

FLYER TO THE YACHTING INDUSTRY (01/2023)

Incidents on Gangways, Pasarells and Accommodation Ladders.

Over recent years, a number of incidents have been reported to the Maritime Authority of the Cayman Islands (MACI) involving persons losing their footing on gangways, passarells and accommodation ladders. Each of these incidents involved a means of access to the yacht which was not provided with intermediate railings or other means to prevent a person falling outside of the gangway or pasarelle.



(Examples of yacht gangways without intermediate railings)

To prevent further accidents, the REG Yacht Code was amended in December 2020 to require gangways, passarells and accommodation ladders to be provided with protection against falling overboard as follows –

“Side screens or handrail(s) shall be provided on both sides and shall comply with one of the following options:-

(a) Where handrails are provided these shall be supported by stanchions at intervals of not more than 2200mm. Intermediate rails or wires shall also be provided. The opening below the lowest course of the Intermediate rails or wires shall not exceed 230 mm. The other courses shall be not more than 380 mm; or

(b) Intermediate rails and toe boards (which may be portable) are to be provided in accordance with ISO 7061:2015, Figure 1 – General Arrangement of a Gangway Type A”.

Existing yachts which were constructed before the entry into force of this amendment were required to comply with the new requirement not later than the first annual survey of the yacht after the entry into force of the amendment.

Despite the above amendment entering into force on 01 June 2021, MACI has recently received notification of a similar incident occurring on a yacht gangway without intermediate handrails.

A crew member was returning to the yacht when he lost his footing on the gangway. The crew member fell through the sides of the gangway and landed heavily on the quay before falling into the water. Fortunately, the crew member was able to be retrieved from the swim platform of an adjacent yacht. The crew member suffered back injuries and broken ribs. Due to the extent of the injuries received, the crew member was unable to continue his service on the yacht as it made its onward voyage.

Safety Issues.

Gangways, passarelles and accommodation ladders with “open sides” have been shown to be a factor in a number of accidents and incidents.

Despite the requirements for gangways, passarelles and accommodation ladders being amended in 2021, a number of these “open sided” gangways, passarelles and accommodation ladders are still in use.

The incident described above could easily have resulted in much more serious consequences which could have included life changing, or even fatal outcomes.

Suggested actions for yacht masters and crew.

Evaluate all means of access to the yacht against the current REG Yacht Code requirements for stanchion distances and intermediate handrails.

Any means of access not in compliance with current requirements should not be used until modified to comply with these requirements or replaced with a compliant means of access.

Ensure that all modifications to a means of access are formally accepted by the yacht’s Classification Society or the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry.

Maritime Authority of the Cayman Islands
01 May 2023.