



UPDATE ON THE ISM CODE AND THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN ELEMENT

No. 21 of 2007

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Applicable to: This circular is for the attention of ship owners, managers, operators, agents, masters, crew members and surveyors

1. This circular contains consolidated information on matters relating to the ISM Code and the Role of the Human Element, emanating from the recent sessions of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) and the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC). The Joint MSC/MEPC Working Group on Human Element, which deals with matters relating to the ISM Code, met during MSC 82 (Dec 06) and MEPC 56 (Jul 07). MSC 83 approved two ISM-related circulars developed by the Joint MSC/MEPC Working Group.

2.1 Impact of the ISM Code: Report of the Group of Independent Experts (GIE)

The Group of Independent Experts (GIE) was established by the Secretary-General of IMO to analyze the impact of the ISM Code and its effectiveness in the enhancement of safety of life at sea and protection of the marine environment. MSC 82 agreed that the paperwork that supports the ISM compliance should be:

- .1 proportionate to the size, type and operation of the company;
- .2 concise and user-friendly; and
- .3 relevant to the operations related to safety and environmental protection.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations made by the GIE and, in particular, that:

- .1 guidelines for Administrations should be revised to make them more effective and user-friendly; and
- .2 guidelines and associated training should be developed to assist companies and seafarers in improving the implementation of the Code.

It also agreed that the results of the study should be given wide publicity across the industry. Hence, the report of the GIE is attached as [ATTACHMENT A](#), and ship owners are requested to give consideration to the recommendations in the study to improve and enhance their safety management systems.

2.2 Occupational safety and health protection: Ergonomic considerations of IMO instruments

The MSC agreed that the following circulars should be reviewed by the DE and NAV subcommittees respectively:

- .1 the Guidelines for engine-room layout, design and arrangement (MSC/Circ.834); and
- .2 the Guidelines on ergonomic criteria for bridge equipment and layout (MSC/Circ.982).

The guidelines are attached as [ATTACHMENT B](#) and [ATTACHMENT C](#). MPA will promulgate the revised guidelines when they become available.

2.3 Near misses

The ISM Code requires that the safety management system should include procedures ensuring that non-conformities, accidents and hazardous situations are reported to the Company, investigated and analysed with the objective of improving safety and pollution prevention. However, there had been an overall lack of information being collected on near-misses where an accident had been avoided. The Committee agreed that there was a need to prepare guidance for companies and seafarers with a view to encourage companies and seafarers to document and record information on near misses and hazardous situations in order to understand the precursors to events that were detrimental to safety and the marine environment.

MPA will inform the shipping community once the guidance on near misses reporting has been developed

A previous MSC circular, MSC/Circ.1015, encouraging the reporting of near misses is attached as [ATTACHMENT D](#).

2.4 Explosions on chemical and product carriers

MSC 82 was advised that the Human Factors Task Group (HFTG) established by the Inter-Industry Group (IIG) had concluded that the most significant contribution to the incidents in question was a failure to follow cargo operation guidelines and procedures (at both shipboard and ship management level). Accordingly, the HFTG had agreed that as a short term measure, requirements relating to the award of Dangerous Cargo Endorsements (DCEs) should be reviewed, and as a medium term, measures to make the ISM Code more effective should be addressed.

The Committee then instructed STW 38 to review the requirements leading to Dangerous Cargo Endorsements (DCEs) for seafarers under its agenda item "Comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and the STCW Code".

MPA will inform the shipping community of major developments in the review of the STCW convention, including DCEs.

The report of the IIG is attached as [ATTACHMENT E](#).

2.5 ISM Guidance: Experience, Qualifications and Training for the role of Designated Person under the ISM Code

The MSC expressed concern that given the importance of the ISM Code, the experience, qualifications and training of the Designated Person (DP) sometimes do not commensurate with the key role the DP plays. Hence, the MSC approved a joint MSC-MEPC.7 circular on Guidelines on qualifications, training and experience necessary for undertaking the role of the DP under the provisions of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code. This is attached as [ATTACHMENT F](#).

2.6 ISM Guidance: Guidelines for the operational implementation of the ISM Code by Companies

The MSC also approved new guidelines to assist Companies in effective and efficient operational implementation of the ISM Code. In this context, the Committee recognized that to support and encourage the development of a safety culture and to strengthen the operational implementation of the ISM Code the following elements should be given particular attention:

- .1 internal audits;
- .2 SMS review/assessment by the Company and master;
- .3 reporting and analysing of non-conformities, accidents and hazardous occurrences; and
- .4 persons performing internal audits and internal system reviews.

The MSC-MEPC.7 circular on Guidelines for operational implementation of the ISM Code by Companies is attached as [ATTACHMENT G](#).

MPA urges ship owners and managers to follow the recommendations of the above two guidelines in order to improve or enhance their safety management systems.

2.7 Cargo Ships and Special Purpose Ships - Inclusion in the ISM Code

The MSC agreed that the tonnage used to determine if compliance is required or not should be the tonnage determined under the 1969 Tonnage Convention, and approved MSC/Circ.1231 on *Interim scheme for the compliance of certain cargo ships and special purpose ships with the management for the safe operations of ships*.

MPA has issued a shipping circular, No. 5 of 2007, requiring all Singapore-flag ships to comply with MSC/Circ.1231:

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=sc07-05.xml

2.8 Other issues

The MSC instructed the Secretariat to publish all related guidance issued by the Organization in the next edition of the ISM Code.

Ship owners are encouraged to obtain the new edition of the IMO publication when it becomes available.

The current publication is *ISM Code (International Safety Management Code) and revised guidelines on*

implementation of the ISM Code. 2002 edition (IMO-IA117E).

3Any queries relating to this circular should be directed to Mr Lim Hock Lye (Tel: 6375 6219).

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List of related circulars

1. MSC.1/Circ.1205 *Guidelines for Developing Operation and Maintenance Manuals for Lifeboat Systems*

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=sc06-25.xml

2. MSC.1/Circ.1206 *Measures to Prevent Accidents with Lifeboats*

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=sc06-18.xml

3. MSC/Circ.1093 *Guidelines for Periodic Servicing and Maintenance of Lifeboats, Launching Appliances and On-Load Release Gear*

(Annex 1 of MSC.1/Circ.1206)

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=sc06-04.xml

4. MSC.1/Circ.1207 *Early Implementation of SOLAS Reg III 19.3.3.4*

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=sc06-22.xml

5. MSC.1/Circ.1231 *Interim Scheme for the Compliance of Certain Cargo Ships and Special Purpose Ships with Management for the Safe Operations of Ships*

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=sc07-05.xml

6. MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.3 *Guidelines on the Basic Elements of a Shipboard Occupational Health and Safety Programme*

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=sc06-21.xml

7. MSC/Circ.1014 *Guidance on Fatigue Mitigation and Management*

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=MC02-08.xml

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=sc06-02.xml

8. MSC/Circ.1084 *Principles for Hot Work on board all types of Ships*

http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/port_and_shipping/circulars_and_notices/shipping_circulars_detail.page?filename=mc03-13.xml

- 9.http://www.mpa.gov.sg/sites/circulars_and_notices/pdfs/shipping_circulars/sc07-21h.pdf

10. IMO Information Resources on the ISM Code is available from IMO website, and is updated regularly. The

current document is:http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D20524/ISMCode_26November2007_.pdf