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# Benefits of adopting ship-specific procedural systems on vessels where ISM does not apply

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We understand that many of our Members' vessels, due to various reasons such as being less than 500GT, or trading domestically are not required to conform to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and therefore, the International Safety Management (ISM) Code. Even if it is not a regulatory requirement for Members to adopt these systems on their vessels, it is advisable to adopt, as a measure of good practice, a specific procedural system to ensure an adequate level of on board safety and quality. Practically this may not be to the extent required by the ISM Code, which may be disproportional to the vessel size, but one which places procedures and record systems on board that concentrate on identifying any significant risks that may possibly arise.

To ensure Members have in place systems to manage risks, periodical assessments should be made and any procedures expanded/amended as appropriate.

Adopting a practical procedural system on board may assist with:

1. improving safety culture, safety performance, operational reliability and the safe operation of the ship: it is understood that many of our smaller vessels operate within the local harbour limits and/or coastal areas but basic procedures on applicable areas such as navigation, maintenance checks, cargo operations, bunkering and towing should be made available on board. Basic safety procedures concerning daily duties such as company/Master's standing orders must be also produced as well as a simple familiarisation procedures for new joining crew. Members should bear in mind that by operating their vessels in a safe and efficient manner, the reputation of the Members may positively grow which is important in this competitive industry;
2. improving the ability to respond to emergencies, hazards and accident situations: contingency plans to be formulated and emergency drills and trainings, covering all aspects of the vessel's operation are to be carried out at designated intervals, e.g. personal injury, grounding, fire, abandon ship, loss of tow and flooding;
3. identifying non conformities, accidents, significant risks and hazardous incidents: procedures should be in place to ensure

any of these types of events are reported back to the office so that analysis and follow up actions on lessons learnt can be implemented such as formulating permit to work systems and training sessions. This will assist in promoting a positive and strong relationship between both ship and shore management;

4. compliance with local and international mandatory rules, codes and regulations: this includes, where applicable, codes, guidelines, environmental standards and standards recommended by the IMO. Administrations, classification societies and Maritime Authorities;
5. implementation of a certification and document management procedure: once in place this could assist the Member in the smooth administrative running of the vessel and help the vessel comply with requirements noted in point 4 above.

Whereas it is important to ensure that adequate procedures/operational instructions are in place on board, it is equally important to ensure that these are understood by the vessels' crews. To ensure full buy-in from those working on board, Members should ensure their instructions and standards are being complied with by showing full commitment to the safety message they are installing in both their shore side and ship operations. This can be achieved by attending the vessel at regular intervals, performing audits and actively engaging with crew's to gain their perspective and thoughts on developing an efficient and safe working environment.