Occupational Safety and Health Admin., Labor § 1918.43

(b) Intermediate decks. (1) There shall be a three-foot (.91 m) working space between the stowed cargo and the coaming at both sides and at one end of the hatches with athwartship hatch beams, and at both ends of those hatches with fore and aft hatch beams, before intermediate deck hatch covers and hatch beams are removed or replaced. Exception: The three-foot (.91 m) clearance is not required on the covered portion of a partially open hatch, nor is it required when lower decks have been filled to hatch beam height with cargo of such a nature as to provide a safe surface upon which employees may work.

(2) For purposes of paragraph (b)(1) of this section, fitted gratings that are in good condition shall be considered a part of the decking when properly placed within the three-foot (.91 m) area.

(c) Grab rails or taut handlines shall be provided for the protection of employees handling hatch beams and hatch covers, when bulkheads, lockers, reefer compartments or large spare parts are within three feet (.91 m) of the coaming.

(d) The clearances in this section do not apply to hatches opened or closed solely by hydraulic or other mechanical means; except that, in all cases in which the three-foot (.91 m) clearance does not exist, cargo that is stowed within three feet (.91 m) of the edge of the hatch shall be adequately secured to prevent cargo from falling into the hold.

§ 1918.43 Handling hatch beams and covers.

Paragraphs (f)(2), (g), and (h) of this section apply only to folding, sliding, or hinged metal hatch covers or to those hatch covers handled by cranes.

(a) (1) When hatch covers or pontoons are stowed on the weather deck abreast of hatches, they shall be arranged in stable piles not closer to the hatch coaming than three feet (.91 m). Exception: On the working side of the hatch, hatch covers or pontoons shall not be stowed higher than the hatch coaming or bulwark on the working side of the hatch.

(2) On seagoing vessels, hatch boards or similar covers removed from the hatch beams in a section of partially opened hatch during cargo handling, cleaning or other operations shall not be stowed on the boards or covers left in place within that section.

(b) Hatch beams shall be laid on their sides, or stood on an edge close together and lashed. Exception: This paragraph (b) shall not apply in cases...