New ISM Code Guidelines

On 1 July, the latest amendments to the International Safety Management (ISM) Code entered into force. Anticipating these changes, and in order to take account of other experience gained since the ISM Code became mandatory, ICS and ISF have published a new edition of their definitive ‘Guidelines on the Application of ISM Code’, with additional guidance on risk management, safety culture and environmental management.

Extra guidance has been included on the maintenance of Safety Management Systems, which are at the heart of the ISM Code’s objectives, and on the role of the Designated Person Ashore who provides the key link between the ship and shore based management. New analysis is also included of why accidents happen, and expanded advice is provided on risk management and on the operation of a ‘safety culture’, in order that companies can fulfill the spirit, as well as the letter, of the ISM Code’s requirements. The new edition also places additional emphasis on environmental management.

The underlying principle of ISM is to help achieve the ultimate goal of zero accidents and zero pollution. It is greatly hoped that the new edition of the ICS/ISF Guidelines will contribute to the fulfillment of this vital aspiration.

New ICS/ISF Secretary General

Peter Hinchliffe has been appointed as the new Secretary General of ICS and ISF. He succeeds Tony Mason who had held the position for the past four years.

Manila STCW Amendments

ISF has welcomed the amendments to the STCW training Convention adopted in Manila in June and is confident that the wide ranging package of changes agreed will further enhance maritime training and the seafaring profession, and contribute to making it even safer. ISF (and ICS) made several detailed proposals during the review. Much of this input has been incorporated in the revised STCW Convention, including leadership and teamwork training requirements for officers, the development of new competence standards for the grade of Able Seafarer, and suggestions for the improvement of awareness of safety procedures amongst tanker personnel.

The most contentious issue to be resolved in Manila concerned the harmonization of IMO minimum rest hour requirements with the ILO Maritime Labour Convention. As a direct result of proposals submitted to the Conference by ISF, some flexibility with regard to both daily and weekly minimum rest hour periods has been maintained with appropriate safeguards, while strong requirements for the recording, monitoring and enforcement of the minimum rest hour provisions have also been added. ISF now has an ambitious programme to develop guidance materials, and to update its widely used training record books, to help ensure full implementation and compliance by the industry with these important new amendments.

US Threat to Limitation

ICS has made an important submission to the US Congress expressing serious concern about proposals to amend the US Oil Pollution Act (OPA 90), suggested by the US President in response to the Gulf of Mexico oil pollution disaster. These would have dramatically increased pollution liabilities for all types of ship or even removed limitation of liability completely, for pollution incidents, potentially making it impossible for responsible ship operators to trade to the United States since they would be unable to gain insurance.

While acknowledging the need for a political response to the disaster in the US Gulf, ICS has emphasised that OPA 90, as currently drafted, has worked well in ensuring that victims of any pollution caused by ships have been adequately and promptly compensated, and shipping is an entirely different industry to oil production. The arguments by the industry – which, with ICS encouragement, have been supported by the Consultative Shipping Group of governments – appear to have been acknowledged within Congress. The latest legislation does not propose amendments to vessels’ limits of liability under OPA 90 but it does contain proposals for increased liability for death and personal injury to seafarers.

Piracy BMPs

Ships approaching areas affected by Somalian piracy in the Indian Ocean are strongly reminded of the utmost importance of adhering to the Best Management Practices (BMP) put down by ICS/ISF and other industry organisations in cooperation with military navies. The latest BMP Version 3 was released in June – see www.marisec.org.
ISF Work Hour Record Software

Together with its partner IT Energy, ISF has launched an updated version of its popular ‘ISF Watchkeeper’ computer program which allows shipping companies to maintain records of individual seafarers’ hours of work and rest, as required by international regulations including the latest amendments to the IMO STCW Convention that were adopted in Manila (see above). Record keeping is now mandatory, and it will be vital for shipowners to comply with the requirement to maintain records which can be almost impossible to maintain without the use of such a program.

Several new features include an option to maintain overtime records and pre-plan work schedules. Most importantly, a new ‘locking’ function has been incorporated to protect completed data from being altered and to prove authenticity to port state control officers or to accident investigators.

Additional information about are found at www.isfwatchkeeper.com from which a free trial can be downloaded. Basic annual subscriptions to the ISF Watchkeeper package start at only £99 per ship.

Gaza Incident

ICS is deeply concerned about the recent forced boarding by Israeli armed forces of merchant ships on the high seas, off the coast of Gaza, and has condemned the totally unacceptable loss of life. As a matter of principle, and as enshrined in UNCLOS, merchant ships have a right to safe passage and freedom of navigation in international waters. These fundamental principles of international law should always be upheld by all of the world’s nations.

Copenhagen Conference

In June, ICS represented the global industry at a special Conference on shipping policy issues organised by the European Commission and the Danish Maritime Authority, in Copenhagen, to which senior representatives of governments, including China, Russia, Singapore and the United States were invited - the main focus being the promotion of free trade and quality shipping.

Pirate petition

Everyone in the industry is encouraged to register with the e-petition against piracy, which is supported by ICS/ISF, as well as a wide range of other shipping organisations including the International Transport Workers’ Federation – see www.endpiracypetition.org/

Turkish Golden Anchors

In July, ICS was pleased to attend the Golden Anchor Awards in Istanbul which were supported by the Turkish Chamber of Shipping and recognise achievement within the Turkish shipping industry.

Goal Based Standards

ICS has greatly welcomed IMO’s adoption of amendments to the SOLAS Convention implementing new ‘Goal-based Standards’ (GBS) for the construction of bulk carriers and oil tankers of 150m or over in length. This is the culmination of several years of negotiations in which ICS has been closely involved and continues to be active. However, some important practical matters still need to be resolved, such as the detailed administrative arrangements for the proposed GBS verification process.

Shipping and CO₂

ICS has updated its well-received brochure which explains the actions being taken by the industry and its regulators, especially at IMO, to reduce CO₂ emissions – see www.shippingandco2.org.

Year of the Seafarer

ICS has published a special brochure to promote the IMO ‘Year of the Seafarer’, which explains ISF involvement in dealing with some of the key challenges currently facing seafarers. It is being distributed worldwide via national shipowner associations, but is available to download free from www.marisec.org/resources.html

CSG/US Dialogue

ICS represented the industry at the biennial CSG/US dialogue meeting in Washington DC. The Consultative Shipping Group comprises senior representatives of shipping administrations committed to free trade principles and a ‘level playing’ field in maritime trade and met with the various US agencies that impact on shipping. In addition to the proposed changes to OPA 90 (see page 1) other issues raised by ICS included the unpopular US Order suggesting that ransom payments to pirates should be illegal, the continuing propensity of Federal and State environmental regulations to be at variance to international rules, the lack of US engagement in WTO negotiations on maritime services, and continued industry opposition to 100% container scanning.

World Transport Ministers Meet

The OECD International Transport Forum recently held its annual Conference of world transport ministers in Leipzig. ICS represented the shipping industry alongside ministers and senior representatives of other transport sectors. The theme for this year’s event was ‘Transport and Innovation.’

ICSW Party

ICSF was delighted to be invited with the party in Luneta Park in Manila, held for nearly 1,500 seafarers and their families immediately after the IMO STCW Conference in June, organised by the International Committee on Seafarers’ Welfare (ICSW) of which ISF is an important member.

ICS and ISF Conferences

ICS will be holding its International Shipping Conference on 15 September in London. ISF will be holding its Manning and Training Conference on 30 September. For details and booking forms see www.marisec.org

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