



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

## MSN 1754 (M)

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

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

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### *Summary*

This notice sets out the instructions regarding safety management of domestic passenger ships of classes III – VI (A).

#### Key points:

- The code is based on general principles and objectives, and expressed in such terms that it can be applied to a wide variety of ships.
- Companies to develop and implement safe practices which include the following:  
a health and safety protection policy;  
procedures to ensure the safe operation of ships in compliance with relevant rules;  
lines of communication between personnel, ashore and afloat;  
procedures for reporting accidents; and  
procedures for responding to emergency situations.
- Companies to ensure that all persons employed in the operation of the ships receive appropriate training for the duties they are required to fulfil.

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Merchant Shipping (Domestic Passenger Ships) (Safety Management Code) Regulations 2001 come into force on 01 November 2001. This Notice is given statutory force by the Regulations, SI 2001/3209, and should be read in conjunction with those Regulations.
2. The Regulations apply to passenger ships of Classes III – VI(A) and introduce the Safety Management Code for Domestic Passenger Ships. The Code is set out in the following paragraphs of this MSN.
3. The Code will apply only to Class III – VI (A) passenger ships and will exclude domestic operators already required to comply with the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.
4. The 'operator' in the regulations means the company, which is defined as the owner or other person assuming responsibility for operating the ship.
5. This Notice describes the objectives of developing a safety management system and how to implement it effectively. The associated MGN 158 (M) provides guidance.

## **OBJECTIVES**

6. The purpose of developing a safety management code is to establish a common standard for the safe operation of passenger ships employed in the domestic trade.
7. It is recognised that no two operations are the same, and that ships vary in size and are employed under a wide range of different locations and conditions. For these reasons, this code is based on general principles and objectives, and expressed in such terms that it can be applied to a wide variety of ships.
8. Safety management shall be applied to every passenger ship in domestic trade. The objectives of safety management are to ensure a simple and cost effective means of:
  - ensuring safety on board;
  - preventing human injury and loss of life;
  - complying with applicable regulations and rules.
9. Each operator shall develop and implement safe practices which include the following:
  - a health and safety protection policy;
  - procedures to ensure safe operation of ships in compliance with relevant rules;
  - lines of communication between personnel, ashore and afloat;
  - procedures for reporting accidents; and
  - procedures for responding to emergency situations.

9a The health and safety protection policy is required to include environmental protection issues only in so far as they relate to the safety of the ship and the health and safety of persons onboard, and to the safety of other ships and the health and safety of persons on those other ships.

Paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 of MGN 158(M) refer to legal requirements as respect to the management of garbage and the prevention of oil pollution, and makes recommendations as to the integration of the management of garbage and oil with the health and safety policy.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTECTION POLICY**

10. The operator shall ensure that the policy is implemented, and that responsibilities of all personnel are understood. There shall be a designated link between the ship and the shore base, to ensure that in the event of an

emergency there is immediate communication with the emergency services.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

11. The Master's responsibility shall be laid down so that there is no misunderstanding. He has the authority to make decisions regarding the safety of the ship and persons on board. Assistance shall be available ashore from the company at all times.
12. The company shall nominate an employee to be the Designated Person. The Designated Person shall have access to the highest level of management of that company, and may fulfill the requirements of paragraph 7 of MGN 158(M).

## **PERSONNEL AND TRAINING**

13. The operator shall ensure that all persons employed in the operation of the ships have received appropriate training for the duties they are required to fulfil and that they have an understanding of the relevant regulations and rules. Masters and crew shall hold the appropriate qualifications.
14. Proper instruction in their duties shall be received by personnel before the first occasion of sailing on the ship as a designated crew member, and as necessary thereafter. This instruction shall be recorded.

## **ONBOARD PROCEDURES**

15. There shall be procedures in place for key shipboard operations with regard to safety. The tasks involved in these procedures shall be assigned to designated personnel.

## **PREPARATION FOR EMERGENCIES**

16. Potential emergency situations shall be identified, and exercises carried out to respond to these emergencies. Where appropriate, these exercises shall involve the personnel ashore. The exercises shall be recorded.

## **REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS**

17. All accidents and near accidents shall be recorded and reported to the operator, who shall implement corrective action, with the aim of improving safety.

18. In addition, the Master shall inform the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) of all accidents in accordance with The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 1999. The MCA shall also be informed, if the accident is such that the validity of the ship's Passenger Certificate (PC) or Domestic Ship Safety Management Certificate (DSSMC) might be affected.

#### MAINTENANCE OF THE SHIP AND EQUIPMENT

19. The operator shall inspect each ship at frequent intervals to ensure that it is properly maintained and operated in accordance with the relevant rules. Deficiencies shall be corrected, and records of inspections kept.

#### CERTIFICATION

20. The initial audit, to assess compliance with the Code, shall be carried out at the same time as each ship is surveyed for issue of the PC. On satisfactory completion of this audit, a DSSMC for each ship, shall be issued. The period of validity of this certificate is subject to a mid-term audit.

21. A mid- term audit, when the ship is in service, shall be carried out between 3 and 6 months after the issue of the PC, to assess whether the safety management system is functioning effectively. If successful, the DSSMC shall be endorsed to this effect and its period of validity shall become the same as that of the PC.

22. Where the in service/mid term audit is unsuccessful, normal enforcement procedures shall be followed to ensure that deficiencies are rectified.

#### FEES

23. For the initial audit, operators shall be charged at the main hourly rate set for services performed by the MCA.

24. Operators shall not be charged for the mid- term audit.

#### EXEMPTIONS

25. Exemptions to these arrangements shall be considered on a case by case basis. In accordance with Recommendation 27.40 of Lord Justice Clarke's Inquiry, exemptions from the provisions of the Code will be granted only on condition that an equivalent level of safety is achieved.

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