



Technical Bulletin

Entry into enclosed spaces

Testing of atmosphere, together with correct ventilation of any space about to be entered, are required safe working practices

The Club's inspectors regularly visit ships where gas detection equipment is either not provided, not functioning properly, is uncalibrated or has tubes which are out-of-date.



It cannot be emphasised too strongly that entry into enclosed spaces is one of the most dangerous areas of seafaring. Atmospheres encountered may be oxygen deficient or contain flammable or poisonous gas concentrations well above safety levels. Exposure to which could result in death.

Testing of atmosphere, together with correct ventilation of any space about to be entered, are required safe working practices. All Safety Management Systems (SMS) include a check list to be followed by crewmembers when assessing the danger prior to entry

into an enclosed space. All check lists include a statement to the effect.

ATMOSPHERE TESTED AND
FOUND SAFE FOR ENTRY? Y/N

It is therefore a requirement of the ISM code to have proper testing equipment available. Failure to provide functioning equipment could result in the detention of the vessel or, more importantly, place the safety of the crew in serious jeopardy.

The minimum we would recommend is a gas detecting instrument similar to those illustrated. Another useful tool to be considered is a manual pump type multigas detector with tubes which are suitable for the trade(s) of the vessel. There are more than 250 different testing tubes available and it follows that the tubes for use in this basic gas detector must have a valid date stamp.

Also desirable is an electronic multigas detector which allows for the atmosphere to be monitored from outside the space prior to entry and during the period of work in the space.

A further safety measure would be personal oxygen sensors for the crew entering or working in an enclosed space. Gas pockets and oxygen deficient atmosphere can remain, or be created during work within the space, even though ventilation is taking place.



Electronic multigas detector

