil penalties, or referrals to partner Flag States or state and/or federal agencies (ex. Departments of Labor or Justice) responsible for shared oversight authority and jurisdiction.

For some context, Sector recently investigated reports that seafarer shore access was being prohibited, unreasonably delayed, unsafe and/or financially burdened following a crewmember's lawful attempt to transit through a Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA) facility. Other reported concerns have included operators attempting to limit or restrict transit times or levy additional transit fees, as well as improper or inadequate gangway arrangements. Facility owner and operators must be aware that regulations require maritime facilities regulated by MTSA to implement a system that provides seafarers, pilots, and representatives of seafarer's welfare and labor organizations timely and safe access between vessels moored at the facility and the facility gate, in accordance with their approved Facility Security Plan at no cost to the seafarer or other individuals. For amplifying details read the regulations at [33 CFR 105.237](#) or review [MSIB 06-19](#) issued by Commandant (CG-5PC).

On vessels, failure to observe U.S. and/or international standards governing crew workplace and living arrangements can and do pose serious risks. Over the past year Sector has responded to various reports of crew accommodation spaces with poor ventilation, inoperable habitability systems, unwieldy seafarer contract demands, hostile work environments leading to physical altercations, overdue salary payments, or inadequate work-rest schedules. These circumstances sometimes resulted in dangerously fatigued mariners, hazardous living and/or operating environments, and non-compliant conditions. There are a multitude of applicable domestic laws, international conventions, directives, and policies that detail an expected standard of safety, social, security, and shipboard operating requirements relating to employment, ergonomic design, and living arrangements all of which are designed to curtail untenable or unsafe conditions on board merchant vessels and which the Coast Guard will employ to restore safety and security.

If it is determined that conditions such as lack of safe seafarer shore access, deficient shipboard living, security, or operating conditions, or questionable employment arrangements on a facility or vessel are of such magnitude for the Sector to reasonably conclude that a hazardous condition has been created or a violation of law exists, then external referrals, enforcement or intervention measures, and/or enforcement action may be initiated under MTSA or the Ports and Waterways Safety Act as applicable or appropriate.

For more information, questions, or comments regarding this MSIB, please contact the Sector Houston-Galveston Inspections Division (281) 464-4732 // 33 or houstonpsc@uscg.mil // houstondom@uscg.mil.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keith M. Donohue".

KEITH M. DONOHUE
Captain, United States Coast Guard
Captain of the Port