



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Safety Management Code For Domestic Passenger Ships of Classes III – VI (A)

Notice to Shipowners, Operators, Charterers and Managers; Masters, Officers and Seamen

Summary

This note provides guidance to owners and operators of Domestic Passenger Ships on how to comply with the requirements of the Safety Management Code for Domestic Passenger Ships of Classes III – VI (A) as set out in Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1754(M).

Key points:

- To comply with the code, a safe working environment must be in place which includes:
 - a health and safety protection policy;
 - procedures to ensure the safe operation of ships in compliance with relevant rules, which may be in the form of checklists;
 - lines of communication between personnel, ashore and afloat;
 - procedures for reporting accidents; and
 - procedures for responding to emergency situations.
- Companies must ensure adequate training is provided for the full range of duties personnel are required to fulfil
- Companies must undertake a review of the safety management system of their ships at least once in every three years.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Merchant Shipping (Domestic Passenger Ships) (Safety Management Code) Regulations 2001 SI 2001/3209 come into force on 01 November 2001 and give statutory force to the Safety Management Code for Domestic Passenger Ships of Classes III – VI (A) as set out in Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1754(M).
2. The purpose of this Marine Guidance Note is to provide guidance on how to comply with the requirements of the Code. Guidance on how to develop and implement an effective safety management system is provided.
3. It is recognised that there are a wide variety of passenger ships in the domestic trade, in the Classes III – VIA, and that they are employed in a variety of operational locations and conditions. The purpose therefore of developing the Code is to establish a common standard of safe operation for these ships.
4. The Code will apply only to Class III – VIA passenger ships and will exclude domestic operators already required to comply with the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.

5. The Code is kept brief and simple, so that it can be applied to a wide variety of ships, and developed by each company to meet the needs of that company.

GENERAL

6. To comply with the Code, each operator should create a safe working environment, which should include the following:

A health and safety protection policy.

- 6.1 This must address the issues of health, safety and the environment as they affect the company and its staff, both ashore and afloat. Such a policy might read along the following lines:

“The policy of (name of Company) is to conduct its activities taking full account of the health and safety of its employees and of all persons using or connected with the Company. In implementing this policy, (name of Company) will ensure that the [ship] is, at all times, properly maintained and operated by qualified personnel in full compliance with relevant legislation. In particular the [Co.] will carry out an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of workers and others affected by [the undertaking], and will take the necessary measures to minimise the risks identified.”

- 6.2 Each operator of a ship certified to carry 15 persons or more is also required by the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Garbage) Regulations 1998 (S.I. 1998/1377) to carry a Garbage Management Plan.

Every ship of 12 metres or more in overall length shall display placards to notify the crew and passengers of the ship’s disposal requirements. MSN 1720(M+F) is relevant and should be consulted.

- 6.3 It is an offence under section 131 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 for a ship in U.K. national waters, navigable by sea-going ships, to discharge any oil or oily mixture into those waters. The operator of such a ship is recommended to develop and implement an oil management plan to the same standard as the garbage management plan and to integrate it with the Health and Safety Protection Policy.

Procedures to ensure safe operation of ships in compliance with the regulations and rules.

- 6.4 The regulations and rules which apply to the domestic passenger ships include but are not limited to:

- The Merchant Shipping (Passenger Ship Construction Ships of Classes III-VIA) Regulations;
- The Merchant Shipping (Life Saving Appliances for Passenger Ships Classes III – VIA) Regulations;
- Categorisation of Waters;
- The Merchant Shipping Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions Regulations;
- Local Navigation Rules;
- The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations;
- The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen;
- Merchant Shipping Notices and Marine Guidance Notes.

- 6.4.1 The company should draw up simple procedures to ensure that safe working practices are carried out in the operation of the ship. These may be in the form of checklists which can be followed by all personnel.

- 6.4.2 For some ships, it might be appropriate to have permanently exhibited checklists, e.g. in the wheelhouse for navigational items. Alternatively, in a smaller ship, the record could take any suitable form such as a diary as distinct from a specially printed logbook. Whatever form the record takes, such entries should be accepted as evidence of compliance with the **ONBOARD PROCEDURES** requirements.

Lines of communication between personnel, ashore and afloat.

- 6.5 Responsibility and authority of each employee should be clear. This may be best illustrated in a simple diagram, showing who reports to whom.

Procedures for reporting accidents.

- 6.6 The requirement for reporting accidents should be well understood by all personnel and in so doing improve the safety culture practised on board.

Procedures for responding to emergency situations.

6.7 There should be clearly stated procedures for responding to emergency situations. These may include but not be limited to: fire; collision; grounding; violent act; main propulsion or steering failure; and man overboard.

6.7.1 Checklists may be useful in this regard.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTECTION POLICY

7. The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessel (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations, specifically require the appointment of one or more competent persons to take responsibility for health and safety. That person/persons should be identified. It is the responsibility of the owner/operator to ensure that the policy is complied with, and that the responsibilities are understood.

8. The company should develop a policy on prevention of alcohol and drug abuse, in the light of the very strong comments made in the THAMES SAFETY INQUIRY Report by Lord Justice Clarke. Where alcohol is served on board, the policy should also stipulate that no alcohol will be served to persons under 18 years of age.

9. Under the Health and Safety Policy, all personnel both ashore and afloat have a duty to take care of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

10. It is essential that, in the event of an emergency, there is the ability to communicate with the emergency services via a shore base. The shore base may be the company office ashore, the local Coastguard, Police or Fire Station, or another office as may be agreed between the ship and the shore base.

RESPONSIBILITIES

11. The Master must have authority at all times, to make decisions with regard to the safety of the ship and the persons on board. To ensure that there is no ambiguity regarding the authority of the Master, there should be a simple written statement to this effect.

PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

12. All personnel should receive training appropriate to the tasks they undertake. It is the responsibility of the company to ensure that this training is given, and that the personnel have an understanding of the relevant regulations and rules.

13. As a minimum, this means:

- 1) for the Master, the relevant qualifications;
- 2) for the crew, training appropriate to their designated duties.

14. Prior to the first occasion of working on the ship, each employee must receive appropriate familiarisation training and proper instruction in onboard procedures. This could include but not necessarily be limited to:

- mooring and unmooring;
- launching and recovery of survival craft;
- evacuation from all areas of the ship;
- donning of lifejackets; and
- use and handling of fire fighting equipment.

15. Where the ship uses locks or sluice gates, on the job training in this process is essential.

16. Relevant training should also be provided to casual staff – ie not regular “crew” – who may be needed to assist in controlling/guiding passengers in the event of evacuation.

ONBOARD PROCEDURES

17. Simple procedures should be developed for the operation of the ship. These should include, but not be limited to:

- testing of equipment, including steering gear, prior to commencing a passage;
- navigation and handling of the ship;
- maintenance routines;
- bunkering operations;
- watertight integrity;
- stability of the ship; and conduct of passengers and crew while on board.

PREPARATION FOR EMERGENCIES

18. The potential emergencies likely to be encountered by the ship should be considered. Exercises should then be carried out in the handling of these emergencies and evacuation from the ship.
19. Where possible, all personnel should be involved in these exercises, both ashore and afloat. (Refer to MSN 1761, paragraph 6).
20. The roles and responsibilities of all personnel in an emergency situation should be developed in accordance with the principles of the Code.
21. The exercises should be recorded. The names of those who participated should also be recorded.

REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS

22. It is a legal requirement under the Merchant Shipping Act to report all accidents. The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 1994 refer.
23. The regulations apply to all ships. The company must therefore have a procedure in place to report any accident to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) and/or to an office of the MCA. Additionally, all accidents and near accidents should be recorded and reported to the operator, who should implement corrective action, with the aim of improving safety.

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EQUIPMENT

24. Maintenance of the ship and equipment is an essential ingredient of safety management. The equipment should be checked and tested daily when in use; in addition to the tests referred to in the **ONBOARD PROCEDURES** section of the Code.
25. There should be procedures for a more detailed inspection and maintenance programme of the ship and equipment.
26. The frequency of the inspections should be determined by the owner/operator, but every event should be recorded.
27. A checklist could be employed as an aide memoir for the inspection of equipment.

CERTIFICATION

28. Visits to owners' offices might be necessary at the initial audit stage, but will be considered on a case by case basis should the need arise to check additional documentation which is not available. Owner/operators should ensure, therefore, that all necessary documentation is available on board the ship.

REVIEW

29. Every company should undertake a review of the safety management system of all ships at least once in every three years.



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