

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

Ministry of Finance and Treasury

Office of the Directorate of Merchant Marine Circular No. 97

Consular and Maritime Affairs

To: Shipowners/Operators, and Masters of Panamanian Registered Merchant Vessels
Subject: Implementation of the ISM Code – Required Reporting Date

The International Safety Management (ISM) Code was adopted by the Assembly of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on 4 November 1993. Its intent is to foster the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention. The 1994 Amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, included a new chapter "CHAPTER IX" - 'Management for the safe operation of ships', making the application of the Code mandatory 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, no 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.

Since the Flag State Administration, in this case Panama, is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the Code for its vessels, this Administration issues this Merchant Marine Circular as part of a continuing series of reminders to cognizant parties in its Registry as to the urgency of accomplishing the objectives of the Code.

As further reminders:

1. If a vessel does not have the SMC by the due date, then, in all likelihood, it would be detained by a Port State Authority;
2. The company and/or operator with 'hands-on' involvement in the operation of a ship must have a DOC;
3. For companies with multi-fleets (vessels under different flags), duplication of DOCs can be avoided by agreement of the Flag State Administrations involved.

The above material is a repetition of the first part of Merchant Marine Circular No.95 issued in September 1996. This Circular No.96 is to inform shipowners/operators and Masters of Panamanian Registered Merchant Vessels required to have fulfilled the requirements of the ISM Code not later than 1 July 1998, that they must submit to this office, by 1 July 1997, the Status of the ISM Code for the applicable Panamanian vessels in their fleet. That is:

1. Names of the vessels in possession of the SMC (Safety Management Certificate).
2. Names of the vessels in progress of receiving the SMC and the prospective date of issue of the SMC.
3. Names of the vessels that have not begun the process to obtain the SMC. (These vessels must begin the process no later than 1 July 1997).

It cannot be overemphasized that this report to this office is a mandatory requirements culminating in the status report by Panama to the International Maritime Organization.

Again, the reminder must be made that it has been officially enunciated by the IMO and by the various Port State Control Authorities Worldwide that there will be no extensions granted after 1 July 1998 for the applicable vessels.

April 1997

Reports are to be submitted to:

CAPT. A.E. FIORE

CHIEF OF MARITIME SAFETY

DIRECTORATE OF CONSULAR AND MARITIME AFFAIRS

CANCELLED

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