ISM Code
INTERNATIONAL SAFETY MANAGEMENT CODE
and guidelines on implementation of the ISM Code
2010 Edition

Electronic Edition
Contents

Foreword .......................................................... V

International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended
Chapter IX – Management for the safe operation of ships ........ 1

Resolution A.741(18) as amended by MSC.104(73),
MSC.179(79), MSC.195(80) and MSC.273(85)
International Safety Management Code ......................... 7

Resolution A.1022(26)
Guidelines on implementation of the International Safety
Management Code by Administrations ....................... 33

MSC–MEPC.7/Circ.5
Guidelines for the operational implementation of the International
Safety Management Code by Companies .................. 53

MSC–MEPC.7/Circ.6
Guidance on the qualifications, training and experience necessary
for undertaking the role of the designated person under the
provisions of the International Safety Management Code .... 61

MSC–MEPC.7/Circ.7
Guidance on near-miss reporting .............................. 67
Foreword

With the entry into force, on 1 July 1998, of the 1994 amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, which introduced a new chapter IX into the Convention, the International Safety Management (ISM) Code was made mandatory. Chapter IX was amended by resolution MSC.99(73), which entered into force on 1 July 2002, and by resolution MSC.194(80), which entered into force on 1 January 2009.

The Code’s origins go back to the late 1980s, when there was mounting concern about poor management standards in shipping. Investigations into accidents revealed major errors on the part of management, and in 1987 the IMO Assembly adopted resolution A.596(15), which called upon the Maritime Safety Committee to develop guidelines concerning shipboard and shore-based management to ensure the safe operation of ro–ro passenger ferries.

The ISM Code evolved through the development of the Guidelines on management for the safe operation of ships and for pollution prevention, adopted in 1989 by the IMO Assembly as resolution A.647(16), and the Revised Guidelines, adopted two years later as resolution A.680(17), to its current form, the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (International Safety Management (ISM) Code), which was adopted in 1993 as resolution A.741(18). This 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 will enter into force on 1 July 2010.

In 1995, the IMO Assembly, recognizing the need for uniform implementation of the ISM Code and that there might be a need for Administrations to enter into agreements in respect of the issuance of certificates by other Administrations in accordance with SOLAS chapter IX and the ISM Code, adopted the Guidelines on implementation of the International Safety
Management (ISM) Code by Administrations by resolution A.788(19). These Guidelines were replaced with Revised Guidelines, which were adopted by resolution A.913(22) in November 2001, which revoked resolution A.788(19). Guidelines on implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code by Administrations were adopted by resolution A.1022(26) in December 2009. This resolution revokes resolution A.913(22) with effect from 1 July 2010.

This publication includes the texts of SOLAS chapter IX, the ISM Code and the Guidelines referred to in the previous paragraphs. Additionally, Guidelines for the operational implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code by Companies, Guidance on the qualifications, training and experience necessary for undertaking the role of the designated person under the provisions of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code and Guidance on near-miss reporting are included.
International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended

Chapter IX – Management for the safe operation of ships
Management for the safe operation of ships

Chapter IX* of the annex to the 1974 SOLAS Convention

Regulation 1
Definitions

For the purpose of this chapter, unless expressly provided otherwise:

1 International Safety Management (ISM) Code means the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention adopted by the Organization by resolution A.741(18), as may be amended by the Organization, provided that such amendments are adopted, brought into force and take effect in accordance with the provisions of article VIII of the present Convention concerning the amendment procedures applicable to the annex other than chapter I.

2 Company means the owner of the ship or any other organization or person such as the manager, or the bareboat charterer, who has assumed the responsibility for operation of the ship from the owner of the ship and who on assuming such responsibility has agreed to take over all the duties and responsibilities imposed by the International Safety Management Code.

3 Oil tanker means an oil tanker as defined in regulation II-1/2.22.†

* Chapter IX of the annex to the 1974 SOLAS Convention was adopted by the 1994 SOLAS Conference. It was accepted on 1 January 1998 and entered into force on 1 July 1998. The text was amended by resolution MSC.99(73) in December 2000, and these amendments entered into force on 1 July 2002. It was also amended by resolution MSC.194(80) in May 2005, and these amendments entered into force on 1 January 2009.

† i.e., “the oil tanker defined in regulation 1 of Annex I of the Protocol of 1978 relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973”.

3
4 Chemical tanker means a chemical tanker as defined in regulation VII/8.2.*

5 Gas carrier means a gas carrier as defined in regulation VII/11.2.†

6 Bulk carrier means a ship which is constructed generally with single deck, top-side tanks and hopper side tanks in cargo spaces, and is intended primarily to carry dry cargo in bulk, and includes such types as ore carriers and combination carriers.

7 Mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU) means a vessel capable of engaging in drilling operations for the exploration for or exploitation of resources beneath the sea-bed such as liquid or gaseous hydrocarbons, sulphur or salt.

8 High-speed craft means a craft as defined in regulation X/1.‡

Regulation 2
Application
1 This chapter applies to ships, regardless of the date of construction, as follows:

.1 passenger ships including passenger high-speed craft, not later than 1 July 1998;

.2 oil tankers, chemical tankers, gas carriers, bulk carriers and cargo high-speed craft of 500 gross tonnage and upwards, not later than 1 July 1998; and

.3 other cargo ships and mobile offshore drilling units of 500 gross tonnage and upwards, not later than 1 July 2002.

---

* i.e., “a cargo ship constructed or adapted and used for the carriage in bulk of any liquid product listed in chapter 17 of the International Bulk Chemical Code”.

† i.e., “a cargo ship constructed or adapted and used for the carriage in bulk of any liquefied gas or other product listed in chapter 19 of the International Gas Carrier Code”.

‡ i.e., “a craft capable of a maximum speed, in metres per second (m/s), equal to or exceeding $3.7\sqrt{V^{0.1667}}$ where $V =$ volume of displacement corresponding to the design waterline (m$^3$) excluding craft the hull of which is supported completely clear above the water surface in non-displacement mode by aerodynamic forces generated by ground effect”.

---
This chapter does not apply to government-operated ships used for non-commercial purposes.

**Regulation 3**  
*Safety management requirements*

1. The company and the ship shall comply with the requirements of the International Safety Management Code. For the purpose of this regulation, the requirements of the Code shall be treated as mandatory.

2. The ship shall be operated by a company holding a Document of Compliance referred to in regulation 4.

**Regulation 4**  
*Certification*

1. A Document of Compliance shall be issued to every company which complies with the requirements of the International Safety Management Code. This document shall be issued by the Administration, by an organization recognized by the Administration, or at the request of the Administration by another Contracting Government.

2. A copy of the Document of Compliance shall be kept on board the ship in order that the master can produce it on request for verification.

3. A Certificate, called a Safety Management Certificate, shall be issued to every ship by the Administration or an organization recognized by the Administration. The Administration or organization recognized by it shall, before issuing the Safety Management Certificate, verify that the company and its shipboard management operate in accordance with the approved safety management system.

**Regulation 5**  
*Maintenance of conditions*

The safety management system shall be maintained in accordance with the provisions of the International Safety Management Code.
Regulation 6
Verification and control

1. The Administration, another Contracting Government at the request of the Administration or an organization recognized by the Administration shall periodically verify the proper functioning of the ship’s safety management system.

2. A ship required to hold a certificate issued pursuant to the provisions of regulation 4.3 shall be subject to control in accordance with the provisions of regulation XI/4. For this purpose such certificate shall be treated as a certificate issued under regulation I/12 or I/13.
International Safety Management Code
International Safety Management Code

Resolution A.741(18) as amended by MSC.104(73), MSC.179(79), MSC.195(80) and MSC.273(85)

PREAMBLE

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

2. The Assembly adopted resolution A.443(XI), by which it invited all Governments to take the necessary steps to safeguard the shipmaster in the proper discharge of his responsibilities with regard to maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment.

3. The Assembly also adopted resolution A.680(17), by which it further recognized the need for appropriate organization of management to enable it to respond to the need of those on board ships to achieve and maintain high standards of safety and environmental protection.

4. Recognizing that no two shipping companies or shipowners are the same, and that ships operate under a wide range of different conditions, the Code is based on general principles and objectives.

5. The Code is expressed in broad terms so that it can have a widespread application. Clearly, different levels of management, whether shore-based or at sea, will require varying levels of knowledge and awareness of the items outlined.

6. The cornerstone of good safety management is commitment from the top. In matters of safety and pollution prevention it is the commitment, competence, attitudes and motivation of individuals at all levels that determines the end result.
PART A – IMPLEMENTATION

1 GENERAL

1.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply to parts A and B of this Code.

1.1.1 *International Safety Management (ISM) Code* means the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention as adopted by the Assembly, as may be amended by the Organization.

1.1.2 *Company* means the owner of the ship or any other organization or person such as the manager, or the bareboat charterer, who has assumed the responsibility for operation of the ship from the shipowner and who, on assuming such responsibility, has agreed to take over all duties and responsibility imposed by the Code.

1.1.3 *Administration* means the Government of the State whose flag the ship is entitled to fly.

1.1.4 *Safety management system* means a structured and documented system enabling Company personnel to implement effectively the Company safety and environmental protection policy.

1.1.5 *Document of Compliance* means a document issued to a Company which complies with the requirements of this Code.

1.1.6 *Safety Management Certificate* means a document issued to a ship which signifies that the Company and its shipboard management operate in accordance with the approved safety management system.

1.1.7 *Objective evidence* means quantitative or qualitative information, records or statements of fact pertaining to safety or to the existence and implementation of a safety management system element, which is based on observation, measurement or test and which can be verified.
1.1.8 Observation means a statement of fact made during a safety management audit and substantiated by objective evidence.

1.1.9 Non-conformity means an observed situation where objective evidence indicates the non-fulfilment of a specified requirement.

1.1.10 Major non-conformity means an identifiable deviation that poses a serious threat to the safety of personnel or the ship or a serious risk to the environment that requires immediate corrective action or the lack of effective and systematic implementation of a requirement of this Code.

1.1.11 Anniversary date means the day and month of each year that corresponds to the date of expiry of the relevant document or certificate.

1.1.12 Convention means the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 The objectives of the Code are to ensure safety at sea, prevention of human injury or loss of life, and avoidance of damage to the environment, in particular to the marine environment and to property.

1.2.2 Safety management objectives of the Company should, inter alia:

- provide for safe practices in ship operation and a safe working environment;
- assess all identified risks to its ships, personnel and the environment and establish appropriate safeguards; and
- continuously improve safety management skills of personnel ashore and aboard ships, including preparing for emergencies related both to safety and environmental protection.

1.2.3 The safety management system should ensure:

- compliance with mandatory rules and regulations; and
- that applicable codes, guidelines and standards recommended by the Organization, Administrations, classification societies and maritime industry organizations are taken into account.
1.3 Application

The requirements of this Code may be applied to all ships.

1.4 Functional requirements for a safety management system

Every Company should develop, implement and maintain a safety management system which includes the following functional requirements:

.1 a safety and environmental-protection policy;

.2 instructions and procedures to ensure safe operation of ships and protection of the environment in compliance with relevant international and flag State legislation;

.3 defined levels of authority and lines of communication between, and amongst, shore and shipboard personnel;

.4 procedures for reporting accidents and non-conformities with the provisions of this Code;

.5 procedures to prepare for and respond to emergency situations; and

.6 procedures for internal audits and management reviews.

2 SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL-PROTECTION POLICY

2.1 The Company should establish a safety and environmental-protection policy which describes how the objectives given in paragraph 1.2 will be achieved.

2.2 The Company should ensure that the policy is implemented and maintained at all levels of the organization, both ship-based and shore-based.
3 COMPANY RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY

3.1 If the entity who is responsible for the operation of the ship is other than the owner, the owner must report the full name and details of such entity to the Administration.

3.2 The Company should define and document the responsibility, authority and interrelation of all personnel who manage, perform and verify work relating to and affecting safety and pollution prevention.

3.3 The Company is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources and shore-based support are provided to enable the designated person or persons to carry out their functions.

4 DESIGNATED PERSON(S)

To ensure the safe operation of each ship and to provide a link between the Company and those on board, every Company, as appropriate, should designate a person or persons ashore having direct access to the highest level of management. The responsibility and authority of the designated person or persons should include monitoring the safety and pollution-prevention aspects of the operation of each ship and ensuring that adequate resources and shore-based support are applied, as required.

5 MASTER’S RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

5.1 The Company should clearly define and document the master’s responsibility with regard to:

.1 implementing the safety and environmental-protection policy of the Company;

.2 motivating the crew in the observation of that policy;

.3 issuing appropriate orders and instructions in a clear and simple manner;

.4 verifying that specified requirements are observed; and

.5 periodically reviewing the safety management system and reporting its deficiencies to the shore-based management.
5.2 The Company should ensure that the safety management system operating on board the ship contains a clear statement emphasizing the master’s authority. The Company should establish in the safety management system that the master has the overriding authority and the responsibility to make decisions with respect to safety and pollution prevention and to request the Company’s assistance as may be necessary.

6 RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL

6.1 The Company should ensure that the master is:

.1 properly qualified for command;

.2 fully conversant with the Company’s safety management system; and

.3 given the necessary support so that the master’s duties can be safely performed.

6.2 The Company should ensure that each ship is manned with qualified, certificated and medically fit seafarers in accordance with national and international requirements.

6.3 The Company should establish procedures to ensure that new personnel and personnel transferred to new assignments related to safety and protection of the environment are given proper familiarization with their duties. Instructions which are essential to be provided prior to sailing should be identified, documented and given.

6.4 The Company should ensure that all personnel involved in the Company’s safety management system have an adequate understanding of relevant rules, regulations, codes and guidelines.

6.5 The Company should establish and maintain procedures for identifying any training which may be required in support of the safety management system and ensure that such training is provided for all personnel concerned.

6.6 The Company should establish procedures by which the ship’s personnel receive relevant information on the safety management system in a working language or languages understood by them.
6.7 The Company should ensure that the ship’s personnel are able to communicate effectively in the execution of their duties related to the safety management system.

7  SHIPBOARD OPERATIONS

The Company should establish procedures, plans and instructions, including checklists as appropriate, for key shipboard operations concerning the safety of the personnel, ship and protection of the environment. The various tasks should be defined and assigned to qualified personnel.

8  EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

8.1 The Company should identify potential emergency shipboard situations, and establish procedures to respond to them.

8.2 The Company should establish programmes for drills and exercises to prepare for emergency actions.

8.3 The safety management system should provide for measures ensuring that the Company’s organization can respond at any time to hazards, accidents and emergency situations involving its ships.

9  REPORTS AND ANALYSIS OF NON-CONFORMITIES, ACCIDENTS AND HAZARDOUS OCCURRENCES

9.1 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.

9.2 The Company should establish procedures for the implementation of corrective action, including measures intended to prevent recurrence.