

# OSHA<sup>®</sup> FactSheet

## Safety While Working Alone in Shipyards

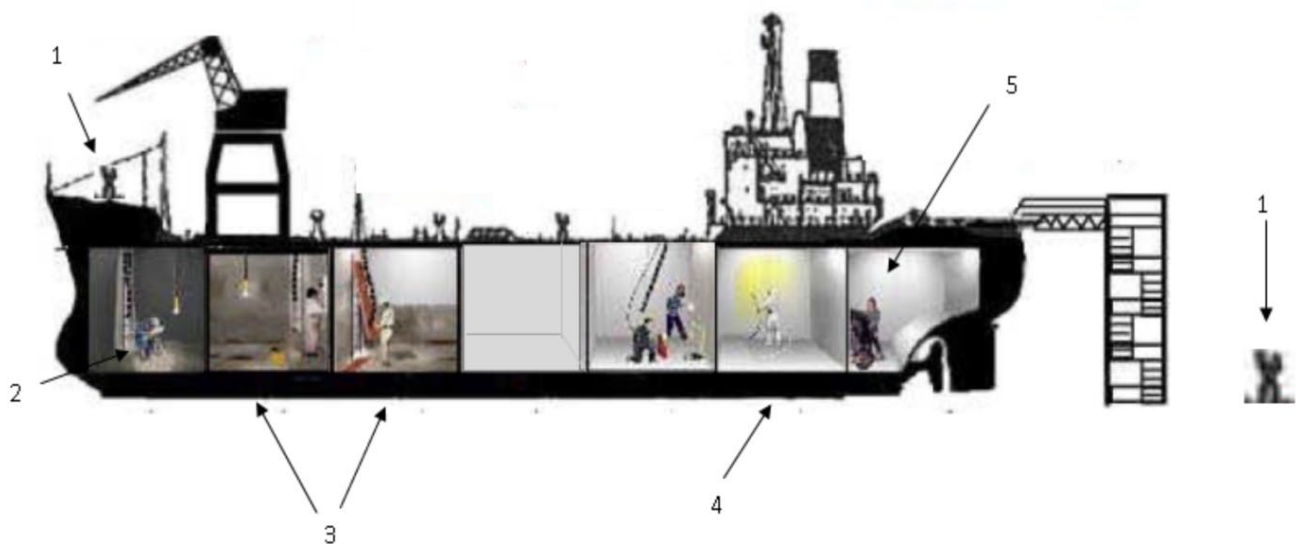
This fact sheet describes the requirements for employees who work alone in shipyards, as specified in 29 CFR 1915.84.

Between 2002–2012, there were 18 fatalities reported involving shipyard employees working alone. Of these incidents, 17 workers were not discovered until after they died from their injuries.

Shipyard employment activities are typically dangerous, but employees working alone are at an increased risk due to their remote location, which may decrease the likelihood of rapid detection or prompt treatment of an injury. Employers can help reduce this risk by accounting for employees working alone. The provisions in §1915.84 address the hazards associated with employees in shipyards working alone, and include the following requirements:

Whenever an employee is working alone, such as in a confined space or isolated location, the employer must account for each worker by sight or verbal communication:

- Throughout each workshift at regular intervals appropriate to the job assignment; and
- At the end of the job assignment or at the end of the workshift, whichever occurs first.



### Examples of Working Alone

1. An employee working alone on a job task at the far end of a vessel, vessel section, or shipyard;
2. An employee working alone in a hold, sonar space, or tank;
3. Two employees working on either side of a metal partition;
4. One employee performing hot work with a fire watch located on the other side of a bulkhead; or
5. An employee working alone in a confined space.

## Definitions

**Isolated location** is an area where employees are working alone or with little assistance from others due to the type, time, or location of their work. Such locations can include remote locations or other work areas where employees are not in close proximity to others.

**Confined spaces** are small compartments with limited access. Examples include double-bottomed tanks, cofferdams, or other spaces which due to their small size and confined nature can readily create or aggravate a hazardous exposure.

## Intervals of Accountability

Employers, or their representative, must check on workers at regular intervals or at a frequency that is tailored to the specific job being performed to ensure the safety and health of workers. Employees working on a brief task may only need to be checked on once during a workshift or job assignment. However, an employee working for several hours, in a remote part of a shipyard, may need to be checked on numerous times to ensure their safety. This will increase survivability, or decrease injury severity should a worker become injured while working alone.



## Means of Verification

Employers must account for workers by sight or verbal communication.

<b>Visual Communication</b> Acceptable means of visual communication include:	<b>Verbal Communication</b> This method of communication must include both parties speaking. Examples of suitable verbal communication include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Camera</li><li>• In-person</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two-way Radio (Walkie-talkie)</li><li>• In-person</li><li>• Intercom System</li></ul>

Cell phones may be used in areas where there is reception. If an employer cannot demonstrate that reception will be available, e.g., below deck, cell phones will not be allowed. Other methods of communication that have low reliability and are not acceptable means for verification include:

- Sound of power tools or whistles; and
- Tapping on tank walls, bulkheads, or decks.

**Note:** In the event that an emergency rescue situation arises, safe entry practices set forth in other OSHA standards, such as 29 CFR 1915, Subpart B, must still be followed.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For assistance, contact us. We can help. It's confidential.



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