



INTRODUCTION

Cellular phones provide a level of access and communication that we have become accustomed to and rely on for or many reasons such as work commitments and contact with friends and family. As a result, cellular phones have become a technological lifeline which may end up becoming a safety hazard.



Based on an analysis of the near-miss database about 29% of reported surveyor/inspector related near misses are due to the use of cellular phones in unauthorized areas on board ships. Also, from personal interviews, there have been reports that near-misses have occurred regarding the act of texting while walking about a vessel.



When on a vessel a surveyor should have their safety and the safety of others on their mind. The top reasons for unsafe cellular phone use are attributed to:

- The lack of or unawareness of procedures/policies regarding the use of cellular phones on the vessel
- Failure to comply with posted signage
- Situational awareness by using a cellular phone that is not intrinsically safe in a restricted area
- A willingness to assume a higher level of risk associated with the use of the cellular phone
- Disregard for company procedures or policies



When preparing to visit a vessel, especially a new or unfamiliar vessel, find out the ship procedures on cellular phone usage. It is important to comply with the ship's procedures and policies. If the ship doesn't have a safety policy with regard to cellular phone use it may then fall to the surveyors to regulate their safe use and storage of phones during ship inspections.

Remember that safety is ultimately a personal responsibility, and where policies and procedures fail to consider safety critical situations it is up to the individual to take precautions. So, inquire about ship procedures, comply with those policies, and make safety a priority. During a vessel inspection there will be no situation so urgent as to require you take the spotlight off your safety.

The material in this document is provided for informational purposes only and not as a comprehensive or exhaustive resource on this topic. This material has been compiled from a multitude of sources believed to be accurate. In no event does the content of this document supersede any applicable local, state or federal statutes or regulations.