

MEMBER ALERT



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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (USCG) MARINE SAFETY ALERT REGARDING VERIFYING GATEWAY HANDHOLD ARRANGEMENTS

The USCG has issued [Marine Safety Alert 04-22, Verify Gateway Handhold Arrangements](#), bringing attention to the importance of verifying the correct arrangement of handholds in embarkation gate arrangements.

The USCG is currently investigating a casualty involving a fall from a pilot ladder where the handholds in the gate arrangement aboard the vessel terminated without being rigidly secured to the vessel's structure. This termination left a gap in the handholds at the transition point at the head of the pilot ladder, where an embarking person might reach to pull themselves onto the vessel.

The USCG observed that the abrupt termination of the handholds above the vessel structure appeared to be a modification that was completed to accommodate the length of the pilot ladder spreader during deployment and retrieval of the pilot ladder. The modification made it possible to retrieve the pilot ladder without having to lift the spreader up and over the vessel's railings.

The USCG recommends that flag State administrations, classification societies, port state control inspectors, and shipboard personnel:

- Ensure familiarity with applicable requirements pertaining to handholds in gateway embarkation arrangements aboard merchant vessels.
- Visually examine handholds in gateway embarkation arrangements for gaps, specifically at the lower terminations.
- Initiate rectification and issue outstanding conditions to meet regulatory intent for any non-conformities discovered.

Your Managers recommend that Members take note of this information and be guided accordingly.