



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commander
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Prevention Division
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Shipyard Safety Rescue Teams: Protecting People and Great Lakes Vessels

The Ninth Coast Guard District is issuing this Marine Safety Information Bulletin to communicate the requirement for Rescue Team arrangements necessary for Marine Inspectors to conduct inspections in confined or enclosed spaces within a vessel at a shipyard. In 1994, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) codified shipyard safety requirements in 29 CFR § 1915. Specifically, Rescue Teams are required by [29 CFR § 1915.12\(e\)](#) to either be established by the shipyard or for the shipyard to arrange for an outside rescue team that meets the regulation. Ship repair in confined and enclosed spaces have a greater likelihood of causing fatalities, injuries, and illness than any other type of shipyard work. Shipyards are uniquely hazardous, as ship repair in one space may impact adjacent spaces with dangerous atmospheres. Rescue Teams are the last line of protection to remove a person from confined or enclosed spaces should the need arise, while also enabling third party first responders.

Officer in Charge, Marine Inspections may visit shipyards to evaluate hazards and the shipyard competent person programs for the safety of Marine Inspectors conducting inspections on Great Lakes vessels at shipyards. A safety concern has been observed during several audits where shipyards were solely reliant on the 911 emergency phone number as their outside rescue team without confirmation that the emergency responder can provide those services. Merely posting the phone number or planning to rely on the 911 emergency phone number does not meet the requirements of arranging an outside rescue team. If the shipyard relies on the 911 emergency phone number, there must be a prior positive arrangement for the outside Rescue Team that is trained and equipped to promptly respond to a request for rescue service. This prior arrangement is not required to be in writing but may be validated by the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection to meet regulations and ensure personnel safety for confined space entry.

To facilitate safety for all those working in the shipyard and to prevent schedule delays, it is highly encouraged that shipyard employers and Great Lakes vessel operators evaluate Shipyard Rescue Teams using the attached [Evaluation of Fire and Rescue Services OSHA Fact Sheet](#) to ensure they are properly trained and equipped to perform a rescue, ahead of winter in-service periods.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact the Ninth District Safety and Environmental Health Officer at (757) 650-2172 or Mr. Kirk Beckmann at (216) 815-3789

Sincerely,

M. D. DOORIS
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief, Prevention Division
By direction