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IFSMA NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice

Establishing a new floating aid to navigation, Guadalquivir River, Port of Seville, Spain. Photo: Almarin, Grupo Lindley ©.

UNITY FOR SAFETY AT SEA

IFSMA

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Secretary General's Report

Dear All,

I do hope that this foreword to the September Newsletter finds you and your families well as everyone around the world continues the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. These are very difficult times for the marine industry and in an unprecedented show of strength, Ship Owners, Unions and Shipmaster Organisations are all working together to try and get Nations to recognise mariners as key workers and to get crew changes underway effectively. We have now been working constantly at this for over five months and yet we seem to have made little progress. Crew changes have increased, but they are at less than 40% of the average monthly rate and every time we get a new nation signed up to allow crew changes, there seems to be another spike in cases and they close down again. We estimate that there are more than 300,000 mariners who now desperately need to be relieved and the same number ashore desperate to get back to sea to earn some money for their families.

We all remain very concerned about levels of fatigue at sea especially now so many mariners have been at sea in excess of the eleven months allowed by the International Labour Organization's Maritime Labour Convention, some have even been at sea in excess of seventeen months and this is an enormous risk to safety. I therefore wish to draw your attention, yet again, to the letter IFSMA sent to all shipmasters at the beginning of June reminding them of their obligations under international regulations and that if they were concerned about the safety of their crew or their ship, then they had the right to refuse to sail. Indeed there is an obligation to do so and in this event mariner unions and the ITF will be right behind you. Please keep IFSMA informed if you are in any doubt or need advice. This might just be what is required to jolt the nations out of their inward looking inaction.

You will be pleased to hear that finally the IMO in London will resume meetings in the middle of September although this will be by video conferencing until at least the end of 2020. Nevertheless, it will enable us to start to pressure national administrations and force them to listen to our plight. I will once again keep you informed on any progress we make.

Please rest assured that we and the Marine Industry Advisory Group, of which IFSMA is part, and all of the UN Agencies are doing all we can to get these travel restrictions lifted.

Keep well and stay safe.

ITF Seafarers' Trust launches Still At Sea Seafarer Photographer Competition

Towards the end of August the ITF Seafarers Trust launched the Still At Sea photography competition for seafarers. This was reported by Natalie Shaw the ITF's Director, Employment Affairs.

Open to currently serving seafarers with a 1st prize of £1000, seafarers are invited to submit digital photos of their lives at sea during the pandemic. With around 90% of global trade transported by ships, seafarers have continued working throughout the pandemic. However, the impact of travel restrictions, quarantine requirements and lack of flights have trapped some 300,000 seafarers aboard ship, with many being ashore for many months, unable to go home.

The competition aims to give a voice to these forgotten keyworkers, and show the world the realities they face as they supply the world with the raw materials and consumer goods that keep hospitals running, power stations pumping and shipping essential consumer goods.

Dave Heindel, ITF Seafarers' Trust Chair commented: '*As Covid-19 has ravaged nations, seafarers have continued working uninterrupted. Many have not been ashore for months on end, some for well over a year.*

'*A photograph needs no translation to share its story and the competition is a platform for seafarers to show the wider world the realities of life stuck onboard*.'

Katie Higginbottom, Head of the ITF Seafarers' Trust added: '*At the beginning of the pandemic seafarers were relatively safe at sea but worried for their families. However, months have passed and hundreds of thousands of seafarers are still stuck at sea. This is a chance for seafarers, hidden but vital global keyworkers, to share their lives with the people who unknowingly rely on them*.'

Seafarers are invited to submit their photographs on the competition's website https://tinyurl.com/y69avk5v up to 30 September 2020.

The winning photographs will be announced on the Trust's Facebook page on 30 October 2020 and digital and physical exhibitions of submissions are planned to follow.

From the Editor

UK's autonomous vessel work continues

In the UK the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) reported on 19 August that it was aiming to build on the recent successful 22-day data collection mission of a remotely operated vessel.

This passage, during which the SEA-KIT unmanned vessel Maxlimer surveyed previously uncharted waters, is an indication of great progress in the field of autonomous shipping.

It is understood that the MCA, through the MARLab project and as part of the wider work of the Maritime Future Technologies team, is working on a long-term plan to establish how autonomous vessels can be best regulated.

Dr Katrina Kemp, Smart Ships & Automation Policy Officer for the MCA commented: '*This was a really exciting journey….*'*We believe that autonomous shipping will play an important role in the future of maritime in terms of reducing carbon emissions by using less fuel and allowing vessels to go to places or situations where people may be put at risk*.'

MCA ensured the necessary certification was obtained provided a waiver, which allowed the passage to take place unmanned with Load Line Exemption.

The IMO digest

A summary of some of the news received from the IMO Media service in recent weeks.

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IMO informal discussions focus on cutting shipping's carbon intensity

IMO facilitated virtual informal discussion sessions from 6-10 July on short-term greenhouse gas reduction measures for international shipping and their associated impact assessments. This was reported by the IMO Media service.

These sessions provided a platform for all IMO Member States and organizations in consultative status with IMO to exchange views and share updated information on various technical and operational proposals to reduce the carbon intensity of international shipping by at least 40% by 2030, in line with IMO's Initial GHG Strategy.

Carbon intensity refers to CO_2 emissions per transport work, and therefore links carbon emissions to the amount of cargo transported and the distance sailed for a specific ship.

Keen interest demonstrated

The constructive atmosphere demonstrated a keen interest to progress work on a mutually acceptable package of further amendments to IMO's MARPOL Annex VI treaty, which already includes energy efficiency measures for shipping. Such future amendments could combine technical and operational approaches to improve the energy efficiency of ships, with a specific reference to carbon intensity.

The webinar-like discussion sessions, attended by more than 350 participants, contributed to increasing the understanding of the various proposals for concrete measures to reduce carbon intensity and their potential impacts on States.

The sessions were arranged ahead of the postponed Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 7) and Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 75). It is hoped that both the ISWG-GHG and MEPC will be able to be held later this year.

IMO and increased maritime security and economic growth

Kenya

An ambitious roadmap to develop a National Maritime Security Strategy for Kenya has been agreed following an inaugural virtual meeting held on 21 July and organised by IMO.

When in place, the strategy will bring significant opportunities for social-economic growth, by safeguarding and promoting the blue economy and by providing a safe and secure operating environment for international maritime transportation, it is understood.

According to a *communiqué* issued by IMO on 24 July the meeting was attended by 16 participants, representing maritime stakeholders from all relevant ministries and agencies of Kenya.

National Maritime Security Committee

Delegates discussed the best way forward in developing the strategy and establishing a National Maritime Security Committee, with the technical assistance of IMO.

Participants agreed on the need for an holistic approach, noting that the response to national maritime security threats must be multi-faceted.

National strategy; State's obligations

Establishment of a national strategy is in line with Kenya's obligations under article three of the Jeddah Amendment[1] to the Djibouti Code of Conduct[2]. It is also in line with Chapter XI-2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)[3], the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS)[4] and other IMO instruments.

Nancy Karigithu, Principal Secretary of the State Department for Shipping and Maritime Affairs, opened the meeting and highlighted the key opportunities that a National Maritime Security Strategy could provide for Kenya.

Photo: www.kpa.co.ke ©

1 https://tinyurl.com/y62qa55q

2 https://tinyurl.com/y3hok7ho

3 https://tinyurl.com/yygncegu

4 https://tinyurl.com/y5zpsxzz

IMO on Digitalization of shipping – more important than ever

Digitalization, big data, and new technologies such as artificial intelligence are key in enabling the post-COVID recovery, IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim told a 28 July webinar on Digital Connectivity and Data Standards[1].

He commented: '*Cooperation between shipping, ports and logistics will be vital for enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of shipping and therefore facilitating trade and fostering economic recovery and prosperity*.'

He highlighted IMO's key role in ensuring shipping can embrace the digital revolution – while ensuring safety, environmental protection as well as cyber security.

He added: '*Digitalization and new technologies will also be the key to allowing standardization and therefore enhancing the efficiency of shipping*.' (Readers may find the full speech below.[2]) These extracts and other details were provided in a Media briefing from IMO on 28 July.

The need for standardization was also highlighted by IMO's Facilitation Head, Julian Abril, who noted the mandatory requirement for electronic data exchange in the Facilitation Convention, effective since April 2019.

Discussions were then underway (late July) towards making a single maritime window mandatory – so that all data for arrival and departure of ships is submitted through a single point and transmitted to the relevant agencies involved.

Standardization and harmonization needed for this to happen is captured in the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business[3], a tool for software developers that harmonises the data elements required for regulatory purposes during a port call and standardises electronic messages, reducing the administrative burden for ships linked to formalities in ports.

It is understood that the goal is to make it easier for companies involved in maritime trade or transport to create software that can communicate, no matter on which standard they are based.

Cooperation, communication and collaboration between the various stakeholders to maintain and further develop the compendium, as well as looking into expanding its data set and data model to areas beyond the FAL Convention, has been formalised in a partnership agreement signed in March 2020 between IMO, the World Customs Organization[4], the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe[5] and the International Organization for Standardization[6].

The webinar on 28 July on Digital Connectivity and Data Standards was organized by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, the first in a maritime perspectives webinar series.

1 https://tinyurl.com/y32sbj6b
2 https://tinyurl.com/y5p8v8gj
3 https://tinyurl.com/y6jaw7x6
4 www.wcoomd.org
5 www.unece.org
6 www.iso.org

Eight IMO Member States come together

Autonomous ships/ports interface

MASSPorts

Trials of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) will be key towards developing an appropriate regulatory regime that addresses the specific challenges of autonomous ships.

Eight IMO Member States* have come together to form the MASSPorts, an initiative promoted by Singapore to address the challenges and achieve alignment of standards for the trials and operation of MASS in ports. This was reported by IMO on 5 August.

The IMO Secretariat joined the initiative's virtual discussions at its first meeting on 4 August, where objectives including detailed guidelines, common terminology, ship reporting and data exchange, and facilitating port-to-port trials were set out.

To learn more readers are invited to see here:
https://tinyurl.com/y3n97dl4

*China, Denmark, Finland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, and Singapore.

IMO assists in mv *Wakashio* oil spill response

On 11 August the IMO reported that it had joined international efforts to assist the Government of Mauritius, following an oil leak from the bulk carrier mv *Wakashio*, which ran aground on 25 July off Pointe d'Esny natural area, south-eastern coast of Mauritius.

IMO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Joint Environment Unit have jointly deployed an oil spill response expert. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and border closures in Mauritius, the expert was (on 11 August) awaiting onward travel via specially chartered UN flight from Nairobi, following COVID tests.

Photo: ESA Sentinel / IMO ©.

Approximately 3,894 tonnes of low-sulphur fuel oil, 207 tonnes of diesel and 90 tonnes of lubricant oil were on board the *Wakashio*. An amount of oil leaked following severe weather.

It is understood that the affected area is located in a very sensitive zone that includes the Blue Bay Marine Park, Iles aux Aigrettes, and the Ramsar sites.

At the time of writing (11 August) satellite mapping support was being sought from UNOSAT, to provide an indication of the extent of the spill and to inform the response effort.

Alongside IMO and OCHA, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Mauritius and the International Tanker Owners' Pollution Federation (ITOPF) were also mobilising environmental and oil spill experts.

A number of countries, including France and Japan, are currently assisting Mauritius, which has activated its national oil spill contingency plan.

IMO is supporting the Government of Mauritius by providing technical advice on oil spill response issues and in the coordination of assistance.

Just In Time Arrival Guide issued

Supporting smarter, more efficient shipping

A new Just In Time Arrival Guide which aims to provide port and shipping sectors with practical guidance on how to facilitate Just In Time Arrivals has been released. This was reported by IMO on 11 August. It is a privilege to report that our input at IFSMA is acknowledged in the introductory pages of the publication.

To download the Guide readers are invited to see the IMO web link here: https://tinyurl.com/y6e5fam8

Global Industry Alliance

This Guide has been developed by the Global Industry Alliance to support low carbon shipping (Low Carbon GIA), based on research and discussion amongst its membership, and the Guide documents the findings of a series of industry roundtables which brought together nearly 50 companies and organizations key stakeholders in the port call process.

Widely recognized as a means of increasing port efficiency and port call optimization, the successful implementation of JIT Arrivals can have a significant environmental impact through reduced GHG emissions from optimizing the ship's speed to arrive just in time. The concept is based on the ship maintaining an optimal operating speed, to arrive at the Pilot Boarding Place when the availability is assured of:

1. Berth;
2. Fairway;
3. Nautical services (pilots, tugs, linesmen).

JIT Arrivals also contributes to reduced time at anchorage and therefore reduced congestion in the port area. It is estimated that ships spend up to 9% of their time waiting at anchorage, which could be reduced through the implementation of JIT Arrivals.

This Guide provides a holistic approach to Just In Time Arrivals, considering contractual and operational aspects to its implementation. The Guide is envisaged as a useful toolkit for many stakeholders including ship owners, ship operators, charterers, ship agents, ship brokers, port authorities, terminals, nautical and vessel service providers. All these actors ultimately play a key role in implementing the necessary changes and facilitating exchange of communication required to realize JIT Arrivals.

Guidance for all shipping segments

The Guide provides guidance for all shipping segments. However, it suggests that JIT Arrivals could be implemented for the container segment first, as there are fewer contractual barriers and containerships often run on more predictable schedules with shorter port to port distances.

The Guide then provides next steps on how efforts can be scaled-up, replicated and adapted, with a view to implementing JIT Arrivals across other sectors.

Furthermore, the Guide considers in detail the port call business process, and how the exchange of key information and data that is required for JIT Arrivals can be improved. It highlights the need for harmonized standards, acceptable to the IMO, and their implementation by all stakeholders involved in the port call process. The work is aligned with recent developments achieved by IMO's Expert Group of Data Harmonization (EGDH), which agreed to include new operational data elements in the IMO Reference Data Model which relate to the concept of Just In Time Arrival. The additional dataset is expected to be approved by IMO's Facilitation Committee. This is seen as an important step towards facilitating the implementation of the JIT concept and will allow for digital exchange of data between the port and ship. Such exchange is in line with IMO Resolution MEPC.323(74), which invites Member States to encourage cooperation between the shipping and port sectors to contribute to reducing GHG emissions.

Global Industry Alliance to support low carbon shipping (Low Carbon GIA)

The Low Carbon GIA is a public–private partnership with the aim to identify and develop innovative solutions to address common barriers to the uptake and implementation of energy efficiency technologies and operational measures.

The Low Carbon GIA was originally established under the framework of the GEF-UNDP-IMO Global Maritime Energy Efficiency Partnerships Project (GloMEEP Project), and since the conclusion of the GloMEEP Project at the end of 2019, the Low Carbon GIA has been operating under the framework of the IMO-Norway GreenVoyage2050 Project.

IMO assists efforts to prevent an oil spill from FSO *Safer*

IMO reported on 14 August that it was contributing to international efforts aimed at preventing an oil spill from the deteriorating floating storage and offloading unit FSO *Safer* moored off the coast of Yemen. The Organisation added that it was leading on the contingency planning efforts aimed at enhancing preparedness to mitigate the environmental impacts of a potential spill.

A technical expert was mobilised to develop a contingency plan based on a variety of risk scenarios, which would play a key role in improving the efficiency, effectiveness and management of emergency response operations in the event of a spill from the FSO.

It is understood that the contingency plan will outline the roles and responsibilities of key players and assist in coordinating the response. It will also clarify equipment requirements and locations of stockpiles and identify priority areas. IMO will also provide training to the relevant players. Further it was reported that the expert was currently (14 August) working remotely in close communication with all relevant stakeholders.

IMO is offering technical advice to support the joint international efforts, led by the wider UN family*, to assess the condition of FSO *Safer* and examine ways to secure the 150,000 MT of light crude oil currently on board.

Following recent reports of water entering the engine room, it was considered that the risk of an oil spill from the FSO *Safer* increased. The floating storage and offloading unit, moored off the coast of Yemen, has not been inspected or maintained since 2015, leading to serious concerns about its integrity, it was reported.

In the words of Patricia Charlebois, Deputy Director, Subdivision for Implementation at IMO: '*While IMO is proactively working on contingency planning, it is hoped that international efforts will succeed in paving the way to assessing the state of the FSO and taking necessary measures, in order to prevent an oil spill from occurring*.

'*In the case of oil spills, prevention is always better than cure. However, should these efforts fail, we want to ensure adequate preparedness measures are in place*.'

Ms Charlebois highlighted that the situation is particularly complex due to conflict in the region and the COVID-19 pandemic.

*The UN entities involved include: OCHA, UN Environment, UNOPS and the Office of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen.

Ship recycling in Bangladesh

Third phase of key project signed

A leap forward

The third phase of an IMO-implemented project to enhance safe and environmentally sound ship recycling in Bangladesh has been given the go-ahead, with Norway committing approximately US$1.5 million (NOK 14 million) to support improved ship recycling in Bangladesh. This was reported by the IMO Media service in a briefing early in August.

SENSREC

The agreement between IMO and the Government of Norway to support Phase III of the project on Safe and Environmentally Sound Ship Recycling in Bangladesh (SENSREC) was signed on 24 July. This will pave the way for Bangladesh to move forward on its path towards becoming a party to the IMO Hong Kong Convention[1], the treaty that will set global standards for safe and environmentally-sound ship recycling.

The Agreement follows the successful implementation of Phase I (2015-2017) and Phase II (2018 - 2020) of the SENSREC Project, both mainly funded by Norway. With the additional funding, Phase III of the project will be implemented over 18 months, starting from November 2020.

SENSREC Phase III will focus on improving ship recycling standards in compliance with the Hong Kong Convention and enhancing capacity building for the Government of Bangladesh on legislation and knowledge management. Specific technical assistance will be provided to the Government of Bangladesh to establish a facility for treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous wastes. There will also be a focus on evaluating the impact of Covid-19 on the ship recycling industry in Bangladesh.

Significant progress

HE The Ambassador of Norway to Bangladesh, Sidsel Bleken, said that the SENSREC Project had already achieved significant progress, thanks to the commitment of the Government authorities as well as the ship-recycling industry of Bangladesh. She commented: '*Norway is pleased to extend its support to Bangladesh and our thanks go to IMO for their important role in this Project. Through IMO, we will continue to support the authorities, the industry,*

and other stakeholders in strengthening their efforts to develop Bangladesh's ship-recycling industry and the country's economy. We hope to see more yards complying with the requirements of the Hong Kong Convention, so that Bangladesh can be ready to accede to the Convention in the soonest possible time.'

The Agreement was signed by Her Excellency and by IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim.

Thanking the Government of Norway for their generous contribution, Lim said, '*The continuation of this project will greatly enhance national capacities for Bangladesh for safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships.*

'*The success of this Phase III of the project will be seen in the crucial technical assistance role that will support the goals of Bangladesh to establish a facility for treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous wastes and ultimately support its aim to accede to the Hong Kong Convention*.'

The Hong Kong Convention

The Hong Kong Convention covers the design, construction, operation and maintenance of ships to ensure they can be recycled safely and in an environment-friendly way at the end of their lives. It also deals with how ships should be prepared for their final voyage to a recycling facility, without compromising their safety or operational efficiency.

Under the Hong Kong Convention, ships sent for recycling are required to carry an inventory of all hazardous materials on board. Ship recycling facilities are required to provide a Ship Recycling Plan, specifying how each ship will be recycled, based on its particular characteristics and its inventory of hazardous materials.

The treaty will enter into force 24 months after three separate criteria have been met. It must be ratified by 15 States – but these States must represent 40% of world merchant shipping by gross tonnage, and a combined maximum annual ship recycling volume (during the preceding ten years) of not less than 3% of their combined gross tonnage.

The number of States[2] required to ratify has now been reached, but further tonnage and recycling volumes are needed before the convention can enter into force.

The top five ship recycling countries in the world, between them accounting for more than 98% of all ship recycling by gross tonnage, are Bangladesh, China, India, Pakistan and Turkey (of these, two are already Parties to the Hong Kong Convention: India and Turkey).

[1]The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009. See here: https://tinyurl.com/yxwbnxew

[2]The Contracting States as at 28 July 2020 are: Belgium, Congo, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Serbia and Turkey. Between them they represent nearly 30% of world merchant shipping tonnage.

World Maritime Day 2020 and 2021

Celebration of 2020 World Maritime Day

In 2020, the tenth in the series of the Day of the Seafarer has the theme ***Sustainable shipping for a sustainable planet***. This will be celebrated on 24 September with an online event organized by the IMO Secretariat.

For background on the theme see here: https://tinyurl.com/y3nd75k9

The 2020 Parallel Event has been cancelled due to the pandemic.

2021 World Maritime Day

Seafarers: at the core of shipping's future has been selected as the World Maritime theme for 2021, reflecting a clear need to raise awareness of seafarers' vital role in world trade and increase their visibility.

The 2021 Parallel Event will be held in South Africa.

A briefing on the 2021 celebration is available here: https://tinyurl.com/y5xdb4hu

Meeting for its 32nd Extraordinary Session held by correspondence, the IMO Council endorsed the 2021 theme following a proposal by IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim.

Focus on seafarers comes as the COVID-19 pandemic has placed extraordinary and unprecedented demands on

seafarers. Hundreds of thousands faced and are still facing extended sea times, going months at sea without seeing families and loved ones.

Without doubt the crew change crisis in 2020 has highlighted seafarers' exceptional contribution as key and essential workers, on the front line of delivering world trade through a pandemic and in ordinary times.

This theme will provide flexibility to the IMO Secretariat, Member States and NGOs in consultative status to focus on seafarers as the people at the heart of shipping, while also allowing for activities to delve into specific topics relevant to the role of the seafarer in: safety, maritime security, environmental protection and seafarers' well-being and the future of seafaring against a backdrop of increased digitalization and automation.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The World Maritime theme for 2021 also links to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly SDG 4 on education and training; SDG 8 related to decent work; SDG 9 on innovation and industry, which links to the promotion of a resilient maritime sector; and SDG 5 on gender equality, linked to efforts to promote seafaring as a career for all, including women, in particular.

Moreover, the 2021 theme can be viewed as an extension of the theme for 2020, namely ***Sustainable Shipping for a Sustainable Planet*** as seafarers are at the core of that theme.

The Nautical Institute elects new President

The newly elected President of The Nautical Institute, Jillian Carson-Jackson has vowed to help the Institute and the wider maritime community meet three important challenges – those of diversity and inclusion, branch engagement and managing the impact of technology.

Speaking at the Nautical Institute Annual General Meeting on 2 July she announced a pledge from the Institute on diversity and inclusion saying: '*There has been a concerted effort over the past years to raise visibility of not just women, but the overall role of diversity and inclusion in maritime. The pledge of the Institute, as a global body for maritime professionals, is to show its commitment to encourage, support and celebrate a diverse and inclusive maritime industry*.'

Jillian Carson-Jackson, FNI, FRIN commenced her career in the Canadian Coast Guard, graduating from the Canadian Coast Guard College as a navigation officer. With over three decades in the industry, Jillian has worked both afloat and ashore in the CCG, including ten years as an instructor at the CCG College.

Following an active role at IALA in the development of VTS Training, she moved to France to work with IALA as Technical Coordination Manager. She then moved to Australia to work with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) as Manager of Vessel Traffic and Pilotage Services.

In 2016 Jillian left AMSA to set up her own consultancy, focusing on maritime technical advice and education. In May 2020 Jillian was appointed a Director of GlobalMET. Jillian represents The Nautical Institute at IALA as chair of the Emerging Digital Technologies Working Group (ENAV Committee) and the Personnel and Training Working Group (VTS Committee).

Mental health awareness and wellbeing

UK-based maritime charities launch training standard

In the UK the Maritime Charities Group, a coalition of ten major maritime charities, has joined forces with the Merchant Navy Training Board to publish a good practice guide to designing a training course for seafarers on mental health and wellbeing awareness.

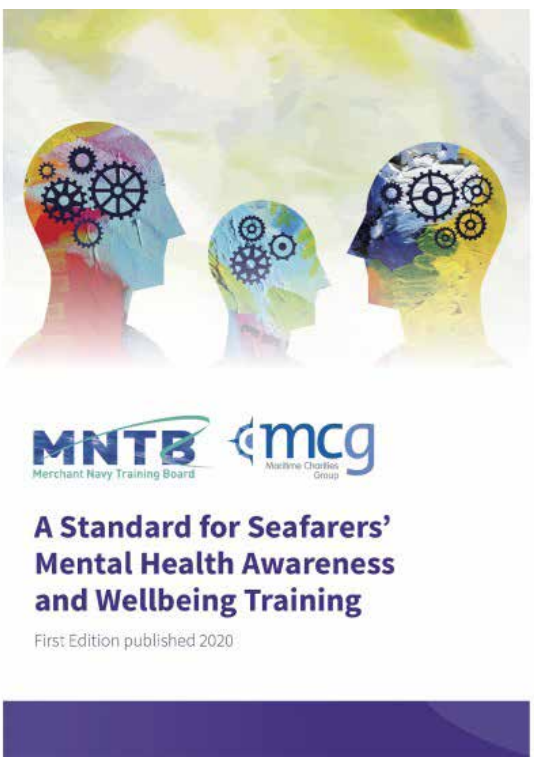
Written by experts from the maritime and education sectors in response to the growing mental health crisis amongst seafarers, the new Seafarers' Mental Health Awareness and Wellbeing Training Standard* was launched on 7 July, during Seafarers Awareness Week, with widespread endorsement from key stakeholder groups.

Author of the guide, Master Mariner and academic, Dr

Chris Haughton, explained why the Standard is needed: '*Mental health awareness training is needed now more than ever and there are many reputable providers offering really good training courses. But the majority of those courses are generic and really don't address the specific issues facing seafarers. If you're working at sea you need a course that's much more targeted otherwise it just won't be relevant. That's why we've developed the Standard, setting out clearly what a good training course should cover*.'

Benchmark for training

Aimed at prospective buyers of training courses as well as potential participants, the Standard sets a benchmark for training that aims to develop a keen awareness and appreciation of mental health and wellbeing amongst all types of seafarer, as well as those with an interest in seafaring. It includes course content, delivery and the qualification requirements of course facilitators.



MCG member the Seafarers' Hospital Society took a leading role in the work. They were concerned about the proliferation of mental health awareness training courses of varying quality that did not address the specific issues faced by seafarers due to the nature of their work. The Society approached the MCG for help in bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to agree a way forward and the Standard was the result.

Reflecting on the collaborative effort that went into developing the Standard, Commander Graham Hockley and Chair of the MCG, said: '*One in four people will develop a mental health problem during their lifetime, but the incidence amongst seafarers is much higher.*

'*The Covid-19 crisis has made the situation for seafarers even worse so now is exactly the right time to publish this guide. We are incredibly grateful to the members of our working group, without whom this would not have been possible. They include training providers, shipping companies, the MCA, MNTB, Trade Unions, maritime charities and academics – all working together in the interests of seafarers' mental health and wellbeing*.'

Widespread endorsement

There is widespread endorsement for the Standard from academics, trainers and industry alike.

Welcoming the initiative shipping industry representative, Bob Sanguinetti, CEO of the UK Chamber of Shipping said: '*We are delighted to be working with the MCG to make this Standard available. Whilst it may not be mandatory, it is certainly advisory and we would encourage all ship owners and training providers to adopt it.*

'*The crew have an important role to play here too. Everyone who signs up to a training course on mental health and wellbeing awareness needs to look for the MCG and MNTB logos. That's the only way they can be assured the course will meet their specific needs and be delivered by someone who understands the environment they work in*.'

The Standard is being published by MNTB and is available from maritime publishers Witherbys for a nominal £10 fee. To purchase a copy readers are invited to take a look here: https://tinyurl.com/yxtts3pu

**A Standard for Seafarers' Mental Health Awareness and Wellbeing Training*,*

First edition published June 2020.

ClassNK releases Annual Report on Port State Control

On 2 July Classification Society ClassNK released its annual report on Port State Control.

This report aims to assist ship operators and management companies in maintaining compliant operations by providing information about ships detained by PSC as well as deficiencies that were found on board from many port states in 2019.

In line with the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, PSC inspections ensure that vessels departing the port meet international standards and have proved to be highly effective in eliminating substandard ships that are in operation. They oversee not only the hardware of a ship, but also the software by examining the maintenance and operational methods being used.

In addition to various figures, status of implementation and recent developments in PSC worldwide are included. For example, in relation to EU-MRV regulation a ship which has not carried out any EEA-related voyages is not required to have a Document of Compliance (DOC) onboard for a specific period, while it was reported that the reason

for not having the DOC might be confirmed by a port authority when calling at ports under the jurisdiction of an EU member state, and it is recommended to prepare to show past voyage record.

The PDF version of the Port State Control Annual Report can be downloaded at no charge accessing the ClassNK website via the link here: https://tinyurl.com/ya5983uv

Promoting navigation safety in the Middle East

MENAS at LISW21

On 8 July organisers of London International Shipping Week (LISW) announced that the International Foundation for Aids to Navigation (IFAN*) is to be a Supporting Organisation of London International Shipping Week 2021 (LISW21).

Support for LISW21 from the UK and international shipping and maritime communities as well as Government has been overwhelming, it is reported, and IFAN will use the week-long event as a platform to promote the importance of navigational safety in the Middle East.

Total reliance on payments of dues

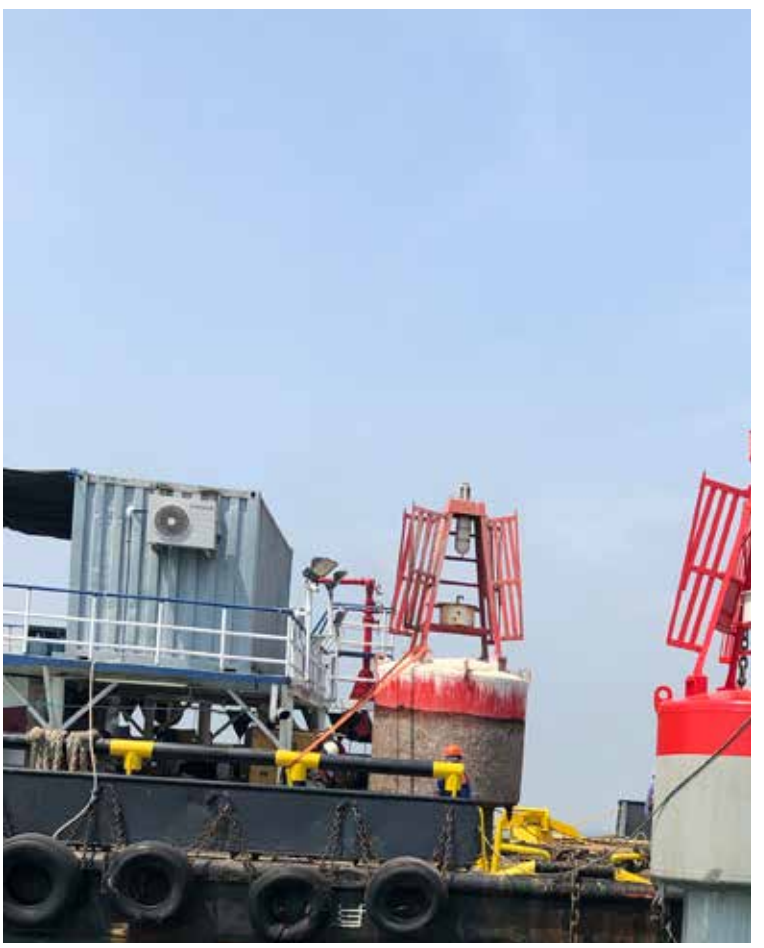
The Middle East Navigation Aids Service (MENAS), a subsidiary of IFAN, has been providing navigational services since 1911 as no state owns the aids to navigation in the joint waters of the Persian Gulf. This service is funded exclusively by navigation dues and it is reported by IFAN that the sustainability of the existing service on which the shipping industry depends is totally reliant on receipt of these payments.

Operating from its main base in Bahrain and a support base in Abu Dhabi, MENAS owns and maintains an extensive network of 58 buoys, lighthouses and DGPS transmitters, mostly located in remote areas more than 12 nautical miles from the shore, and generally in hazardous areas such as narrow waterways leading to main ports.

Peter Stanley, CEO of IFAN, commented: '*We are delighted to be a Supporting Organisation for LISW21 and IFAN is looking forward to discussing navigational safety in the Middle East with ship owners and the wider industry to highlight its importance*.'

LISW21, which will be held in the week of September 13-17, 2021, has already received the support of over 100 international shipping trade associations together with the UK Government, Royal Navy and the UK domestic shipping and maritime sectors. At LISW19 20,000 visitors attended.

Further information about LISW21 can be found on the dedicated event website here:
www.londoninternationalshippingweek.com



Buoy servicing by MENAS.

Illustration courtesy of MENAS ©

*See here: www.ifan-maritime.org

De Beers and the world's largest diamond recovery vessel

ABB to power

It was reported from Zurich on 13 July that ABB had won a contract from Damen Shipyards Group to deliver an advanced power system for the world's first custom-built diamond recovery vessel.

ABB will supply an integrated power train that to ensure the world's largest and most technologically advanced diamond recovery vessel meets exceptional safety, efficiency and availability requirements. The vessel, yet to be named, is currently under construction at Damen Shipyards Mangalia on the Black Sea coast of Romania. Financial details of the order were not disclosed.

There was much interest shown in this vessel earlier in the year when it was reported that the ship's electrical fit would be by Alewijnse* and industry experts observed closely the unique South West African evolution and design of De Beers fleet

De Beers leads

With a total cost of $468 million, the vessel is said to be the largest single investment ever made in the marine diamond industry. It will deploy advanced subsea crawling – a technique for recovering diamonds from the seabed. This newbuild will be delivered to Debmarine Namibia, a joint venture between the Government of the Republic of Namibia and De Beers Group in 2022.

De Beers Group is the world's leading diamond company, with unrivalled expertise in the exploration, mining and marketing of rough diamonds, driving it forward since 1888.

Namibia's riches

Namibia has the richest known marine diamond deposits in the world, with Debmarine Namibia extracting some of the highest quality diamonds available anywhere in a depth of water of between 90-150 metres off the country's SW coast. Traditionally, onshore diamond mining in Namibia is achieved in open-cast mines, however, with the country's land-based output expected to run out in 15 years, offshore mining is on the rise.

Marin Teknikk design

Of 177 metre loa this vessel has been designed by renowned Norwegian naval architects Marin Teknikk. It will become the largest vessel in the owner's fleet, exceeding the size of Debmarine Namibia's current largest, *Mafuta*, by 8,000 tons displacement. It is expected to increase the shipowner's annual production by 35%, contributing additional 500,000 carats to today's production levels.

De Beers has previously installed ABB's power systems in mv SS *Nujoma* (SSN), Debmarine Namibia's deep-water diamond exploration and sampling vessel.

In the words of Michael Curtis, who is heading the newbuild project for Debmarine Namibia: '*The success of the SSN, with high reliability, efficient positioning and low fuel consumption coupled with safe operation, was instrumental in selecting the same systems for the new diamond recovery vessel, with ABB's power systems being an integral part of the solution.*'

Unsurpassed uptime forecast

ABB's latest technology will ensure that the vessel achieves unsurpassed uptime. In addition to the advanced system for power generation, distribution and variable speed drive propulsion systems, the installation includes a large online double-conversion marine uninterruptible power supply (MUPS) to support the ship's vital control processes, significantly reducing the risk of critical power loss and downtime.

For De Beers the world's first custom-built diamond recovery vessel.

Illustration: Marin Teknikk AS ©

Undisrupted availability

ABB's MUPS is designed for undisrupted availability, ensuring power backup for the vessel's onboard control systems of the subsea-crawler and processing plant that sorts through sediment lifted from the seabed to extract diamonds. ABB's advanced and tightly integrated power system will help optimize engine loading, as well as reduce running hours and fuel costs, and decrease maintenance needs.

Mark Vermeulen managing director Damen Offshore & Transport added: *'ABB is trusted globally as a leading technology company capable of delivering solutions for advanced and complex custom-built vessels. We are delighted to be working with them as part of a landmark newbuilding project for both companies*.'

Juha Koskela, Managing Director, ABB Marine & Ports concluded with: '*This is a truly special ship, packed with sophisticated technology, and a project demanding an especially close relationship with the customer to ensure that optimal solutions were delivered for exact specifications*.

'*We are thrilled to see that the team behind this advanced vessel recognizes the benefits of efficiency, safety and uptime available through integration. This success is also consistent with growing traction for ABB's electric, digital and connected solutions across an increasing number of vessel types and operational profiles*.'

*See www.alewijnse.com

Crew kidnappings surge in seas off West Africa

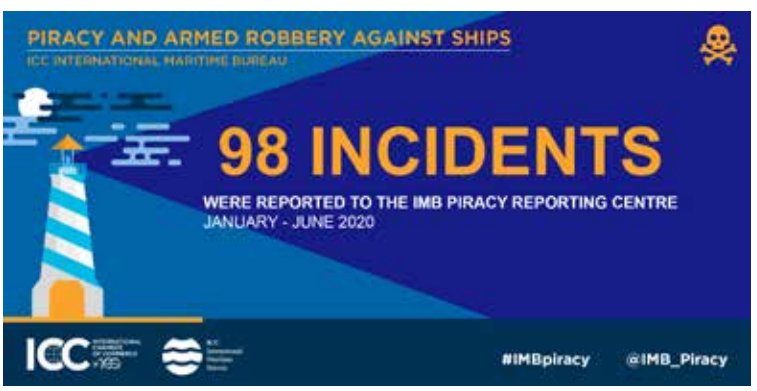
IMB reports

Violent attacks against ships and their crews have risen in 2020, with 77 seafarers taken hostage or kidnapped for ransom since January, reveals the ICC International Maritime Bureau's latest piracy report issued on 15 July. (see here: https://www.icc-ccs.org/)

The Gulf of Guinea is increasingly dangerous for commercial shipping, accounting for just over 90% of maritime kidnappings worldwide. Meanwhile ship hijackings are at their lowest since 1993.

In total, IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) recorded 98 incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the first half of 2020, up from 78 in Q2 2019.

The increasing threat of piracy adds to hardships already faced by hundreds of thousands of seafarers working beyond their contractual periods due to COVID-19 restrictions on crew rotations and international travel.



IMB Director Michael Howlett commented: '*Violence against crews is a growing risk in a workforce already under immense pressure. In the Gulf of Guinea attackers armed with knives and guns now target crews on every type of vessel. Everyone's vulnerable*.'

So far this year, 49 crew have been kidnapped for ransom in the Gulf of Guinea and held captive on land for up to six weeks. Rates are accelerating, with 32 crew kidnapped in the past three months alone. And they are happening further out to sea: two-thirds of the vessels were attacked on the high seas from around 20 to 130 nautical miles off the Gulf of Guinea coastline.

IMB PRC urges vessels to report any attacks promptly. It can then liaise with coastal agencies, naval forces and vessel operators, encouraging a quick response to deter piracy and armed robbery and improve the security of seafarers. The Piracy Reporting Centre also broadcasts to shipping via GMDSS Safety Net Services and email alerts to Company Security Officers.

Howlett added: '*We need to change the risk-to-reward ratio for pirates operating within the Gulf of Guinea. Without an appropriate and proportionate deterrent, pirates and robbers will get more ruthless and more ambitious, increasing the risk to seafarers*.'

In one recent case commended by IMB, the Nigerian Navy responded promptly to a distress call from a fishing vessel boarded and hijacked by armed assailants in Ivory Coast waters. As a result the crew were saved and the ship was prevented from being used as a possible mother vessel to carry out further attacks.

In another incident, a product tanker was attacked while underway around 127 nautical miles off Bayelsa, Nigeria. Eight armed pirates kidnapped ten crew as well as stealing cash, personal valuables, and ship's property. IMB PRC contacted regional and international authorities, and a Nigerian Navy Security Vessel was dispatched. A nearby sister vessel helped the four remaining crewmembers to sail the tanker to a safe port. The kidnapped crew were released three weeks later.

Singapore Straits

The Singapore Straits saw eleven incidents in the first half of 2020, raising the risk of collisions in this busy channel, especially at night. Although most are opportunistic, low-level attacks that are aborted once the alarm is sounded, two reports in May 2020 indicated crew were threatened with knives, taken hostage and injured.

There were ten attacks in Indonesian anchorages and waterways in Q2 2020, up from five in Q1 2020.

Americas – Call for more reporting

IMB is recording more incidents in new areas of Latin America, but says many further attacks go unreported, making the problem more difficult to tackle.

The four attacks that were reported in Mexico all targeted offshore vessels, and all happened within a span of eleven days in April. One anchored accommodation barge was

boarded by six people wearing face masks and armed with automatic weapons and pistols. They attempted to enter, and opened fire, injuring a crewmember and damaging three windows. The Master raised the alarm, sent a distress message, informed the CSO, and the crew mustered in the citadel. The incident was reported to the Marine Control via VHF Ch16 and a naval boat was dispatched, but the attackers escaped with the barge's high value project equipment.

Incidents continue to be reported off Callao anchorage, Peru. Meanwhile, vessels off neighbouring Ecuador have recorded incidents each year since 2017, with at least three container ships attacked while underway in Q2 2020. In one case, two crew were taken hostage for the duration of the robbery and in another the perpetrators fired on the ship when they were unable to gain access.

Somalia

No incidents were reported off Somalia. Vessels are urged to continue implementing BMP5 recommended practices while transiting these waters. The Somali pirates still maintain the capability for carrying out attacks.

Near miss between ferry and RN submarine

(UK) Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) report

Summary

At 1256 on 6 November 2018, *Stena Superfast VII*'s officer of the watch took urgent action to avoid a submerged submarine after its periscope had been spotted close ahead of the ro-ro ferry. The incident took place in the North Channel, crossing from Belfast, Northern Ireland to Cairnryan, Scotland, a very busy ferry route.

Post-event analysis showed that, prior to the ferry's course alteration, there had been a serious risk of collision. This near miss happened because the submarine's control room team had underestimated the ferry's speed and overestimated its range, resulting in an unsafe situation developing.

However, the submarine's control room electronic tactical display presented a picture of a safer situation than reality; this meant that safety-critical decisions made on board the submarine may have appeared rational at the time.

The MAIB report was issued at 0001 on 16 July.

Stena Superfast VIII which operates on the Belfast to Cairnryan route.

Photo: www.stenafreight.com ©

Safety Issues

The following safety issues were established:

- Safety-critical decisions need to be made based on accurate information.
- Passage planning should identify all potential hazards and effective mitigations.
- Maintaining a good lookout is vital for the safety of all vessels.

Recommendations

The Royal Navy has taken a series of actions in response to this and similar previous accidents. As a result, a safety recommendation (2020/124) has been made to the Royal Navy to undertake an independent review to ensure that the actions taken have been effective in reducing the risk of further collision.

Statement from the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

'*On 6 November 2018, the lookout on board the ferry Stena Superfast VII spotted a submarine's periscope close ahead. The officer of the watch then took immediate and effective action, turning the ferry to avoid a genuine risk of collision with a submerged submarine. The incident happened because the submarine's control room team had underestimated the ferry's speed and overestimated*

its range, resulting in safety-critical decisions being made based on inaccurate information.

'*Although there was no collision, this was the third accident or incident between a dived Royal Navy submarine and a surface vessel in four years, which is a matter of significant concern. The Royal Navy co-operated with the MAIB's investigation into this near miss and has taken a series of actions, intended to prevent recurrence, in response to this, and the other similar incidents. However, I have today recommended that the Royal Navy undertakes an independent review of the actions that have been taken, in order to ensure that the risk of similar collisions has been reduced to as low as possible.*'

Accident Investigation Report 13/2020

The MAIB report is available here:
https://tinyurl.com/yyp6vpk4

An earlier accident, involving an RN submarine was investigated in 2016 and the MAIB report entitled: *Collision between the stern trawler Karen and a dived Royal Navy submarine* is to be found here:
https://tinyurl.com/y4mnqza9

UK Department of Transport

Collaborative internet access project

On 14 July the UK-based charity Seafarers UK announced that it was working on a collaborative project with the Department for Transport and the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB) to provide free internet access on board ships visiting UK ports where hundreds of seafarers were waiting to return home, it was reported.

Working with Port Chaplains and trained ship visitors from welfare organisations such as: Mission to Seafarers, Stella Maris and the Sailors' Society, the project will use Mi-Fi technology (that is to say wireless routers that act as a mobile Wi-Fi hotspot) to provide seafarers with a strong and secure internet connection to enable them to connect with families and friends.

It was reported, too, that the MiFi project's pilot year was funded by the ITF Seafarers' Trust, and this new partnership project led and managed by the MNWB will provide seafarers with free internet access for one year.

Communications and access to good quality Internet has always been seafarers' principal welfare request when onboard and in port as demonstrated by a variety of surveys of seafarers' needs in recent years.

MNWB Deputy Chief Executive Sharon Coveney explained: '*Due to the pandemic, most of the centres that provide free internet have had to close and many seafarers remain unable to leave their vessels. Some, but not all, vessels provide their crew members with access to good quality internet and our project will ensure that as many as possible have the opportunity to keep in contact with their loved ones during these difficult times.*'

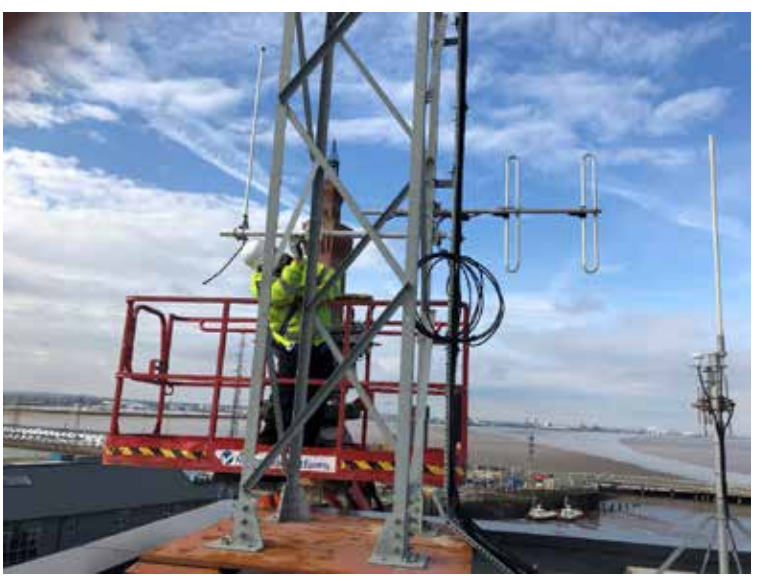
Seafarers UK Grants Director Deborah Layde added: '*Our joint funding support with the Department for Transport and MNWB ensures that not only will a successful pilot evolve but it also demonstrates proactive and collaborative working between Government and Voluntary Organisations. Ultimately seafarers' wellbeing and connectedness will be enhanced around the UK.*'

Virtual AIS Aids to Navigation Project

By Richard Tomkins

Senior Engineer, Engineer & Project Delivery, Trinity House

The Automatic identification System (AIS) makes possible the use of Virtual AIS Aids to Navigation (Virtual AIS AtoN) which can be displayed onboard a vessel, without a physical aid to navigation (AtoN) present. Virtual AtoNs will be used to provide early warning to the mariner of new dangers such as wreck, obstruction, floating debris, or an AtoN that is off-station; while physical marks are en route yet to be deployed.



Contractor installing antenna on ABP Grimsby Marine Control Centre Mast.

The Requirement

The Trinity House Navigation Directorate along with the Engineering and Project Delivery Department liaised to produce a coverage requirement for the use of Virtual AIS AtoN. The requirement for coverage for such aids extends anti-clockwise around the coast from Portland to Flamborough Head; with the additional spot locations of St Just, and Point Lynas as detailed in the Navigation Requirements for Virtual AIS AtoN to cover in the main the six hours emergency response criteria. This having a required range from shore of 30NM allowing for a maximum deployable range of 5NM in from the transmission boundary. From the requirement, ten land-based sites were initially identified. The General Light house Authorities Research

and Development (GRAD) Department was tasked to produce radio propagation plots for each identified site to ensure the 30NM coverage requirement could be met. From the plots, it was identified that two additional third party sites would need to be used.

Antenna Installed at Point Lynas former Fog Signal building showing VHF, GPS and 4G antenna.

Two sites were identified and following confirmation by GRAD that the sites would fill the gaps in the original coverage plot, the Trinity House Estates Department negotiated the long-term lease of space at ABP Grimsby's marine control centre and the RNLI Shoreham lifeboat station.

Along with the ability to deploy Virtual AtoN AIS, and critical to the project, was the ability to verify that these deployed aids are as specified, with verification and integrity being monitored at the Trinity House Planning Centre, Harwich. To achieve this requirement a real time Virtual AtoN AIS verification system has been developed and deployed such that parameters of Virtual AIS AtoNs can be confirmed and monitored.

Implementation

From the requirement, Trinity House designed a Virtual AIS AtoN network based on a Type 3 (RATDMA) AIS transponder, which can be remotely configured using standard NEMA configuration sentences. The transponders are installed to create a network of 12 land-based Virtual AIS AtoN stations, with the Trinity House tender fleet being fitted with Type 3 AIS Transponders, which allows local activation of a Virtual AIS AtoN broadcast, providing the ability to respond to local afloat incidents. Additionally two mobile Virtual AIS AtoN stations have been provided for fast ad hoc deployment.

To create the real time deployment / verification system for Virtual AIS AtoN , the Trinity House Central Monitoring and Control System (CMCS) was updated to allow remote initiation over the network of Virtual AIS AtoN broadcasts from within the Planning Centre. Data integrity being of utmost importance especially when configuring a Virtual AIS AtoN for transmission to ensure all vessels are correctly directed. The CMCS generates and translates the three main AIS message types used, these are AtoN Report (messages 21) and Application Specific Messages (message 6) for AtoN monitoring data and (message 8) for Meteorological and Hydrographic data. From the Trinity House Planning Centre using the updated CMCS, the broadcast of all Trinity House AIS and Virtual AIS AtoN are monitored using data from the Virtual AIS AtoN network as well as the MCA national network of AIS base stations.

Trinity House from each one of 12 land-based Virtual AIS AtoN station can deploy up to five Virtual AIS AtoNs around wrecks or obstruction. The Virtual AIS AtoN targets can be configured to 1 of 31 AtoN types, such as cardinal marks around a wreck, these will display on a vessel's Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS).

The Equipment

Virtual AIS equipment at each site is housed within a customised enclosure, containing three pieces of equipment to receive and transmit the AIS messages, communicate with CMCS in Harwich and allow remote access and data filtering.

A marine VHF antenna and GPS antenna are installed externally at each site. The VHF antenna transmits and receives the AIS messages on the marine VHF 162MHz frequency. GPS is used as a timing source for the AIS transponders to broadcast at the correct intervals and in the correct time slot on the VHF Digital Link. As the network is deemed to be for the purpose of deployment and monitoring Category 1, each site is provided with a minimum of 48 hours backup power for the equipment, which is either provided by the station's existing battery banks, dedicated batteries or local uninterruptable power supply. The Virtual AIS transponders communicate over a 3G/4G mobile virtual private network, which provides security and resilience, independent of any other service communication equipment at the sites.

Following On

The use of AIS Application Specific Messages was reviewed and a trial was arranged to demonstrate the use of Message 8 – Binary Broadcast Message to transmit the internationally agreed Meteorological and Hydrographic data message. The format of the message may contain some 30 parameters within seven categories for Wind, Air, Visibility, Water, Water Level, Wave and Precipitation.

North East Spit buoy on board THV Galatea *for installation of Met-Hydro equipment.*

A new AIS transponder and compatible Ultrasonic Weather Station were selected for use on a Type 1 buoy. The weather station is fitted with GPS, three-axis solid-state compass, rate gyro and tilt sensors so theoretical and apparent wind can be calculated on a moving platform. The parameters selected to be transmitted for the trial include Wind; Average Speed, Gust, Direction, Gust Direction & Air; Temperature, Pressure, Pressure Tendency.

On completion of successful trial, an active buoy station was selected for a live trial. This was the Spit North East buoy as it was deemed the data would be of use to the PLA Thames pilots.

Editor's Note.

Switching off DGPS in the UK

The UK's GLA is to close its DGPS service at the end of March 2022 – what does this mean for the seafarer?

Dr Alan Grant GLA DGPS System Director

The General Lighthouse Authorities of the UK and Ireland (GLA) has taken the decision to close its DGPS service at the end of March 2022, following user consultation and a considered review of how the system is being used. Other national maritime authorities have also taken the decision to close their DGPS service, while others maintain operations for the foreseeable future – each administration provides the aids-to-navigation (AtoNs) they deem appropriate for the risks within their waters.

DGPS and Selective Availability

The GLA DGPS system was first introduced in 1995 as a trial system, being formally declared operational in 1997. The system consists of 14 DGPS reference stations (see Figure 1, below), six far-field monitoring sites and three monitoring and control sites. The system is operated as a single AtoN, albeit one operated and maintained by three authorities. Marine radiobeacon DGPS was developed to counter Selective Availability (SA), a deliberate error added to the civilian GPS service to degrade positional accuracy. SA caused the reported position to wander even when the user was static, something that is clearly not ideal when trying to navigate a vessel. However, by comparing the reported GPS position of a receiver sited at a precisely known location, it is possible to calculate the amount of position error at any given time.

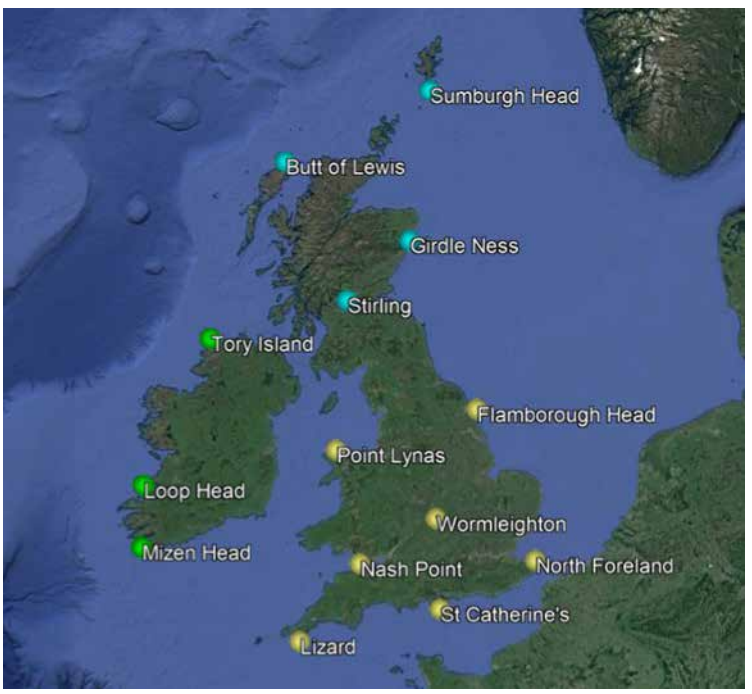
Error in position calculations is caused by many different factors, not just SA. Errors for each satellite are identified and a correction for each is provided to mariners operating nearby via the 300 kHz broadcast. Maritime receivers in the region can apply such corrections and improve the estimated reported position. At the time when SA was in use, this meant an improvement from approximately 50 metres to around five metres.

SA was discontinued in 2000 and today, GPS offers the civilian user a position accurate to around 3-5 metres. DGPS continues to improve positional accuracy, albeit with a smaller improvement, enabling positions in the region of 1-2 metres.

In addition to improving the estimated position accuracy, by assessing whether the error is within a given threshold, the reference station is able to monitor the performance of the GPS constellation and identify any faults. Faulty satellites are removed from the position solution, therefore providing position integrity for the mariner. The integrity element remains unchanged and is often cited as the main benefit of DGPS in a world where SA is no longer an issue.

Stakeholder consultation

The GLA service was partially replaced around a decade ago. The current infrastructure is now approaching the end of its design life and the GLA conducted a stakeholder consultation to assess the requirements for the service going forward.



The consultation process sought input from stakeholders across the maritime sector and beyond through direct engagement and via a widely circulated user survey. GLA personnel interviewed vessel crews from across the UK and Ireland and 153 people responded to the survey. Figure 2 provides an overview of the different respondent groups along with the percentage of total responses.

It can be seen that the vast majority of responses were from mariners and maritime operators (eg engineers, scientific officers, operations managers and harbour masters). Responses came from mariners operating a wide range of vessels including ferries, container ships, tankers, liquid natural gas carriers, bulk carriers and leisure craft. The survey resulted in a mix of responses. The majority of mariners report that they use the GLA DGPS system for accuracy improvements and integrity, as one may expect, while others reported that they do not use it.

Mariners were asked which GNSS constellations they used today and those they expected to use in the future. All mariners reported using GPS today, with around 40% also making use of GLONASS, and around 9% using Galileo too. From the response received, it is expected that more mariners will move to multi-constellation receivers over the next 5-10 years, making use of GPS, GLONASS, Galileo and BeiDou.

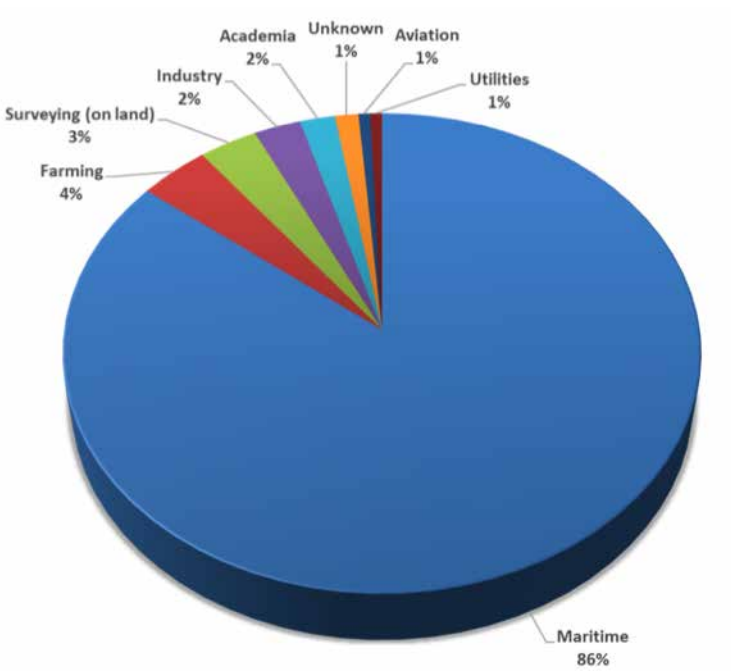
Face-to-face discussions produced a similar mix of views. While the majority considered the GLA DGPS system a useful service, others reported that they didn't use it at all. It was noted that DGPS works quietly in the background and therefore can be inconspicuous on the bridge until it is unable to work correctly, at which point an alarm is raised to inform the bridge crew.

Alternative solutions

While marine radiobeacon DGPS is not mandated by the International Maritime Organization for carriage on vessels covered by SOLAS, it is provided for in all maritime receiver standards and the spectrum is allocated internationally. Marine radiobeacon DGPS is a common method for receiving differential correction information at sea on many classes of vessel.

Following a change in maritime receiver standards in 2003, all receivers now include Receiver Autonomous Integrity Monitoring (RAIM). RAIM is a means of determining whether the resulting position estimate is safe to use through an algorithm within the receiver. As the name suggests, it is another means of determining integrity, i.e. whether the position solution is safe to use.

Differential corrections are also available from other sources, including Satellite Based Augmentation Systems (SBAS), which are primarily provided for aviation users. Work is under way in Europe to introduce a maritime service to the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS), the European SBAS. This service is expected to be available around 2022. It is important to note that today's maritime receivers are not tested for how they apply SBAS data, as that functionality is not currently part of the receiver standards. This is being addressed and those mariners wishing to take advantage of SBAS information in the future will need to upgrade their receiver to one that is type approved for SBAS use (expected 2022-23).



Future of the GLA DGPS network

After careful consideration of the results of the consultation process, recognising that today's GNSS are able to meet all but the most stringent accuracy requirements, and that position integrity can be provided by alternative means,

such as RAIM or by mariners validating their position via other visual and electronic aids to navigation, the GLA have concluded that their DGPS system is now redundant. The GLA recognises the need to provide adequate notice and support continuity of service going forward. As such, the GLA DGPS system will remain operational until 31 March 2022, at which point the signals will cease.

While SBAS such as EGNOS should provide useful services to the mariner in time, there is no guarantee that this will come to fruition. However, it is anticipated that alternative sources of integrity will continue to improve as mariners move to multiple satellite constellation receivers with more satellites and signals available, and as RAIM algorithms advance. The use of all available satellite constellations with advanced RAIM algorithms in the future is expected to provide greater positional accuracy and integrity than is available today with marine radiobeacon DGPS.

The GLA advises mariners to consider their use of DGPS and to plan for its discontinuance accordingly. Mariners should check their GNSS receiver(s) to confirm the presence of RAIM and consider upgrading to type approved SBAS receiving equipment when available. Overall, the GLA encourages mariners to use all available AtoN, whether visual or electronic, and other sensors such as radar, to support their safe passage and the protection of the environment.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

Dr Alan Grant, GLA DGPS System Director
alan.grant@gla-rad.org

GLA is the collective term for the three individual lighthouse authorities that provide marine aids-to-navigation around the UK and Ireland. These are:

- Northern Lighthouse Board – covering Scotland and the Isle of Man
- Irish Lights – covering all of Ireland
- Trinity House – covering England, Wales, Channel Islands and Gibraltar

Editor's Note

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Container ship *Ever Smart*

Loss of cargo containers overboard

MAIB Report

Summary

On 30 October 2017, the UK-registered container ship *Ever Smart* suffered a container stow collapse while on passage between Taipei, Taiwan and Los Angeles, USA. The vessel's master had changed the ship's passage plan to avoid severe weather caused by a developing depression east of Japan. *Ever Smart* continued in heavy seas; rolling and pitching heavily with frequent bow flare slamming. Once the weather had abated, the crew discovered that the container stacks on the aft most bay had collapsed and toppled to port. Of the 151 containers in the stow, 42 were lost overboard and 34 were damaged. Superficial damage was caused to the ship.

MAIB Crown Copyright 2020. Report No 14/2020 on the investigation of the loss of 42 containers from the container ship Ever Smart 700 miles east of Japan, North Pacific Ocean 30 October 2017. ©

Safety issues

In the (UK) Maritime Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) report issued on 22 July 2020 safety issues were identified. These are:

- The loss of the containers most likely occurred during a period of heavy pitching and hull vibration in the early morning of 30 October 2017.
- A combination of factors resulted in a loss of integrity for the whole deck cargo bay; in particular, the containers were not stowed or secured in accordance with the cargo securing manual (CSM).
- Container lashings might not have been secured correctly.

Safety recommendations

The report indicates that the MAIB made three recommendations Nos 2020/125, 2020/126 and 2020/127 to Evergreen Marine Corp. (Taiwan) Ltd to improve standards of stowage plans produced ashore, knowledge of the dangers of bow flare slamming and lashing-gear maintenance management.

Particularly the recommendations highlighted to the company's ship masters the increased risk of cargo damage when ships experience hull slamming and stern shuddering during heavy weather.

Further, it should introduce a programme for lashing equipment inspections when the ship is not in service; and action should be taken to ensure shore planners are fully trained in the use of ship loading computers and that they understand the importance of checking permissible load limits for containers and lashing systems.

Report

The 78-page MAIB report No 14 of 2020 issued on 22 July 2020 is available here: https://tinyurl.com/y4vc3rob

Stow collapse

One point made in the document refers to the initiation of the container stow collapse as indicated here: '*Most container stow collapses of this kind occur following the structural failure of an individual container within the stow or the failure of the lashing arrangements.*

'*In either case, the containers in the stack directly above the deformed or unsecured container will topple sideways into the adjacent row. This leads to a domino effect as one stack hits another, causing structural or lashing system failure in each adjacent row.*

'*This sequence of failure will continue until the outer stack is reached and containers are lost overboard*.'

Weight distribution

Regarding container weight distribution the Report says: '*If the individual weight of any container in a stack exceeds the limit given in the CSM (Cargo Securing Manual), there is a risk that the lashing devices will become overloaded and will fail. Similarly, the risk of containers suffering compression or racking damage lower down in the stowage will also be increased.*'

AMSA launches campaign targeting container ships

On 22 July the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) launched a focused inspection campaign targeting cargo securing arrangements on container ships visiting Australian ports.

This inspection campaign was initiated in response to several serious incidents involving shipping containers lost overboard recently.

Significant environmental damage

Incidents such as the losses of 81 containers off Newcastle by the vessel *YM Efficiency* in 2018, 50 containers off Wollongong by *APL England* in May and three containers from *Navios Unite* off Cape Leeuwin in June have caused significant environmental damage to Australia's iconic marine and coastal environment.

These events affect the livelihoods and safety of commercial fishers and, more broadly, communities across Australia.

Contributing factors

Incident investigations by AMSA have discovered that the improper stacking and securing of cargo and poor maintenance of securing equipment are likely to have been contributing factors to these incidents.

AMSA Acting General Manager of Operations Michael Drake said that vessels visiting Australia must ensure they fully comply with the international standards relating to cargo securing laid out in Chapter VI of the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention.

He said: '*We have seen the serious consequence of improper cargo securing arrangements in the form of tonnes of plastics and other debris washing up on our beautiful beaches and floating in our oceans*.

'*Rusted cargo securing points, improper lashings and exceeding stack weight limits have all contributed to these incidents and ship operators should be on notice that non-compliance will not be tolerated in Australia*.'

Illustration: www.amsa.gov.au ©.

Inspection campaign

It was reported from AMSA in Canberra that the focused inspection campaign will run from the beginning of August until the end of October 2020 and will involve both extended Port State Control (PSC) inspections and stand-alone inspections on vessels which are not currently eligible for PSC inspection.

It is understood that if a cargo ship visits Australia over this period, the Master should expect that AMSA will visit the ship as part of this focused campaign.

Where vessels are found to be non-compliant AMSA will take steps to bring the ship into compliance before it is able to continue its passage.

AMSA encourages ship owners and masters to familiarise themselves with the approved cargo securing manual (CSM) for their vessel and AMSA Marine Order 42, to be found here https://tinyurl.com/y4qrgavu

This gives effect to Chapter VI of SOLAS in Australia.

We have been made aware that AMSA's focused inspection campaign is aimed at education, improving standards, and reducing the number of incidents that result in cargo being lost at sea.

To learn more

More information can be found on AMSA's website to be found here: https://tinyurl.com/y25v2h2l

New sulphur-sniffing drone patrols above the Great Belt*

Checking emissions from ships sailing on the busy Route T

According to the Danish Maritime Authority (DMA) the drone is provided by the European Maritime Safety Agency, and will operate in a specific area north of the Great Belt. This is the second time EMSA has tested a sulphur-sniffing drone in Denmark. Last year, a different model patrolled in the area for three months. The new drone has previously been used for various surveillance tasks.

By flying into the ship's exhaust gas plume, the drone can use its sniffer technology to register the sulphur content in the ship's fuel. These data are immediately available to the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, who can then follow up if a ship is emitting too much sulphur.

Several Danish authorities have cooperated to get the drone from EMSA in action above Danish waters. The test project is carried out in a collaboration between the Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency and the Danish Maritime Authority.

The sulphur drone has operated in Denmark from 1 July and will continue to 31 October 2020.

*The strait between the major islands of Zealand and Funen in Denmark, one of the three Danish Straits, this divides Denmark in two,

Australian VTS recognised

Inaugural awards

On 28 July the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) reported that Hay Point Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) Operator Warren Bath had been recognised by the inaugural VTS award for his coordination of an incident involving a bulk carrier. Queensland's Hay Point is one of the largest coal export ports in the world, see: www.nqbp.com.au

VTSO Bath was nominated for the award after coordinating the response action of allied services including tugs, port pilots and helicopter operators when reports came through of a bulk carrier drifting 20 metres off the berth at 0100 on 21 April 2019.

Within ten minutes of receiving the call, the ship had turned 90 degrees to the berth and was in danger of being damaged, and causing damage to its surroundings.

Mr Bath's quick response ensured the vessel was brought back alongside within three and a half hours with no damage to the bulk carrier, to other ships berthed at the port or to the offshore terminal infrastructure. No pollution event arose.

Two other nominations highly commended

Port Hedland VTS was commended for the successful response after receiving a call from the ore carrier *Cape Reliance* reporting people clinging to a drifting upturned boat. Strong currents were rapidly pushing the capsized boat and the desperate men further out to sea. Port Hedland is the world's largest bulk export port, with exports including iron ore, lithium and salt. See: https://tinyurl.com/y52ncoqk

The VTS coordinated police and marine rescue crews, including a pilot boat and marine pilot transfer helicopter from the port, to assist with the search and rescue.

Four people were rescued from the water within two hours of the initial report, after spending nearly seven hours in the water.

Todd Stewart and Ricky Blake from Brisbane VTS received commendations for coordinating local vessels to assist in

the search for a sinking recreational craft off Caloundra Headland in the middle of the night on 9 June 2019. They called on ships anchored in the vicinity of a search mission to help widen the search area.

Brisbane VTS chart is shown here:
https://tinyurl.com/y2y5flnd

Incredibly, the master of a tanker in the area radioed VTS and reported seeing people in the water south of the ship in the morning light. Mr Stewart and Mr Blake relayed this information to Queensland Water Police resulting in the rescue of two adults and a child.

Recognising outstanding contributions

The Australian VTS Award was launched in December 2019 to recognise an outstanding contribution by a VTS to the safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment which is beyond their normal operational scope.

National recognition

VTSs provide for the safe and efficient movement of ships and help prevent dangerous traffic situations. These awards provide national recognition to those involved in vessel traffic services in Australia while also raising the profile of the 15 VTSs across Australia that manage traffic in ports and surrounding waterways.

The award also recognises VTS personnel and the important services they provide among stakeholders and wider industry.

Nominations open for the 2020-2021 Australian VTS Award on 1 October

Reducing the risk of collisions at sea

An AMSA Marine Notice

On 28 July the Australian Maritime Safety Authority issued Marine Notice No 06/2020 in order to remind vessel owners, operators, masters, skippers, watchkeepers, and other personnel involved in the navigation of vessels, of the importance of adhering to the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (known as the Collision Regulations or COLREGs); as amended.

The Marine Notice emphasised that in Australia, the COLREGs are implemented through Commonwealth, state and territory laws.

COLREGs apply to all vessels, regardless of their size or nature of operation, in all navigable waters, from inland waters to the high seas.

Contravention of COLREGs may jeopardise the safety of life and endanger the environment. Under the (Australian) Navigation Act 2012, it is an offence for an owner or a master to operate a vessel, if it contravenes the COLREGs (implemented by Marine Order 30 (Prevention of collisions) 2016).

General responsibility

Vessel owners, operators and masters are responsible for ensuring that personnel involved in the navigation of vessels have an in depth knowledge of navigational practices and a full understanding of the COLREGs.

Incident history

Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB)* investigations into 41 collisions over 26 years identified failure to maintain a proper lookout and to take early avoiding action as common contributing factors to collisions.

In summary

To recap, the Marine Notice emphasised the need for maintaining a proper lookout and for watchkeepers to be aware that any distraction from their duties can have a negative impact on safety.

In addition, managing fatigue is a recognised way of minimising distraction.

In particular watchkeepers should be aware difficulties with visibility of small vessels. Such vessels constructed of glass reinforced plastic, carbon fibre, and/or wood, are not easily detectable by radar. Operators of these vessels should never assume approaching vessels have detected them by radar.

Operators of not easily detected vessels are encouraged to ensure their vessels can be easily detected by:

- Transmitting AIS data,
- Installing radar reflectors, and
- Displaying navigation lights that are brighter than the minimum requirements.

Rule 9 and Rule 10

The master and crew of vessels less than 20 metres loa, sailing vessels and vessels engaged in fishing must be familiar with Rule 9 (Narrow Channels) and Rule 10 (Traffic Separation Schemes) of the COLREGs, including obligations to not impede the passage of other vessels when navigating in or near narrow channels, fairways, and traffic separation schemes.

AMSA's Marine Notice 06/2020 is available here:
https://tinyurl.com/y5rbyzqo

*Australian Transport Safety Bureau www.atsb.gov.au

ESPO welcomes the EMSA and ECDC COVID-19 Guidance for safe and sustainable restoration of cruise operations

On 27 July the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) jointly published the COVID-19 EU guidance for cruise ships.

See here: https://tinyurl.com/yxtedzu8

The European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) welcomed the initiative taken by EMSA in producing this useful and timely goal-based guidance, and supported the recommendations outlined in the document.

This guidance is not intended to provide prescriptive solutions. Rather, it helps stakeholders in determining the effectiveness of measures addressing the identified risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a living document, ESPO expects the guidance to change and adapt in accordance with new developments and policy measures relating to COVID-19.

In the words of Isabelle Ryckbost, Secretary General of ESPO: "*European ports are committed to contribute to a safe, sustainable and resilient recovery in the aftermath of COVID-19. The safe and sustainable restoration of cruise business is for some ports an essential part of this.*

'*It will be important to work towards a level playing field in approaches and measures to restart, when possible, cruise operations, notwithstanding the national policies in the management of this health crisis. This guidance is a first step in that process and will help cruise operators in this process*.'

ESPO has been consulted and actively contributed to the development of this guidance, which is intended to facilitate the safe and sustainable restoration of cruise traffic in the EU.

Crucially, the guidance places the main responsibility for preventing and containing outbreaks on cruise operators, and contains important advice on how operators should coordinate and cooperate with port managing bodies and Port States.

At the same time, the guidance recognises that the safe operation of a cruise ship normally requires the involvement of several parties, including the company managing the ship, ship master and crew, the port and terminal where the ship will berth, the Flag State and the Port State. Co-operation of these main parties concerned is essential to re-start operations and to respond to the challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19.

While the EU guidance is addressing the important issues of the repatriation of passengers and crew changes, ESPO believes that this guidance is not enough to solve the ongoing crisis as regards the changing of crews in the current situation. Joint solutions have to be developed by the relevant authorities in Member States of the EU in order to address this humanitarian crisis.

ESPO's stance indicates that European seaports firmly believe that the lessons learned from the development of this guidance will leave European stakeholders and decision makers better prepared for potential future developments in this crisis.

USCG standby and escort

mv *Island Express*

US Coast Guard air and surface rescue crews at Sector San Juan, Puerto Rico, responded and assisted the distressed mv *Island Express* on the afternoon of 29 July, after the ship started taking on water when it departed the Port of San Juan for storm avoidance in anticipation of Tropical Cyclone 9.

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan received a Mayday VHF radio transmission on Channel 16 from the Master of *Island Express*, who reported that there was a possible broken pipe in the engine room and that approximately 75% of the bilges were full of water.

The 412-foot motor vessel Island Express takes on water about four miles off San Juan, Puerto Rico on 29 July. US Coast Guard rescue crew from Station San Juan and Air Station Borinquen responded to assist the vessel.

USCG photo by Ricardo Castrodad, Coast Guard District 7. USCG ©.

Watchstanders directed the launch of two 33-foot small boats and a 45-foot Response Boat Medium from Station San Juan that got underway and arrived on scene with *Island Express*. A Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter also arrived on scene, and the aircrew was able to maintain communications with the Coast Guard boat crews as they escorted the cargo ship in eight to ten foot seas back to the safety of the port.

In the words of Senior Chief Petty Officer Lance Wiser,

Station San Juan officer in charge: '*Despite the impending tropical storm and all Station San Juan small boats securely out of the water for an incoming storm, our boat crews responded immediately to launch two 33-foot small boats from their trailers and the 45-foot Response Boat Medium utilizing the mobile boat hoist.*

'*The teamwork and training of Station operators allowed these evolutions to safely take place simultaneously which led to all three assets arriving on scene with the distressed vessel within 45 minutes. The sea conditions on scene were pushing the parameters of the small boats but the crews endured and the distressed vessel was escorted safety into the harbour*.'

Meanwhile, Sector San Juan Prevention personnel coordinated with the San Juan Bay Pilots and two Puerto Rico Towing tugboats that rendezvous'd with *Island Express* at the entrance of San Juan Harbour. Tugboats escorted the vessel to Pier 15, where it was safely moored and crew finalized pumping out of the bilge spaces.

Crew change: Drastic measures needed

Per INTERCARGO: About 300,000 seafarers remained trapped on board their ships as at 27 July
And
A similar number awaiting re-employment

According to a report from INTERCARGO of 27 July the organisation cannot begin to contemplate the impacts if terminal and cargo operations were halted and cargo vessels stopped operations and trading, as a result of crew remaining on board for 12 to 17 months. This compromises the safety of crew, ships, and cargoes, if worldwide progress is not made on crew change. About 300,000 seafarers remained trapped on board their ships and a similar number were awaiting re-employment with financial hardship.

Despite a universal campaign from all sectors of the shipping industry, INTERCARGO says that hundreds of thousands of seafarers still continue serving after completing their Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA), and that many of them have now spent well over 12 months on board. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that bulk carriers on tramp trading call at many more ports than other shipping sectors do, piling added strain on an already fatigued workforce with no hope of crew change.

Said Dimitris Fafalios, Chairman of INTERCARGO: '*Very soon the industry is going to have to say enough is enough*.

'*The situation is reaching farcical proportions. We have seen crew changes refused because a COVID test could not be carried out within the prescribed 48-hour window before the crew's arrival, despite the journey to the port taking three days. In some other countries which claim to allow crew change, in fact this happens only if crew can be replaced with the country's nationals. These are just some examples*.'

It is understood from INTERECARGO that the two key bottlenecks are the airlines' unwillingness to make flights available between shipping destinations and crew source countries; and the lack of commitment from Health and Immigration Authorities to facilitate seafarers' travel and the issue of visas.

Dimitris Fafalios, Chairman of INTERCARGO.

Inhumanity

In the words of Jay K Pillai, Vice-Chairman of INTERCARGO: '*The situation is escalating from bad to worse as the United Nations IMO protocols for Key Workers are not being honoured by all Port States. About 35% to 40% of all seafarers on board cargo ships are serving well over their SEA and about 10% of all seafarers on board are serving between 12 to 17 months.*

'*This is inhumane and countries should bear full responsibility for it. Some Governments are not facilitating the crew change even for their own citizens. This includes imposing all possible restrictions on crew change in their home country, restricting flights and applying policies which do not allow seafarers to fly to foreign countries to join ships.*

'*It is a sad story and it can't continue like this unless Port States who export/import cargoes ensure that ships will not depart with seafarers serving over the MLC* limit. More and more countries are prohibiting crew change, though they welcome the cargoes the ships bring to support the welfare of their society*.'

Focus of attention on measures

INTERCARGO believes that the focus of attention should be on following measures:

- INTERCARGO supports the cross-industry recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and places great emphasis on accurate testing procedures, especially for on-signing crew. Recent occurrences of Covid-19 positive crew being allowed to travel from their home countries cannot be condoned by INTERCARGO as it puts seafarers on board and civilians at risk. INTERCARGO calls for increased diligence by crewing agents arranging on-signing crew so that this does not happen again.

- Seafarers shall be tested prior to departure from their home country and tested again at arrival to port prior to going on board ship. Similarly, seafarers disembarking from ships shall be tested prior to coming ashore or flying out. If tests are negative, they shall be exonerated from quarantine.

- All seafarers shall be allowed to travel with visa exemptions for joining ships.

- Port States must allow seafarers to sign off without confirmed flight tickets and wait in isolation hotels while awaiting flights, which could be long, subject to availability of flights.

International Maritime Summit, July 2020

INTERCARGO fully supports the outcome of the International Maritime Summit on Crew Change in July, where thirteen countries signed agreements to facilitate crew changes. INTERCARGO encourages all governments that are signatories to the IMO SOLAS convention to join and implement the above agreement and especially countries which benefit most from the import and export of dry bulk cargoes.

INTERCARGO has reminded the airline industry of the great economic support provided through seafarer and shore staff travelling to and from ships before the Covid-19 crisis. Hundreds of thousands, possibly more than a million tickets annually provided a significant economic boost to airlines globally. Furthermore, INTERCARGO has asked the airlines not to forget seafarers during these difficult times.

Spyros Tarasis, Vice-Chairman of INTERCARGO concluded by saying: '*This has become a talking shop. Everybody knows where the problems lie – with the airlines, with visas and with health authorities not recognising seafarers as key workers. But nothing is being done, and very soon the shipping industry itself may well be obliged/forced to stop the trading of cargoes essential for welfare and sustaining the smooth running of societies worldwide*.'

*ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006

Indian Register of Shipping mv *Roknoor-32*

Classes Unichart Navigation's

mv *Roknoor-32*

General cargo vessel *Roknoor-32*, built under the classification of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRClass), was successfully launched from the Delta Shipyard in Chattogram, Bangladesh. Ordered by Unichart Navigation Limited, *Roknoor-32* is the first in the series of five vessels and is also the first Bangladesh- flagged vessel being constructed under IRClass.

The launch follows closely on several other vessels which were built under IRClass' classification and successfully delivered during this unprecedented global pandemic. It underpins IRClass' dedication and proven track record to fulfil clients' needs, ensuring that work carries on even during these unpredictable times.

General cargo vessel Roknoor-32

Executive Director of Delta Shipyard, Syed Monzur Hossain said: '*We will like to thank IRClass for all the support provided during this pandemic. The timely approval of plans allowed the construction to proceed smoothly and the team's unsurpassed attention to detail ensured that any issues were resolved early on in the process*.'

Roknoor-32 is approximately of 82.5m loa, of 3,200dwt and designed to meet the latest IMO conventions and codes for worldwide operations, it was reported on 4 August.

Amit Bhatnagar, Regional Manager East Coast of India and Bangladesh for IRClass commented: '*I am delighted with our team in Bangladesh who have worked tirelessly during this period to facilitate the successful construction and launch of the vessel. The team has been very committed from the start and quickly adapted to the "new normal" of safety measures, implemented to allow safe operations for both our clients and surveyors*.'

AMSA Safety Alert

On 7 August the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) issued a Safety Alert (No 05/2020) on Fire Prevention and Protection. This document aims to raise awareness of measures to ensure the fire risks on vessels are appropriately managed.

Addressing the risk of fire

Mariners are advised to ensure the ship's Safety Management System (SMS) includes:

- Planned maintenance of the vessel's firefighting, fire-containment and fire-prevention equipment.
- Emergency procedures in the event of a fire.
- Training and induction for crew members on emergency procedures and how to use firefighting equipment, and
- First aid for injuries caused by fire or smoke.

Common issues that reduce fire protection

Poor maintenance of vessels and their fire protection equipment are major contributors to vessel fires.

A recent AMSA inspection campaign focusing on fire prevention on passenger vessels revealed 829 instances of poor fire-system maintenance across 326 vessels.

The most common issues identified were:

- Emergency fire pump could not supply adequate water pressure to fight a fire.
- Portable extinguishers were not maintained in accordance with Australian Standard (AS) 1851-2012.
- Lack of, or poorly maintained, fire insulation, protection or suppression systems.
- Emergency shutoffs in engine room not working.
- Fire alarm strobe light in engine room not working.
- Assessment of fire risk not updated as part of the SMS.
- Fire detectors not working.
- Poor or inadequate signage for fire flaps or emergency shut-off valves.

An analysis of AMSA's marine incident reports and inspection data shows similar issues across all vessel types.

The Fire Triangle.

Illustration: AMSA ©

Fire protection

It is important to ensure that vessels have both passive (for example structural) and active fire protection measures to minimise the spread of fire if it occurs.

Active fire protection

Most people are familiar with active fire protection measures, such as fire detection systems and alarms, fixed and portable fire-extinguishing systems, and fire blankets. It is important that these devices are in place and operate effectively.

Passive fire protection

Passive structural fire protection is also an important control measure because it slows the spread of fire and protects essential systems, giving crew more time to fight a fire or—in a worst case scenario—abandon the vessel before lives are lost.

Passive structural fire protection is essentially the installation of fire-resistant material on the vessel structure, such as fire-resistant bulkheads, deck heads, decks and doors.

Structural fire protection measures help to break the fire triangle by removing the transfer of heat to other compartments in a vessel, especially high-risk zones like the engine room, and accommodation areas.

The type of material and thickness used for passive structural fire protection will depend on what materials need protection. For example, steel begins to lose its design margin of safety at temperatures of around 550°C, whereas for aluminium the temperature is much lower, at around 150°C. Further, at 275°C aluminium will lose around 50% of its yield strength.

An accredited marine surveyor can advise what materials may be suitable for an application and the specifications needed to be met for a vessel.

Defective fire damper.

Photo: AMSA ©.

Maintaining passive structural fire protection

It is common to see a fire-rated division—such as the bulkhead in an engine room—penetrated during a modification, docking or a periodic survey. Electricians, plumbers, or communication engineers can leave unintended holes in the fire-rated division as they perform maintenance and upgrades.

Such openings as these examples reduce the effectiveness of the structural fire protection. If there is a fire, heat will be able to escape where the structural fire protection has been penetrated or compromised, allowing the fire to spread to the adjoining compartment.

Passive structural fire protection is a critical element of a vessel's fire protection system, preserving vessels, lives and livelihoods from the threat of fire. Vessel owners, skippers and surveyors need to pay special attention to fire-rated divisions to ensure the original approved specification is maintained.

A reminder was issued to all who go afloat to:

- Ensure fire prevention measures are in place and part of risk assessment to reduce the risk of fire
- Review risk-assessment for a vessel's operation regularly
- Ensure fire prevention, fire containment, and firefighting equipment are included in planned maintenance
- Ensure the integrity of passive structural fire protection is maintained.

Potential reduction in GHG emissions

Joint R&D for use of ammonia in marine transportation

World's first effort to stabilize supply of ammonia as fuel for oceangoing vessels

On 6 August NYK Line, Japan Marine United Corporation, and Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (ClassNK) signed a joint R&D agreement for the commercialization of an ammonia-fuelled ammonia gas carrier (AFAGC) that would use ammonia as the main fuel, in addition to an ammonia floating storage and regasification barge (A-FSRB).

Image of an ammonia floating storage and regasification barge (A-FSRB).

Background

Since CO_2 is not emitted when ammonia is burned, it is viewed to have promise as a next-generation fuel that could mitigate shipping's impact on global warming. In addition, it is said that zero emissions can be realized by utilizing CO_2-free hydrogen* as a raw material for ammonia. In particular, a significant reduction in CO_2 emissions is expected to be achieved by replacing coal and natural gas as the main fuels for power generation.

Parties in Japan have succeeded in generating electricity through the use of a gas turbine with 100% ammonia. In addition, innovative next-generation thermal-power-generation technologies that contribute to the reduction of CO_2 emissions are being developed. These technologies are aimed at generating electricity by co-firing ammonia at coal-fired power stations.

The reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is a significant issue in the marine transportation sector. In 2018, the IMO set the goal of halving GHG emissions from the international maritime sector by 2050 and reaching a target of zero as early as the end of this century.

Ammonia is expected to be used as an alternative fuel for vessels. As demand for ammonia fuel is foreseen to expand, the need for a transportation infrastructure for stable supply is expected to increase. Thus, the companies have decided to start this joint R&D of an AFAGC and an A-FSRB.

Overview of Joint R&D

Ammonia-fuelled Ammonia Gas Carrier (AFAGC)

Large-scale marine transportation of ammonia is currently carried out by multi-purpose LPG vessels. In this project, the signatory organisations will be engaged in the R&D of a liquefied ammonia gas carrier. It is expected that the use of ammonia, which is the cargo, as a marine fuel will contribute to the early realization of zero emissions for oceangoing vessels.

Ammonia Floating Storage and Regasification Barge (A-FSRB)

In this joint R&D project, signatories will be engaged in the R&D of a barge** that is equipped with a floating storage and regasification facility exclusively for ammonia for the first time anywhere in the world. This project is expected to contribute to the early introduction of ammonia fuel by utilizing the barge as an alternative to land facilities (storage tanks, regasification facilities and so forth) for the stable supply of ammonia fuel.

Efforts of each company regarding joint R&D

	AFAGC	A-FSRB
NYK Line	· Establishment of operation methods · Consideration of legal compliance · Economic evaluation	· Establishment of operation methods · Consideration of legal compliance · Economic evaluation
Japan Marine United Corporation	· R&D of AFAGC	· R&D of A-FSRB
Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (ClassNK)	· Technical verification regarding safety · Development of guideline	· Technical verification regarding safety

Future Outlook

This joint R&D aims not only to utilize ammonia as a marine fuel but also to establish methods for the mass transportation and supply of ammonia and to become a solution for introducing a mixed combustion of ammonia into coal-fired power stations operated by Japanese electric power companies.

As a result, the R&D is expected to contribute significantly to the decarbonization of not only the maritime industry but also the energy industry.

Image of an ammonia-fuelled ammonia gas carrier (AFAGC).

*** CO_2-free hydrogen**

One way of producing hydrogen without generating CO_2 is through the use of renewable energy. A second way is by using natural gas or coal together with carbon capture and storage. CO_2-free ammonia synthesis is technology for synthesizing ammonia using such CO_2-free hydrogen.

**** Barge**

A barge is a flat-bottomed vessel designed to carry heavy cargo mainly in inland waterways and ports. Almost all barges cannot navigate by themselves because they are not equipped with an engine; they must be towed or propelled by a tugboat.

Contact details of each signatory company are to be found here:

NYK Line
www.nyk.com/english

Japan Marine United Corporation
www.jmuc.co.jp/en

Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (ClassNK)
www.classnk.com

Jamaica takes steps to enable crew changes and repatriations

Following intensive lobbying at a high level by representatives of the international maritime community of which IFSMA is part, it is apparent that countries are slowly recognising the need to allow crew changes to take place.

Daily the situation changes and at the time of going to press with this edition of *Newsletter* it was not possible to list compliant countries although a trawl of the Internet does show some degree of compliance.

With regard to the Government of Jamaica (GOJ), it has listed seafarers among the class of **essential workers** under its Disaster Risk Management Act and has put in place measures to speed up the transit of registered seafarers through its borders.

Wait by 600,000

Around the world an estimated 600,000 seafarers are waiting for crew changes – 300,000 on vessels and 300,000 waiting to embark – according to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF). Many of those on board have been working for up to four months past their contracted dates while those waiting to embark are typically not receiving wages, leaving them facing financial ruin.

GOJ is encouraging ship owners to make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible to safely repatriate seafarers whose Seafarers' Employment Agreement (SEA) has expired and has implemented measures to support the repatriation of seafarers and crew changes via Jamaica.

Trade continuity

However, in special circumstances, the Maritime Authority of Jamaica (MAJ), which oversees all matters maritime for the GOJ, will consider extending SEAs to facilitate trade continuity, where the circumstances warrant and there is mutual agreement between the owner and the seafarer.

Meanwhile the MAJ has resumed normal procedures for the issue and renewal of seafarers' documentation.

In a statement of 7 August Rear-Admiral (Ret'd) Peter Brady, MAJ Director General, said: '*The Maritime Authority of Jamaica is cognizant of the crisis brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic and its debilitating impact on the global community. There has been some improvement as some ports across the world have re-opened, and seafarers are being repatriated in some instances.*

'*Notwithstanding, numerous seafarers are still facing difficulty at sea and it is recognized that only a global response will alleviate the hardships seafarers face during this pandemic*.'

Outlining the measures Jamaica is taking, he continued: '*In response to the recommendations of the IMO and other global industry stakeholders, the Government of Jamaica has instituted measures to alleviate the current crisis. It is to be noted that the borders of Jamaica have re-opened to facilitate controlled re-entry and transit of persons*.'

As a consequence the GOJ is taking steps to ensure that the economy returns to normal operations as far as possible. The MAJ continues to provide the full suite of registration, technical and seafarer certification services to clients from its offices in the usual manner, as well as via purpose-built electronic platforms.

For further information

Seafarers wishing to transit Jamaica to join a ship or to return home are required to complete the following two-step process:

- Visit the MAJ website at www.maritimejamaica.com download and complete the *Jamaica Crew Change Form* and submit by e-mail, along with the required supporting documentation to LegalAffairs@jamaicaships.com
- This should be submitted at least 48 hours before the intended date of arrival in Jamaica.

- Approved applicants will be issued with an electronic certificate by the MAJ via email.

- The certificate contains an address with unique identification number which is needed in the second step.

- It is to be noted that this is not an approval to enter Jamaica but rather an indication to the Jamaican border authorities that the holder of the certificate is verified to be a seafarer meeting the requirements of the Order to be considered for expedited transit through Jamaica.

- The second step requires application for actual travel authorization. The seafarers should visit www.visitjamaica.com website, follow the steps outlined for all non-residents seeking to visit Jamaica. On arrival in Jamaica, the unique number on the certificate should be provided to the Immigration Authorities to activate the expedited transit status.

Grounding and recovery of container feeder vessel *Thea II* and tug *Svitzer Josephine*

Approaches to the Humber Estuary 15 December 2018

On 13 August 2020 the (UK) Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) published its Accident Investigation Report 15/2020 into the above incident.

At approximately 1500 on 15 December 2018, the main engine of the Cyprus registered container feeder vessel, *Thea II*, failed while approaching the Humber pilot station.

With no propulsion the master anchored the vessel in gale force weather. While awaiting the arrival of tugs, the weather deteriorated further and *Thea II* dragged its anchor towards the Binks shoal.

At 1739, before *Thea II* could be towed clear, the container vessel and one of the tugs attending, *Svitzer Josephine*, ran aground.

Search and rescue assets were deployed, but no personnel were evacuated from either vessel. As the tide rose, both vessels refloated. Just before 2200, *Svitzer Josephine* was able to get underway and return to harbour. However, *Thea II*'s tow was delayed while the vessel's managers attempted to agree contractual terms with another tug operator.

At about 0100 the following day, its managers signed Lloyd's Open Form. The vessel was then towed to the deep water anchorage before being taken into harbour on 16 December 2018.

There were no injuries and no pollution as a result of this accident. The investigation found that *Thea II* had lost propulsion due to the failure of its main engine governor, which could not be repaired, and the master had no choice but to anchor the vessel and await the arrival of tugs. However, as the weather deteriorated and the vessel began to drag towards the Binks shoal, the master did not deploy all his remaining chain or his vessel's second anchor. Had he done so, it would have slowed or arrested the vessel's rate of drift and allowed more time for tugs to secure lines and tow the vessel clear.

The MAIB investigation also found that the tug *Svitzer Josephine* grounded because the master, focused on passing the towline to the crew of *Thea II*, lost positional awareness and did not appreciate the rate of drift of both vessels towards the Binks shoal.

Thea II refloated on the rising tide. However, despite the best efforts of the harbourmaster, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and local tugs, in difficult weather conditions, *Thea II*'s managers only agreed salvage terms 2½ hours later, under the threat of formal direction from the Secretary of State's Representative.

This delay almost led to *Thea II* re-grounding, risking damage to an environmentally sensitive area.

As a result of this accident, action has been taken by Associated British Ports Humber and Svitzer Marine Ltd, to review their risk assessments and operating procedures. The Secretary of State's Representative has continued an industry- wide engagement programme to promote a greater understanding of his role.

A recommendation has been made to *Thea II*'s managers, TS-Shipping, to review their emergency response organisation and procedures.

The MAIB report

For the MAIB Accident Investigation Report readers are invited to see here: https://tinyurl.com/y3m7byme

MCA SAR footage of the incident is available here: https://tinyurl.com/yxfqkcdq

Similar accident

Readers may wish to be aware that this MAIB Accident Investigation Report drew attention to a similar accident in 2018.

On 18 December 2018, the Russia-registered bulk carrier *Kuzma Minin* grounded after dragging its anchor in Falmouth Bay, England (South Coast).

The vessel was in ballast and was successfully refloated on the next high water. There was minor damage to the vessel and there were no injuries or pollution.

The MAIB investigation (*Report 11/2019*) identified that the vessel dragged anchor in wind speeds of over 50kts.

The vessel's movement was quickly detected by the crew and the master attempted to get the vessel underway. However, the anchor was fouled by a chain and, while the crew attempted to clear this, the vessel was blown ashore.

Following the accident, the port strengthened existing measures to check visiting vessels have protection and indemnity insurance, and to improve the safety of vessels at anchor in Falmouth Bay.

A recommendation was made to the vessel's owner aimed at ensuring its vessels are appropriately resourced and meet the requirements of international conventions.

Editor's Note:

The text above is based on material contained in the MAIB *Report on the investigation of the grounding and recovery of the container feeder vessel Thea II and the tug Svitzer Josephine in the approaches to the Humber Estuary on 15 December 2018, Report No 15/2020*.

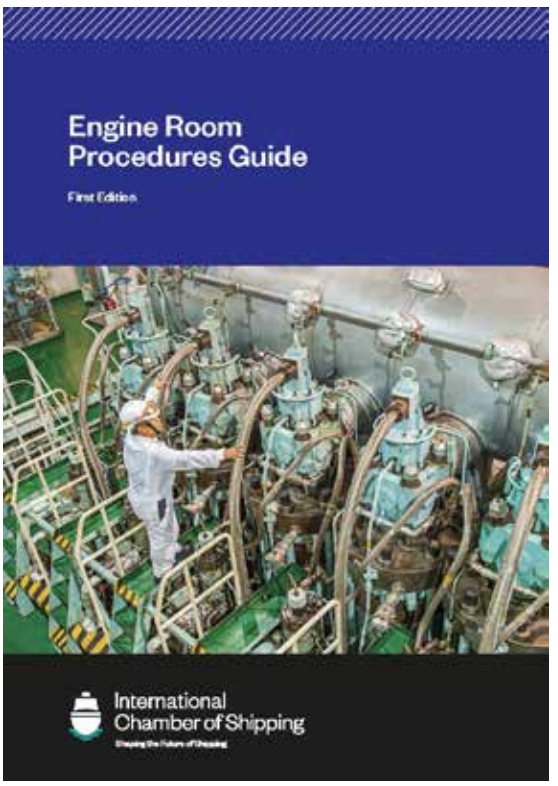
The ICS Engine Room Procedures Guide

In July the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) issued the first edition of *The ICS Engine Room Procedures Guide.*

Orders may be placed here: https://tinyurl.com/yyzu8xg7

Designed to complement the globally recognised *ICS Bridge Procedures Guide*, the *The Engine Room Procedures Guide* provides authoritative and comprehensive guidance on engine room procedures, to ensure that engine rooms are operated and managed safely.

Priced at £155, this new publication is relevant to all merchant ships, and will be invaluable to Chief Engineers and members of the engineering team, as well as shipping companies and training institutions. The new ICS Guide is an essential reference tool which reinforces established best practices. It is strongly recommended that a copy is carried on board every merchant ship



The Engine Room Procedures Guide sets out routine engine room procedures and also includes useful checklists for the ship's engineering team. It provides clear guidance on safe and environmentally responsible engine room operations and maintenance, supporting internationally agreed standards and recommendations adopted by the International Maritime Organization.

The ICS would be happy to answer any questions about the new Guide at: publications@ics-shipping.org

INMARSAT, Thetius and Shell Shipping and Maritime launch Crew Welfare Open Innovation Challenge

Closing at 2300UTC on 16 September 2020.

A challenge for start-ups and SMEs will fund and test an application that helps improve the safety of deck operations, minimises fatigue on board, reduce administration on board and improve overall crew welfare.

It was announced early in August that Inmarsat had joined forces with Shell Shipping and Maritime and maritime digital consultancy Thetius to launch a new Open Innovation Challenge for start-ups and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

This challenge, it is understood, aims to identify technology that can benefit crew safety, health and wellbeing at

sea at a time when COVID-19 has exposed the welfare of seafarers to global scrutiny.

News from the three organisations indicates that the six-week Open Innovation Challenge is looking for novel solutions that have the potential to improve crew safety and welfare across four innovation challenge areas spanning deck safety, fatigue, administration reduction and overall wellbeing.

To quote Nick Chubb, Managing Director of Thetius, who will run the Challenge: '*We are seeking applications for solutions from start-ups and SMEs who want to conduct a proof of concept onboard a vessel supported by Shell Shipping and Maritime and Inmarsat.*

'*Start-ups and solution providers who apply to the Open Innovation Challenge will be required to submit a pitch that details their proposed solution and a proof of concept onboard a Shell vessel.*'

From the submitted applications a shortlist will be generated. The successful solutions will be invited to pitch their idea to a decision-making jury at the end of September. The majority of the jury will be made up of serving seafarers, with representatives from Inmarsat, Shell Shipping and Maritime and the welfare sector also taking part.

Cash grant of £10,000

The team behind the chosen idea will be awarded a £10,000 cash grant to test their idea by implementing a proof of concept onboard a vessel and the winning start-up will also receive support from Shell Shipping and Maritime, Thetius and Inmarsat.

'*Shell is committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of seafarers*,' said Richard Holdsworth, Shell's Maritime Ventures Lead. He added: '*We are excited to learn more and help support new technologies that could make a difference to the welfare of crews*.'

In July Inmarsat and Thetius launched a new report *Welfare 2.0: How can the next generation of technology enable better crew safety, health and wellbeing at sea?*' This document highlighted the current lack of funding for crew welfare technology that has hindered its development and can be downloaded here:
https://www2.inmarsat.com/welfare2.0

Ronald Spithout, President, Inmarsat Maritime added: '*Our report shone a light on the need for far greater support and investment in crew welfare technology. This collaboration and challenge are designed to help nurture and develop solutions that can help improve the lives of seafarers*.'

For further details and to submit an entry to the Open Innovation Challenge readers are invited to see here:
https://thetius.com/crew-challenge/

BIMCO and ICS prepare for new *Seafarer Workforce Report*

It was jointly reported on 17 August that with the future of crewing high on the agenda, BIMCO and ICS are preparing for the launch of the latest *Seafarer Workforce Report* (previously known as the *Manpower Report*). This is the industry standard resource for ship operators, agencies and governments seeking the market intelligence they need to develop crewing and training strategies fit for the future.

In the words of Guy Platten, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping: '*The shipping industry is evolving rapidly. With the challenges and changes wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, decarbonisation and rapid technological developments, ship operators now more than ever need a management tool that provides them with an understanding of both today's and tomorrow's crewing landscape*.'

The new *Seafarer Workforce Report* will be the essential tool in preparing ship operations for a post-COVID world and to ensure that the regulations and policies being developed will be fit for purpose.

Over the next few months shipping companies, national maritime administrations, and maritime education and training institutions will be asked to contribute to the new report. Their insight and data on the status of maritime training and recruitment, attrition and retention rates and the number and profiles of seafarers qualified and certificated under the STCW Convention will provide the foundation for this authoritative publication.

David Loosley, BIMCO Secretary General added: '*I believe that this study will be one of the most important that we have launched. The COVID-19 pandemic represents a crew change crisis as well a financial crisis for our industry*

that may influence the global supply and demand of seafarers for many years to come. The result will help provide answers to where the shipping world is heading and what new crewing initiatives might be required.'

For the last 30 years, BIMCO and ICS have regularly conducted a comprehensive survey of the world's supply and demand of seafarers, developing its format and content to meet the changing needs of the industry.

The new *Seafarer Workforce Report* is expected to be published in 2021. It will feature:

- Detailed estimates of the current supply and demand for seafarers for the world fleet, including country-specific figures.
- Forward projections for the likely supply and demand situations in the next decade.
- Identification of various maritime training, recruitment and retention trends and their potential consequences.

UK Coastguard to replace emergency radio network infrastructure

It was reported early in August that in the UK the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is investing over £170 million in a new radio network that will enable HM Coastguard to continue to save lives in the coming years.

Built and maintained by telent Technology Services Ltd this new network is said to be a significant investment in telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas.

The existing network will be replaced with a modern and resilient fibre-based hybrid network, that will provide increased reliability, bandwidth and security, it was reported.

The new network will ensure HM Coastguard can continue to:

- Communicate with ships in UK waters to advise on navigation hazards or to receive distress alerts.
- Track shipping through vessels' AIS, which present a very significant national security risk.
- Launch and direct the fleet of charitably funded lifeboats that save lives; and
- Communicate with HM Coastguard helicopters, fixed wing aircraft, and emergency tugs which save lives and protect the marine environment.

At MCA Commercial and Programmes Director, Damien Oliver, the Senior Responsible Officer for this Programme, said: '*This is a vitally important investment in Coastguard infrastructure through the construction of a new national radio network, without which HM Coastguard simply could not fulfil its role in protecting life on the coast and in our waters into the future.* '*This new network will replace the increasingly difficult to maintain analogue system in place today. It will also provide fibre connectivity to the very rural areas in which the majority of our 155 remote radio sites are located*."

This programme will replace old existing copper telephone wiring with modern fibre-based technology to each of the HM Coastguard's 155 remote radio sites, as well as adding new connection points to increase resilience and diversity which will in turn improve reliability.

A future benefit of the programme will see remote towns and villages in the proximity of the network being able to use the new fibre infrastructure to access improved technology services from a broad base of suppliers.

As network provision is not part of the MCA's core capability, a market leading specialist organisation will be used to install and run the new network under a Managed Service Support Contract.

Following a rigorous and competitive tendering process telent have been awarded the contract to design, implement and support the new fibre-based hybrid network.

About the UK MCA

In the UK the MCA is a frontline emergency response agency of the Department for Transport. As well as delivering maritime search and rescue through HM Coastguard (one of the four UK emergency services with Police, Fire and Ambulance), the MCA is responsible for maritime regulation, safety and counter-pollution.

From the IFSMA Office

The IFSMA office remains closed for now, however, work continues almost as normal. A virtual Executive Council meeting was held on 27th July, with connections from Japan and Ukraine to Argentina and USA.

Matters discussed included difficulties with crew change, with more than 300,000 crew stranded. You will notice that we have included an article on crew change. The situation can and does rapidly change, UK visitors to Jamaica must now go into quarantine on their return to UK.

Our invitation for the next Biennial General Meeting in Odessa was confirmed. Final arrangements will not be made for the moment. It is hoped to hold the event in the autumn of 2021. The next Executive Council meeting virtually in December unless urgent event required an earlier meeting.

Members will recall the survey request we circulated during July on "Global Seafarers during COVID-19 Pandemic". Further to my message to all members on 15th July, this is to remind you of the survey which can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/y6arxkxh . The researcher hopes to reach 600-700 returns and has extended the cut off time to 15th September. Please help if you can.