



JAPAN P&I NEWS

To the Members

USA—Vessel Gangway Inspection, Maintenance and Operational Safety

We have obtained information regarding a Marine Safety Alert issued by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) concerning the inspection, maintenance and operational safety of vessel gangways, following a catastrophic failure of a gangway connection point that resulted in severe injuries and a tragic loss of life.

Although this alert stems from an incident on a passenger vessel, the international guidance referenced by the USCG (IMO MSC.1/Circ.1331/Rev.1) applies to all foreign-going vessels. Severe personal injury casualties resulting from improperly secured gangways or parted wire ropes occur across all vessel types. For full details, please refer to the [USCG Marine Safety Alert 14-26](#).

Members are encouraged to ensure that inspection items and management procedures based on this alert are not treated as a one-off exercise, but are integrated into their daily safety management to maintain and enhance practical effectiveness. On bulk carriers and container ships in particular, a gangway is often required to be used in a suspended condition to avoid physical obstructions on wharf aprons or interference with shore cranes. However, this suspended condition considerably increases the potential for failure or sudden movement of the equipment. Members and management companies are invited to consider integrating practical precautions into their Safety Management Systems (SMS).

- Conducting risk assessments and ensuring the utilization of secondary means of support
When operating a gangway in a suspended condition, it is critical that the arrangement is subject to an ongoing, realistic, and robust hazard identification and risk assessment process. It is recommended to implement an appropriate secondary means of support (other than the hoisting wires) in case the primary connection fails. Furthermore, ensuring that a properly rigged safety net is deployed along the full length of the arrangement is recommended to prevent falls into the gap between the ship and the wharf.
- Ensuring vigilant gangway watches and safe operations via pre-operation Toolbox Meetings
To ensure practical effectiveness on site, it is beneficial to continuously confirm proper gangway operations during pre-operation Toolbox Meetings. When using a suspended gangway arrangement, maintaining careful ongoing monitoring and ensuring that a system is in place to make adjustments when necessary—taking into account tidal changes and vessel movement caused by passing traffic—is recommended.
- Systematic maintenance and sharing at Shipboard Safety and Health Committee meetings (Fostering a safety culture)
Regarding gangway structural components and hoisting arrangements, appropriately managing the time elapsed since the last load test and inspection of the wires, winch, and hoisting arrangement is recommended. We suggest

sharing the contents of this Safety Alert at Shipboard Safety and Health Committee meetings and exchanging views among all crew members on why these checks are necessary, using this opportunity to foster a strong safety culture across both ship and shore rather than treating SMS procedures as mere paperwork.

We will continue to provide the latest information and technical insights to assist our Members in preventing accidents.

Yours faithfully,

The Japan Ship Owners' Mutual Protection & Indemnity Association