



# South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref: SM6/5/2/1

Date: 4 November 2014

## Marine Notice No. 26 of 2014

### Guarding of Openings and Holds

TO MASTERS OF ALL SHIPS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS, SHIP OPERATORS, OWNERS, MANAGERS AND SHIP'S AGENTS, STEVEDORES AND SHIP REPAIR COMPANIES, LABOUR BROKERS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

#### *Summary*

This marine notice advises persons in the maritime industry of the requirements for ensuring that openings and edges, onboard ships, through or over which personnel could fall, are guarded.

1. This year, there have been several accidents whereby stevedores and shore contractors have fallen through poorly guarded openings resulting in serious injury.
2. The following legislation applies with regard to the fencing and guarding of openings and edges through or over which personnel can fall:

#### **Maritime Occupational Safety Regulations, 1994**

##### **Guardrails**

**25.** (1) Every employer shall ensure that any opening, open hatchway or dangerous edge into, through or over which a person may fall is fitted with secure guardrails or fencing of adequate design and construction to prevent such occurrence, except where the installation of such guardrails or fencing will interfere with the proper performance of work.

(2) Where a temporary opening is made in a ship for carrying out repair work, the opening may, in lieu of the guarding required by sub regulation (1), be guarded by means of **hazard tape displayed at a height of not less than 800 mm and not higher than 1 200 mm and at a distance of not less than 2 000 mm from the edge of the opening.**

3. With regard to the specifications for fencing on walkways adjacent to open holds, the following applies:

#### **Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen**

##### **13.5 Guarding of Openings**

13.5.1 Hatchways open for handling cargo or stores, through which persons may fall or on which they may trip, should be closed as soon as work stops, except during short interruptions or

where they cannot be closed without prejudice to safety or mechanical efficiency because of the heel or trim of the ship.

13.5.2 The guard rails or fencing should have no sharp edges and should be properly maintained. Where necessary, locking devices and suitable stops or toe-boards should be provided. Each course of rails should be kept substantially horizontal and taught throughout their length.

13.5.3 Guard rails or fencing should consist of an upper rail at a height of 1 metre and an intermediate rail at a height of 0.5 metres. The rails may consist of taut wire or taut chain.

13.5.4 Where the opening is a permanent access way, or where work is in progress which could not be carried out with the guards in place, guards do not have to be fitted during short interruptions in the work e.g. for meals, although warning signs should be displayed where the opening is a risk to other persons.

4. The responsibility for ensuring that walkways are safely and securely fenced is that of the ship's crew; however stevedore foremen / managers should ensure that fencing has been erected and complies with the above specifications.
5. No work should be conducted on walkways that are not properly fenced.
6. If practical, the use of safety harnesses should be considered when working from walkways.
7. For ships undergoing repair and maintenance work, it is preferable that positive guarding / barricading is utilised instead of hazard or barrier tape for openings made in railings, decks, tank tops, etc.

**4 November 2014**

**SM6/5/2/1**

Issued by and obtainable from:  
**The South African Maritime Safety Authority**  
**146 Lunnon Road**  
**Hillcrest, Pretoria**

**PO Box 13186**  
**Hatfield 0028**

**Tel: +27 12 366 2600**

**Fax: +27 12 366 2601**

**E-mail: [marinenotices@samsa.org.za](mailto:marinenotices@samsa.org.za)**

**Web Site : [www.samsa.org.za](http://www.samsa.org.za)**