



IMO Guidelines to PSC officers for ISM Code inspections

This circular provides Shipowners guidance for those deficiencies that lead to vessel's detention in relation to the ISM Code during a Port State Control Inspection.

Notice to: Ship Owners / Managers / Operators | Auditors

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The Marine Environment Protection Committee, at its 70th session, and the Maritime Safety Committee, at its 97th session, approved the Guidelines for PSC Officers on the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.

During an initial PSC Inspection, the PSCO shall need to verify that the ship carries the ISM certificates according to SOLAS Chapter IX and the ISM Code by examining the copy of the DOC and the SMC, for which a copy of the DOC must be on board. The copy of the DOC is not required to be authenticated or certified and should have the required endorsements. The SMC is not valid unless the operating company holds a valid DOC for that ship type.

During a more detailed Inspection, if an outstanding ISM related deficiency from a previous PSC Inspection exists and the current PSC Inspection is more than three months later:

- the PSCO shall need to verify that an internal safety audit has been performed; and
- having reference to the previous PSC Inspection report, the PSCO shall need to examine the technical and/or operational areas in which deficiencies designated with "ISM" are noted.

During a PSC follow-up, if an outstanding ISM-related deficiency (to be rectified within three months) from a previous PSC Inspection exists and no objective evidence can be provided by the ship's Master, during the current PSC Inspection more than three months later, that an internal safety audit has been performed, any further action will be taken based on the professional judgment of the PSCO and may warrant the detention of the ship.

Deficiencies warranting detention

The following deficiencies may warrant detention:

- deficiencies of technical and/or operational nature which individually or collectively provide objective evidence of a serious failure, or lack of effectiveness, of the implementation of the ISM Code;
- there is no SMC, interim SMC and/or copy of the DOC or interim DOC on board the ship;
- there is no valid SMC or interim SMC on board;

- the SMC intermediate verification is overdue;
- the SMC is expired and there is no objective evidence of an extension issued by the Administration; or where the SMC has been withdrawn by the Administration;
- the DOC or interim DOC is expired or withdrawn;
- the ship type as indicated on the SMC or interim SMC is not listed on the DOC or interim DOC;
- evidence of the DOC annual verification is not available on board;
- the certificate number on the copy of the DOC and the endorsement pages are not the same; and
- the Company name, the Company address or the issuing Government authority on the DOC or interim DOC is not the same as on the SMC or interim SMC.

ISM-related deficiencies

Where the PSCO has considered the technical and/or operational-related deficiencies found and concluded these provide objective evidence of a (serious) failure, or lack of effectiveness of the implementation of the ISM Code, an ISM-related deficiency should be reported in the PSC Inspection report.

Act now

Ship owners/ Managers/ Operators are invited to take into consideration above Guidelines for PSC Officers on the ISM Code, as appropriate, to ensure that their vessels fully comply with those requirements and avoid any possible detention during the vessels Inspection.



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