

Safety Alert

Number: 25-09

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Subject: Watertight Door Fatality

What Happened / Narrative

On 2nd April 2025, an individual was found in between the sliding hydraulic watertight door and the door frame. He was found unconscious and not breathing. He was brought to sick bay and assessed with no signs of life.

The Incident Management Team was activated and topside medical supported attending to the individual. Immediate care given for the deceased, the family and crew onboard. Incident investigation is underway.

Although actual causes have yet to be determined since the investigation is still ongoing, the purpose of sharing this alert is to facilitate reflective discussions with vessel marine crews and interested parties on the dangers posed by watertight doors.



Engagement & Awareness

How aware are you of the operation of power-operated doors/equipment at your work locations, and their associated risks? What control measures and safeguards are in place at your worksite to prevent this type of incident? Are they sufficient?

Watertight Door Safety – Awareness

Function:

- Watertight doors prevent water passage between compartments, maintain buoyancy and stability; and enhance safety by limited water movement during emergencies.
- Typically located in underdeck areas prone to water ingress and commonly found on various types of ships and vessels, including container ships, offshore vessels, etc.

Operation:

- Two main types of doors: hinged and sliding doors.
- Powered watertight doors can be operated locally, remotely from the bridge or be on automatic closure mode.
- Powered watertight doors are extremely heavy and powerful.

Further guidance can be found in [MGN 35 \(M+F\) Amendment 2](#) and [COSWP \(11.6\)](#)

Recommendations

1. Provide thorough familiarisation with and training in the operation of all power-operated doors, including details of the hazards of such doors. Training should include both review of written procedures and hands-on operational instruction. Visit the [GARD website](#) to learn more.
2. The planned maintenance system must be followed for carrying out routine inspection and maintenance on watertight doors.
3. Always fully open a watertight door before passing through the doorway.
4. Audible alarms and visible warning lights showing the status of the door closing, warning personnel in the vicinity.
5. It is essential that all crew members who may use the doors
 - a. Know what type of control system is fitted;
 - b. Are well trained in the correct operating procedure for the system;
 - c. Fully appreciate the crushing power of watertight doors.

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