Intermaritime Certification Services

ICS Class

This training/examination module is covering the following item:

A.2.3.5: ISM

In compliance with the IMO resolution MSC.349(92) and MEPC.237(65), RO Code, Appendix 2.

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Module A.2.3.5: ISM

International Standard for the Safe Management and
Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention

1. ISM

Learning Outcomes

By studying this course you will examine maritime safety management and the ISM Code from all perspectives, including;

- The international codes used to govern and measure compliance
- Risk and quality management approaches
- Auditing and reporting for safety management
- Management strategies needed to create a proactive culture of safety

1.1 Introduction

A-001 The improvement of the management of ship operations and the reduction of human error have been internationally recognized as crucial factors to reduce marine casualties. As a result, the International Safety Management (ISM) Code was incorporated into the SOLAS Convention.

A-002 ISM audits are normally carried out separately from any Classification Society or other Statutory surveys. However, it is the responsibility of the Classification Society Surveyor and/ or the Flag State Administration Surveyor to confirm that the SMC and DOC are valid when attending onboard for a periodic survey and that non-conformities, which might relate to that survey, have been dealt with satisfactorily.

A-003 The ISM code is an International Safety Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention, as adopted by the Assembly of the International Maritime Organization.

1.2 Objective

A-004 The objectives of the Code are to ensure safety at sea, prevention of human injury or loss of life and avoidance of damage to property and to the environment, particularly the marine environment.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to provide an international standard for the safe management and operation of ships and for pollution prevention.

The Code establishes safety-management objectives and requires a safety management system (SMS) to be established by "the Company", which is defined

as the shipowner or any person, such as the manager or bareboat charterer, who has assumed responsibility for operating the ship.

The Company is then required to establish and implement a policy for achieving these objectives. This includes providing the necessary resources and shore-based support.

Every company is expected "to designate a person or persons ashore having direct access to the highest level of management".

The procedures required by the Code should be documented and compiled in a Safety Management Manual, a copy of which should be kept on board.

1.4 Applicability

A-005 The ISM Code came into effect on 1 July 1998 and applied initially to oil tankers, chemical tankers, gas carriers, bulk carriers and cargo high-speed craft of 500 GT and above, and passenger ships (including passenger high-speed craft engaged in international voyages) together with their owning or managing companies. On 1 July 2002, all other cargo ships and mobile offshore drilling units (MODUs) of 500 GT and above, and their owning or managing companies, also became subject to the provisions of the ISM Code.

1.5 Requirements

A-006 The ISM Code requires that shipping companies establish safety objectives and develop, implement and maintain a Safety Management System (SMS). This includes functional requirements for key personnel in the company structure and onboard each ship.

1.6 Application

A-007 The application of the ISM Code should support and encourage the development of a safety culture in shipping. The appropriate organization of management, ashore and onboard, is needed to ensure adequate standards of safety. The objectives of the mandatory application of the ISM Code are to ensure:

1. Compliance with mandatory rules and regulations relating to the safe operation of ships and protection of the environment; and
2. The effective implementation and enforcement of these rules and regulations by Flag State Administrations.

A-008 Verification of compliance both ashore and afloat is the responsibility of each Flag State Administration or its appointed agents. These agents can include Classification Societies. The verification process is carried out by periodic assessments or audits.

A-009 In the IACS Procedural Requirements (PR 17), *'Reporting by Surveyors of Deficiencies relating to Possible Safety Management System Failures'*, the minimum content expected in a report (Annex 1) and guidance on what to report (Annex 2) are clearly outlined:

- Technical deficiencies
- documentation deficiencies
- operational deficiencies
- other deficiencies.

The application of the Code leads to the issuing of two statutory certificates, subject to Port State Control inspections. Vessels without the required certificates are liable to be detained and, at least within Europe, may be banned from re-entering until compliance has been adequately demonstrated. The two certificates are the Document of Compliance (DOC) and the Safety Management Certificate (SMC).

1.6.1 Development and Implementation

The Code details the requirements that *every* company should include, develop, implement and maintain in the SMS. As part of setting up of the SMS, the company will need to clearly define the following:
- Safety and environmental protection policy
- company responsibility and authority
- designated persons
- Master's responsibility and authority
- resources and personnel
- development of plans for shipboard operations
- emergency preparedness
- reports and an alysis of non-conformities,
- accidents and hazardous occurrences
- maintenance of the ship and equipment
- documentation
- company verification, *review* and evaluation
- certification, verification and control.

1.7 The Document of Compliances (DOC)

The DOC will be issued to the company following a successful audit of the shore-side aspects of the SMS.
The auditor will require objective evidence to demonstrate that the system has been in operation for a minimum of three months in addition to similar evidence of operation on at least one ship of each type in the company fleet.

The DOC will be specific to the ship type(s) at the time of the audit and will be valid for a maximum of *five* years and subject to annual verification an interim DOC, valid for *twelve* months, may be issued to facilitate initial implementation of the ISM Code where a company is newly established or where new ship types are added to an existing DOC.

1.8 The Safety Management Certificate (SMC)

The SMC will be issued to each ship after an onboard audit of the SMS. Objective evidence will be required to demonstrate that the SMS has been in operation onboard the ship for a minimum of three months before the audit.

The company must hold a valid DOC. A certified copy must be onboard the ship

The SMC will be valid for a maximum of *five* years and will be subject to intermediate verification between the second and third anniversaries

More frequent audits may be deemed necessary by the Flag Administration, particularly in the early stages of implementation of the Code.

1.9 Amendments to the ISM Code

The ISM Code was amended in December 2000 by resolution MSC.104(73), and these amendments entered into force on 1 July 2002. It was further amended in December 2004 by resolution MSC.179(79), and these amendments entered into force on 1 July 2006. It was further amended in May 2005 by resolution MSC.195(80), and these amendments entered into force on 1 January 2009. The ISM Code was also amended in December 2008 by resolution MSC.273(85). This resolution was adopted on 1 January 2010, and the amendments entered into force on 1 July 2010. The Code was further amended in June 2013 by resolution MSC.353(92) and these amendments entered into force on 1 January 2015.

1.10 Development of the Guidelines on implementation of the ISM Code

Recalling resolution A.741(18) by which the Assembly adopted the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (International Safety Management (ISM) Code), IMO adopted on 23 November 1995 resolution A.788(19) on Guidelines on implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code by Administrations.

Noting that the ISM Code was expected, under the provisions of chapter IX of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, to become mandatory for companies operating certain types of ships, as from 1 July 1998, and recognizing that an Administration, in establishing that safety standards are being

maintained, has a responsibility to ensure that Documents of Compliance have been issued in accordance with the Guidelines, and that there may be a need for Administrations to enter into agreements in respect of issuance of certificates by other Administrations in compliance with chapter IX of the 1974 SOLAS Convention and in accordance with resolution A.741(18), IMO recognized further the need for uniform implementation of the ISM Code.

Having considered the recommendation made by the Maritime Safety Committee at its sixty-fifth session and the Marine Environment Protection Committee at its thirty-seventh session, the Assembly adopted the Guidelines on Implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code by Administrations (resolution A.788(19)).

The resolution urged Governments, when implementing the ISM Code, to adhere to the Guidelines, in particular with regard to the validity of the Document of Compliance and the Safety Management Certificate required by the ISM Code; and also urged Governments to request the companies concerned to apply for certification under the ISM Code as soon as possible but not later than twelve months prior to the ISM Code becoming mandatory for ships belonging thereto; to inform the Organization of any difficulties they have experienced in using these Guidelines, so that the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee could keep the annexed Guidelines under review and to amend them as necessary.

These Guidelines established basic principles for verifying that the Safety Management System (SMS) of a Company responsible for the operation of ships or the SMS for the ship or ships controlled by the company complies with the ISM Code; and for the issue and periodical verification of the DOC and SMC. These Guidelines are applicable to Administrations.

1.10.1   Amendments to Guidelines

The Guidelines on implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code by Administrations, resolution A.788(19) were replaced with revised Guidelines, which were adopted by resolution A.913(22) in November 2001 which revoked resolution A.788(19). Further revision of these guidelines resulted in Guidelines on implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code by Administrations adopted by resolution A.1022(26) in December 2009. This resolution revokes resolution A.913(22) with effect from 1 July 2010. Revised guidelines on the implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code by Administrations were adopted by resolution A.1071(28) in December 2013. This resolution revokes resolution A.1022(26) with effect from 1 July 2014.