

**ASSEMBLY - 18th session**  
**Agenda item 11**

**17 November 1993**

**Resolution A.741(18)**  
Adopted on 4 November 1993

**INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT CODE FOR THE SAFE OPERATION  
OF SHIPS AND FOR POLLUTION PREVENTION  
(International Safety Management (ISM) Code)  
(Electronic Version for Distribution on the World Wide Web)**

The Assembly,

RECALLING Article 15 (j) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Assembly in relation to regulations and guidelines concerning maritime safety and the prevention and control of marine pollution from ships,

RECALLING ALSO resolution A.680(17), by which it invited Member Governments to encourage those responsible for the management and operations of ships to take appropriate steps to develop, implement and assess safety and pollution-prevention management in accordance with the IMO Guidelines on Management for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention,

RECALLING ALSO resolution A.596(15), by which it requested the Maritime Safety Committee to develop, as a matter of urgency, guidelines, wherever relevant, concerning shipboard and shore-based management, and its decision to include in the work program of the Maritime Safety committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee an item on shipboard and shore-based management for the safe operation of ships and for the prevention of marine pollution, respectively,

RECALLING FURTHER resolution A.441(XI), by which it invited every State to take the necessary steps to ensure that the owner of a ship which flies the flag of the State provides such State with the current information necessary to enable it to identify and contact the person contracted or otherwise entrusted by the owner to discharge his responsibilities for that ship in regard to matters relating to maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment,

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

RECOGNIZING 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,

RECOGNIZING ALSO that the most important means of preventing maritime casualties and pollution of the sea from ships is to design, construct, equip and maintain ships and to operate them with properly trained crews in compliance with international conventions and standards relating to maritime safety and pollution prevention,

NOTING that the Maritime Safety Committee is developing requirements for adoption by Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, which will make compliance with the Code referred to in operative paragraph 1 mandatory,

CONSIDERING that the early implementation of that Code would greatly assist in improving safety at sea and protection of the marine environment,

NOTING FURTHER that the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee have reviewed resolution A.680(17) and the Guidelines annexed thereto in developing the Code,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendations made by the Maritime Safety Committee at its sixty-second session and by the Marine Environment Protection Committee at its thirty-fourth session.

1. ADOPTS the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (International Safety Management (ISM) Code), set out in the annex to the present resolution;
2. STRONGLY URGES Governments to implement the ISM Code on a national basis, giving priority to passenger ships, tankers, gas carriers, bulk carriers and mobile offshore units which are flying their flags, as soon as possible but no later than 1 June 1998, pending development of the mandatory application of the Code;
3. REQUESTS Governments to inform the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the action they have taken in implementing the ISM Code;
4. REQUESTS the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee to develop Guidelines for the implementation of the ISM Code;
5. REQUESTS ALSO the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee to keep the Code and its associated Guidelines under review and to amend them as necessary;
6. REVOKES resolution A.680(17).

Annex

**INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT CODE FOR THE SAFE OPERATION  
OF SHIPS AND FOR POLLUTION PREVENTION  
(International Safety Management(ISM) Code)**

**SAFETY AND POLLUTION-PREVENTION MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

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## 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 environment 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 determine the end result.

## 1 GENERAL

### 1.1 Definitions

**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 charter, 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 the 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.

## **1.2 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*:

- .1 provide for safe practices in ship operation and a safe working environment;
- .2 establish safeguards against all identified risks; and
- .3 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:

- .1 compliance with mandatory rules and regulations; and
- .2 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 (SMS)**

Every Company should develop, implement and maintain a safety-management system (SMS), 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 as well as 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 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** reviewing the SMS and reporting its deficiencies to the shore-based management.

**5.2** The Company should ensure that the SMS operating on board the ship contains a clear statement emphasizing the master's authority. The Company should establish in the SMS 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 SMS; 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 SMS 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 SMS 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 SMS 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 SMS.

## **7 DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS FOR SHIPBOARD OPERATIONS**

The Company should establish procedures for the preparation of plans and instructions for key shipboard operations concerning the safety of the ship and the prevention of pollution. The various tasks involved should be defined and assigned to qualified personnel.

## **8 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

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

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

**8.3** The SMS should provide for measures 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 SMS should include procedures ensuring that non-conformities, accidents and hazardous situations are reported to the Company, investigated and analyzed with the objective of improving safety and pollution prevention.

**9.2** The Company should establish procedures for the implementation of corrective action.

## **10 MAINTENANCE OF THE SHIP AND EQUIPMENT**

**10.1** The Company should establish procedures to ensure that the ship is maintained in conformity with the provisions of the relevant rules and regulations and with any additional requirements which may be established by the Company.

**10.2** In meeting these requirements, the Company should ensure that:

- .1** inspections are held at appropriate intervals;
- .2** any non-conformity is reported, with its possible cause, if known;
- .3** appropriate corrective action is taken; and
- .4** records of these activities are maintained.

**10.3** The Company should establish procedures in its SMS to identify equipment and technical systems the sudden operational failure of which may result in hazardous situations. The SMS should provide for specific measures aimed at promoting the reliability of such equipment or systems. These measures should include the regular testing of stand-by arrangements and equipment or technical systems that are not in continuous use.

**10.4** The inspections mentioned in 10.2 as well as the measures referred to in 10.3 should be integrated into the ship's operational maintenance routine.

## **11 DOCUMENTATION**

**11.1** The Company should establish and maintain procedures to control all documents and data which are relevant to the SMS.

**11.2** The Company should ensure that:

- .1** valid documents are available at all relevant locations;
- .2** changes to documents are reviewed and approved by authorized personnel; and
- .3** obsolete documents are promptly removed.



**11.3** The documents used to describe and implement the SMS may be referred to as the Safety Management Manual. Documentation should be kept in a form that the Company considers most effective. Each ship should carry on board all documentation relevant to that ship.

## **12 COMPANY VERIFICATION, REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

**12.1** The Company should carry out internal safety audits to verify whether safety and pollution-prevention activities comply with the SMS.

**12.2** The Company should periodically evaluate the efficiency of and, when needed, review the SMS in accordance with procedures established by the Company.

**12.3** The audits and possible corrective actions should be carried out in accordance with documented procedures.

**12.4** Personnel carrying out audits should be independent of the areas being audited unless this is impracticable due to the size and the nature of the Company.

**12.5** The results of the audits and reviews should be brought to the attention of all personnel having responsibility in the area involved.

**12.6** The management personnel responsible for the area involved should take timely corrective action on deficiencies found.

## **13 CERTIFICATION, VERIFICATION AND CONTROL**

**13.1** The ship should be operated by a Company which is issued a document of compliance relevant to that ship.

**13.2** A document of compliance should be issued for every Company complying with the requirements of the ISM Code by the Administration, by an organization recognized by the Administration or by the Government of the country acting on behalf of the Administration in which the Company has chosen to conduct its business. This document should be accepted as evidence that the Company is capable of complying with the requirements of the Code.

**13.3** A copy of such a document should be placed on board in order that the master, if so asked, may produce it for the verification of the Administration of organizations recognized by it.

**13.4** A certificate, call a Safety Management Certificate, should be issued to a ship by the Administration or organizations recognized by the Administration. The Administration should, when issuing the certificate, verify that the Company and its shipboard management operate in accordance with the approved SMS.

**13.5** The Administration or an organization recognized by the Administration should periodically verify the proper functioning of the ship's SMS as approved.

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