



STELLA MARIS

Staying safe during missile attacks

➤ A missile strike is one of the most serious threats a civilian ship can face. Missiles can be launched from aircraft, ships, submarines, or from the shore. They travel at high speed and often fly at low altitude. Because of this, you may have very little time to react.

How to react during a missile attack

An air raid warning may not always sound in time. Sometimes the missile may already be close when the alarm begins. The sound of an approaching missile can resemble a sharp whistle mixed with a rustling noise. In many cases, the explosion follows only two or three seconds later.

When the alarm sounds, move immediately to the closest safe space.

Stay calm, follow instructions from officers, and avoid panic, which can lead to dangerous mistakes.

Remain in shelter until the attack is over, listen for official updates, and help injured colleagues only when it is safe.

If you are inside the vessel

The safest place during a missile strike is an internal compartment - a room with no windows or external walls. Stairwells or windowless corridors provide reasonable protection. If possible, move at least two decks below, as missiles usually strike upper areas of the vessel. Being lower reduces the risk of shrapnel injuries.

Once inside a safe compartment, lie on the floor in an inner corner or on the stairs. Staying close to an interior wall and below window level reduces exposure to

- **Stay calm, move to a safe place and listen for official instructions.**
- **The safest place to stay is an internal compartment away from external windows and walls.**
- **Lie flat on the floor face down. Cover your head and keep your mouth open.**
- **If safe to do so, stay in place for 10 minutes in case there is a follow-up attack.**
- **Never touch unfamiliar objects or unexploded bomblets or munitions.**

fragments and blast waves.

Avoid windows and glass, which can shatter and cause severe injuries.

The galley and restrooms are unsafe due to ceramics, porcelain, and glass that may become dangerous projectiles.

Never use the lift during an attack.

After the final explosion, remain in shelter for at least ten minutes, as a second strike may follow.



If you are on the open deck

If there is no shelter nearby, the safest immediate action is to lie flat on the deck, face down. Most fragments and debris travel upwards or move horizontally about 30–50 centimetres above the surface. Lying flat lowers the chance of being struck.

Cover your head with your hands and keep your mouth open. This can reduce the risk of eardrum damage and concussion from the blast wave. If a recessed or covered area is nearby, move to it quickly, but only if it is safe to do so.

During the attack, stay completely still. Once the shelling ends, rise slowly, check surroundings, and move with caution.

Never touch unfamiliar objects, as some missiles contain cluster munitions. Unexploded bomblets can detonate with the slightest contact.

First Aid Kit

In addition to the standard first aid kit the following items are recommended:

- Torniquets
- Haemostatic bandages
- Flash burn kits including non-adherent sterile dressings

Supporting crews in a time of conflict

Stella Maris Ukraine and its partners have produced these guidelines to reflect the evolving risks facing civilian seafarers. They are designed to help crews stay as safe as possible during such attacks from missiles and drones.

It remains the responsibility of the employer to ensure that seafarers are trained and have the appropriate resources when transiting through a high-risk area of navigation, so do ask your employer if you have any further questions. Stella Maris will continue supporting seafarers affected by the conflict, offering practical help, welfare support, and clear information designed to save lives.

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