

GREEN BRIEFING

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“Cost to Workers: ZERO. Benefit: LIFETIME”

Courtesy: GMS

Till Date

781

Training Sessions

12,036

Workers Trained

70

Topics Covered



PERMIT TO WORK (PTW) SYSTEM: AWARENESS AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

A structured approach for safer ship recycling operations

Every vessel arriving for dismantling brings hidden risks. Residues, unstable structures, enclosed spaces, corroded decks, and unpredictable interactions between ongoing jobs can expose workers to danger. A Permit to Work (PTW) system provides the structure needed to keep these hazards under control. It ensures that each high-risk task begins only after proper assessment, preparation, verification, and authorisation.

Dr. Anand Hiremath, CEO of the Sustainable Ship and Offshore Recycling Program (SSORP), explains:



“When implemented properly, the Permit to Work system becomes the most important safety pillar in ship recycling operations. It brings predictability to work that would otherwise be chaotic.”

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Workers across Alang, Chittagong, and Gadani increasingly recognise how PTW helps them understand job risks and avoid unsafe assumptions.

Rafiq Alam, a cutter in Gadani, said during training

:

“Before PTW, we often started based on instructions alone. Now we check conditions, wait for clearance, and understand the risks.”

PTW is not a document. It is a disciplined way of working.

This training is provided FREE of cost to workers, proudly sponsored by GMS under the Sustainable Ship & Offshore Recycling Program (SSORP).



PTW CREATES A SYSTEM OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Ship recycling involves hot work, confined space entry, mechanical dismantling, lifting, working at height, and other hazardous activities. Unsafe coordination can lead to severe incidents. The PTW system clearly defines who is responsible for assessing hazards, preparing work areas, and supervising each step.

Key roles

Permit Applicant (Supervisor or Mukadam)

- Describes the job accurately
- Confirms worker competency and PPE
- Monitors workers constantly for safe behaviour
- Ensures equipment is in good condition

Permit Issuer (HSE Officer)

- Conducts site verification
- Checks for atmospheric hazards
- Confirms controls and authorises work
- Conducts random inspections to verify compliance during the job
- Suspends or cancels the permit if unsafe acts or deviations are observed

Approving Authority

- Reviews high-risk or combined permits
- Reviews previous incidents or near misses before approving critical permits
- Verifies emergency readiness

Workers

- Follow permit instructions
- Stop work when unsafe conditions arise
- Report hazards without delay

Mr. Rahul Singh, SSORP Coordinator in Alang, highlights the culture change PTW promotes:

“Some tasks become routine and workers stop noticing hazards. PTW forces everyone to take a fresh look before starting.”

Yard supervisors support this approach. Mehul Bhatt, Supervisor, Gujarat Marine Yards, shared:

“We now begin our day by reviewing which permits are needed and which areas require more checks. Work flows better when everyone understands their duties.”



PTW ensures no high-risk job begins without written authorisation and physical verification of site conditions.

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Understanding PTW Categories

Each type of permit addresses different types of hazards found in ship recycling yards.

Safe for Entry (SFE) Permit

Used when workers only need to enter an area for inspection or movement. Structural stability, lighting, atmospheric conditions, and pathways must be checked before entry.

Confined Space Entry and Work Permit

Confined spaces include tanks, cofferdams, double bottoms, void spaces, and pump rooms. These areas may contain oxygen deficiency, toxic gases, or flammable vapours.

Amjad Hossain, Worker, Chittagong Ship Breakers, shared:

“We used to think one gas reading was enough. Now we keep monitoring because conditions can change quickly.”

Hot Work Permit

Required for any activity that could generate sparks or heat. This includes cutting, welding, heating, or grinding.

Mr. Zamil Uddin, SSORP Coordinator in Bangladesh, notes:

“Most fires we investigate start with hot work done without proper cleaning or testing. PTW prevents those shortcuts.”

Cold or General Work Permit

Used for rigging, lifting, opening pipelines, manual dismantling, and power tools.

Working at Height Permit

Required for work above 1.8 meters. It establishes fall protection, tool control, weather checks, and access stability.

Supervisors report that workers now ask for proper access equipment instead of improvising, a noticeable improvement.



If the scope changes, conditions deteriorate, or gas readings shift, a new permit must be issued before work resumes.



PERMIT VALIDITY AND WHEN STOP WORK IS NECESSARY

Permits are valid only for a single shift unless re-evaluated. Conditions inside ship structures can shift rapidly due to weather, tides, or gas buildup.

Work must stop immediately when:

- Fire or smoke is detected
 - Ventilation fails
 - Gas readings exceed safe limits
 - Tools or equipment malfunction
 - Workers feel unwell or report discomfort
 - Heavy rain or strong winds affect stability
- Kamal Sheikh, Cutter Helper in Gadani, shared:

“Earlier, we hesitated to stop work. Now the PTW rule says stop first, report next. It prevents accidents.”



Stopping work is not a delay. It is a safety decision. Conditions must be made safe before restarting.





CONTROLLING SIMULTANEOUS OPERATIONS THROUGH LINKED PERMITS

Simultaneous operations are common in ship recycling yards. One team may be lifting a heavy block while another is cutting inside a nearby compartment. Without coordination, these jobs can interfere with each other.

Linked permits coordinate these activities.

Examples of permits that must be linked:

- Hot Work + Confined Space Entry
- Hot Work + Working at Height
- Cold Work + Confined Space Entry
- Cold Work + Working at Height

Dr. Anand Hiremath emphasises:

"Many serious incidents occur because multiple activities interact. Linked permits ensure overlapping hazards are reviewed together."

A supervisor in Chittagong, Farid Ahmed, added:

"Linking permits made our teams work more closely. We now plan together instead of working independently."

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Linked permits prevent one team's activity from unintentionally creating hazards for another.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BUILT INTO PTW

Before any permit is approved, emergency readiness must be established. This step ensures workers know what to do and have the tools needed to respond.

Emergency preparation includes:

- First aid kits and stretchers
- SCBA sets for confined space standby
- Fire extinguishers and trained fire watchers
- Checked and working communication systems
- Clear access and escape routes
- Rescue equipment positioned for quick use

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Muhammad Usman, SSORP Coordinator in Pakistan, explains:

“Workers act with more confidence when they know the emergency plan. PTW ensures that preparation is completed before the job begins.”

Training drills have made workers more responsive. Shahid Khan, Worker, Karachi Steel Dismantlers, said:

“After practicing a rescue drill, we realised the importance of having the attendant ready. It can save lives.”

PPE AS A MANDATORY LAST LINE OF PROTECTION

PPE requirements differ across permits. Workers understand these requirements more clearly after PTW training. For confined space work, respiratory protection is essential. For hot work, flame-resistant clothing and goggles are required. For height work, double lanyards and full-body harnesses must be used.

Mr. Rahul Singh remarks:

“Proper PPE reduces injuries immediately. PTW helps workers understand why each item is needed.”

A worker from Alang, Suresh Solanki, said:

“We have begun using the right PPE for the job instead of whatever is available. It makes us feel safer.”



PPE is the final safeguard. It cannot compensate for missing controls but it prevents injuries when hazards remain.

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PERMIT CLOSURE: PREVENTING HAZARDS FOR THE NEXT SHIFT

Closing a permit is as important as issuing it. It confirms that work has been completed safely, the area is restored, and no hazards remain.

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Closure includes:

- Supervisor verification
- Cleaning the area
- Safe removal of tools
- Updating documents and observations
- Returning the permit to the HSE team

Mr. Zamil Uddin explains:

“Good closure ensures that the next team does not face hidden dangers. It completes the safety cycle.”

Supervisors report that permit closure keeps yards more organised and reduces the number of forgotten tools and hoses left behind.

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BUILDING A CONSISTENT SAFETY CULTURE THROUGH PTW

Supervisors and workers say PTW has strengthened discipline and communication. Toolbox talks are more structured. Workers ask questions instead of quietly accepting instructions. Supervisors model correct behaviour, which encourages workers to follow.

Muhammad Usman highlights:

“When supervisors follow PTW and PPE rules, workers follow them automatically. Leadership influences culture.”

A worker in Chittagong, Habibur Rahman, added:

“We feel respected when supervisors explain hazards. It makes us more willing to follow the rules.”

Managers in Gadani report fewer interruptions and smoother workflow after adopting PTW.



PTW strengthens teamwork. When every person understands the plan, the job becomes safer and more predictable.

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MOVING FROM TRAINING TO DAILY PRACTICE

SSORP trainers observe that workers quickly begin applying PTW principles when the reasons behind each requirement are clearly explained. Workers appreciate seeing real examples during on-site sessions.

Mr. Amrish Pandey notes:

“We see more engagement from workers now. They share observations that help identify hazards early.”

A crane operator in Bangladesh, Imran Chowdhury, described the shift:

“We wait for PTW clearance before lifting or cutting. It keeps everyone aligned and reduces miscommunication.”

A Mukadam from Alang, Jitendra Joshi, said:

“PTW improved planning. We now know exactly what controls must be arranged before starting the job.”

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OPERATIONAL SAFETY GUIDELINES SUPPORTED BY PTW



- Identify hazards before requesting a permit
- Obtain HSE clearance before starting any high-risk task
- Wear complete PPE
- Maintain communication throughout the job
- Control spills and waste responsibly
- Keep documentation updated
- Coordinate during simultaneous operations
- Practice emergency drills regularly



These guidelines support long-term improvement and reflect the daily behaviours needed to maintain a safe working environment.

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CREATING LASTING CHANGE

A strong PTW system reduces incidents, improves efficiency, and builds worker confidence. Supervisors feel more supported, and workers feel more involved in decisions affecting their safety.

A worker from Gadani, Abdullah Rehman, shared:

“PTW made our work more organised. We feel safer because nothing starts without proper checks.”

A yard manager in Alang commented:

“The PTW system reduced confusion and improved communication between teams. It made a noticeable difference.”

Dr. Anand Hiremath concludes with a message for all yards:

“Permit to Work is not just a form. It is a commitment. When workers check, prepare, and communicate before starting a task, risks reduce immediately. Safety grows stronger when every person plays their part.”

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“Safety becomes reliable when every task begins with clarity and ends with accountability.”

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Round-up of monthly training activities - Permit To Work (PTW) System: Awareness and Effective Implementation

Country	Training No.	Yard	Course Date	No. of Trainees
 Bangladesh	781	MAK Corporation	22.11.2025	14
	772	BOB Recyclers	12.11.2025	4
	774	Chittagong Ship Breaking & Recycling Industries	19.11.2025	30
	767	Janata Steels Ltd.	05.11.2025	25
	770	Z. H. Steel Ltd.	09.11.2025	9
 India	768	Shree Ram Vessel Scrap Pvt. Ltd	07-11-2025	21
	769	Inducto Steel Ltd	08-11-2025	13
	771	J.K. Industries	10-11-2025	17
	773	Leela Responsible Recycling LLP	14-11-2025	40
	775	Shree Ram Green Ship Recycling Industries (Unit II) LLP.	19-11-2025	13
	776	Bansal Ship Recyclers LLP	19-11-2025	20
 Pakistan	764	Jamaluddin & Co	19/11/2025	39
	765	Prime Ship Breakers	19/11/2025	23
	766	S.A Traders	19/11/2025	16

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