

Company Safety Memo

SAFETY MEMO

DATE: 23/08/07
TO: ALL MASTERS AND CREWMEMBERS.
CC:
FROM:
RE: CREW'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Following a recent inspection of all of our vessel's documents, safety manual and system etc., it would seem evident that the following items are not being attended to as frequently as they should be: -

- Some safety manuals are not being signed as being read, after recent revisions have been made. This maybe one of the reasons for the following comments.
- Some drill records are out of date, suggesting that the emergency drills are not being practised by any new/temporary or existing crewmembers.
- Any concessionaire/catering personnel do not also appear to have been given any familiarisation tours of the vessel before sailing. This requires the names and signatures of persons giving and receiving instruction to confirm that they have been instructed.
- Bar staff, who make up part of the regular crew are also not showing up on records, as not having been given any regular or refresher instruction by crewmembers.
- Some crewmembers are not fully aware of their responsibilities and duties when being asked.
- Standing orders, notice to mariners etc are not being filed properly, making it most difficult to impart any important information to crewmembers that may come aboard for one or two trips only.
- The initial reluctance to submit any company incident/accident forms following any incident or accident. This is despite the fact, that legally you are required under MCA/MAIB/PLA and HSE regulations to do so. Any delays in submitting information to the company make events much harder to recall and can leave the individual or company open to serious compensation claims for example. There are clear procedures and instructions outlined in the safety manual to cover this and other previous items mentioned.

The above list does not need rocket science to be able to comply with any rules or regulations. It is without any doubt that it is part of the crews' duties to ensure that the above items and others are implemented. Not to do so puts you in a very vulnerable situation in the eyes of the law, should a serious incident/accident occur on the vessel you are crewing?

If for whatever reason, crews are unable to fulfil their duties and responsibilities as outlined in the safety manual and address the problems outlined above, then either _____ or _____ must be informed so that those reasons may be addressed.

Finally I would like to make it perfectly clear to everybody concerned that the MCA, now that they are responsible for issuing and controlling the Boatmasters' licences, will not be tolerating these shortcomings and would have no qualms in the suspension or the withdrawal of them should it be deemed necessary. By not carrying out your duties in a responsible manner, you are not only placing yourselves and others at risk (which is in direct contravention of the 1974 HSE Act and company policy) but your future and the company's would also be under threat.

Standing Orders to crew

NOTICE TO CREW

IN LIGHT OF THE RECENT FATAL ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED RECENTLY ON ONE OF THE CLIPPER VESSELS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE A HEAD AND STERN ROPE MADE FAST AT ALL TIMES WHEN MOORED AND PARTICULARLY WHEN EMBARKING AND DISEMBARKING PASSENGERS.

PLEASE REFER TO PLA NOTICE WHICH HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN ISSUED TO YOU, FOR YOUR SHIP'S FILE, WHICH GIVES FULL DETAILS REGARDING REQUIREMENTS FOR MOORING VESSELS.

THAMES CRUISES

06/05/2004

STANDING ORDER TO ALL CREWS

Following a risk assessment regarding passengers and staff embarking and disembarking from vessels, you are advised to carry out the following procedures at all times.

- 1) Vessel to be moored tight alongside the pier or other vessel, if 2nd bottom.
- 2) If alongside other vessel, line up embarkation gates and put out a minimum of 2 ropes, one foreside and one afterside of gate.
- 3) One crew member to stand by exit gate and also where applicable escort staff from 1st bottom vessel onto pier.

THAMES CRUISES LIMITED

26TH February 2007

Extract from Research Project 527

ASSESSMENT OF STANDARDS OF SAFETY MANAGEMENT ON CLASS V VESSELS ON THE RIVER THAMES

Background

The International Safety Management (ISM) Code was introduced progressively between 1998 and 2002 for ships over 500gt operating internationally. In his Interim Report on the Thames Safety Inquiry²¹, Lord Justice Clarke welcomed the development of a Domestic Safety Management (DSM) Code applying to domestic passenger ships, and recommended that it should be introduced at the earliest opportunity. The DSM Code is a UK initiative, not driven by EC or international standards, although it is now under consideration by the EC as a model for community requirements. It was developed as a basic safety management tool for use by small companies, including owner operators, and was not intended to emulate the more complex ISM Code.

The DSM Code was introduced in November 2001, and has been in force for four operating seasons. Guidance was issued to MCA surveyors in January 2005 on stepping up implementation of the Code, after a period during which the MCA has taken a more educational approach with operators. Research Project RP 527 was designed to establish what effect the Code is having on the safety culture of Class V passenger ships, and if appropriate to recommend ways to increase its effectiveness.

This report coincides with an internal review of the implementation of the Domestic Safety Management Code by the MCA. Our response to the recommendations of RP 527 will be reviewed in the light of the findings of the internal review.

Introduction

For Research Project RP 527 on safety management, Det Norske Veritas Maritime Solutions Limited (DNV) was contracted to undertake an independent assessment of Class V safety management standards using a risk based methodology on some pre-selected vessels determined by the MCA.

Thirty vessels from the pre-selected list were visited by DNV within this project. During each vessel visit, an assessment of the vessel or company's safety

²¹ As footnote 6.

system was carried out against an audit protocol based on the Domestic Safety Management (DSM) Code as well as conducting 41 interviews with a range of personnel. The interviews were used to carry out an assessment of the safety culture on the River Thames using the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Climate Survey Tool (CST).

The aims were:

- to assess the standard of safety management, by identifying gaps leading to unacceptable levels of operational risk to crew and passengers;
- to assess the prevailing attitude to safety at all levels, including gauging the impact of the DSM Code; and
- to identify strategies for improvement.

Results

A number of conclusions were made in the following areas based upon the findings from the DSM audit and the CST: -

Compliance with the requirements of the DSM Code was found to be good. However, there were concerns in the following areas.

- Health and Safety Protection Policy
- Procedures to Ensure Safe Operation
- Communication
- Accident and Incident Reporting
- Procedures for Responding to Emergency Situations
- Training

In particular, DNV found that in most cases the Safety Management System was viewed as an exercise in compliance with regulations, rather than being integrated into, and therefore informing company safety systems. This means that companies do not have a culture of continual improvement of safety standards, which is the intended outcome of a safety management system.

The MCA is reassured by the overall finding that operators are complying with the Domestic Safety Management Code. We believe that the integration of safety management into the day to day operation of passenger vessels will come in time, as operators understand better the role of the Code and realise the benefits as well as the costs involved.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations were identified and are listed below:

1. Move the MCA Surveyor audit away from a compliance based documentation approach towards a more targeted audit. This can be done in stages by conducting a part normal audit and part themed audit, for example with particular topics such as accident investigation or achievement of objectives being example themes. This will provide an element of continual improvement;

We recognise the importance of encouraging continual improvement in company safety systems. However, we do not fully accept that the MCA should adopt in-depth, themed audits for DSM audits. The vast majority of the operations concerned are small companies with very simple management structures and safety procedures, and themed audits are unlikely to uncover more than can be achieved in a general audit.

2. Determine where the gaps lie in the Health and Safety Protection Policy and assist operators to develop achievable key objectives and targets. Encourage MCA Surveyors to audit against these.

We accept that the MCA has a role to play in assisting operators to develop integrated Safety Management Systems, and the recommendations on targeted inspections, discussing weaknesses in the current health and safety policy and guidance on incident and near miss reporting will be taken forward in that context. Training in risk assessment and safety management is included in the syllabus for the proposed new national Boatmaster's licence.

3. Provide more training for MCA Auditors and Designated Persons about safety management systems and risk assessment. Use of these techniques can assist in the development of appropriate rules/procedures that assist all parties in conducting their duties.

The MCA does not fully accept this recommendation. MCA Auditors who carry out DSM audits are fully trained in these areas, under ISM procedures. However, there is an issue about how to apply these techniques, which are designed for large operations, to the domestic passenger ship scene. We do intend to explore the need for a short course to adapt ISM auditing techniques to the wide range of small vessels covered by the DSM Code.

4. Improve communications between operators about H&S performance on the River Thames. Using either the Domestic Passenger Ship Steering Group (DPSSG) or some other means to report back to shipboard personnel so they are aware of lessons learnt or success for other operations (see also recommendation 6).

The MCA accepts that there would be benefits in improved communications between operators on safety issues. Individual MCA Marine Offices issue

bulletins and circular letters on safety issues to operators and others affected from time to time.

The operators' associations are already proactive in this area and District Marine Safety Committees and the Domestic Passenger Ship Steering Group provide further opportunities. However, there are undoubtedly many operators who are not affiliated to any association, and so do not have the opportunity to participate in such discussions.

The MCA will continue to promote the benefits for operators of working together, (e.g. through operators' associations) to ensure that their views are represented and to share information and guidance on safety issues.

5. Expand the checklist system currently in place to include additional management system items which will regularly check the status of the Domestic Safety Management System, as a means of carrying out an internal audit.

We accept that check-lists can form a useful part of a vessel's safety management system, and under existing guidance it is open to operators to develop them where appropriate. It is not considered appropriate for the MCA to develop further standard checklists, as this would be contrary to the need, identified elsewhere in the report, for each operator to have a system tailored to their operation and vessels. We will discuss this issue with DPSSG and consider additional guidance on company management systems which will help operators to check the operation of their safety management systems.

6. Educate operators about definitions and recording systems for accident and near miss reporting. Encourage reporting within a 'just culture'²². Use early successes to feedback between operators about reporting to raise awareness that the safety standards are fair and equitable for all operators. One option could be the promotion of systems such as CHIRPS (Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting System²³);

The MCA agrees that internal reporting of incidents is an important component of any safety management system. Internal investigation of incidents is a good way of informing continual improvement of safety systems. We discussed accident reporting with DPSSG members in March 2005 and operators have been asked to consider ways to improve reporting.

²² A 'just culture' is an atmosphere of trust in which people are encouraged, even rewarded, for providing essential safety-related information – but in which they are also clear about where the line must be drawn between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

²³ www.chirp.co.uk

7. Consider issuing a Document of Compliance (DOC) to separate the DSM audit process from the current Passenger Certificate.

While for larger companies, with a number of vessels, there may be a case for a company certificate for Safety Management separate from the individual passenger ship certificate, a combined system was introduced to reduce the paperwork and administration involved – this is of particular importance for owner operators with maybe one or two vessels. A passenger ship cannot operate without a valid DSM certificate, so it makes sense to keep the DSM and passenger certificate running concurrently. However, we will be reviewing our audit procedures in the light of the MCA review of the DSM Code.

8. Consider regular (bi-annual/annual) large scale inter-company safety/emergency drills to improve crew awareness.

We have discussed the need for company and inter-company drills in our response to Research Project RP 526 on Evacuation Standards. We will strengthen the guidance on emergency procedures and training within the DSM Code.

Conclusion

In the Introduction to this document, the MCA has suggested that goal-setting regulations, taking into account the environment in which the vessel operates, should be an alternative to the current prescriptive regime available to operators.

The MCA expects that the operator's DSM Code would be a key feature of any goal-setting regime, since this would be how the operator would demonstrate that the vessel, and the measures in place on board, provided an adequate level of safety for the operating environment.

Notice to crew regarding accident on board *Royal Princess*

NOTICE TO ALL CREW

RE: Recent Incident concerning a passenger on
Royal Princess who fell in during disembarkation.

There are several points which need a reminder.

- 1) There should be a crew member on the gate at all times when passengers are embarking or disembarking.
- 2) The boat should be moored tight to the pier with ropes forward and aft of the embarkation/disembarkation gate.
- 3) Any person on board who is looking the worse for drink must be refused any further drinks.

THAMES CRUISES

17/07/2001

Text of Thames Cruises passenger disembarkation announcement

"Announcement to be made just before going alongside the pier to disembark

Can I have your attention please.

We are just about to go alongside the pier to disembark.

Please will you be extremely careful when you step from the vessel to the pier.

Do not attempt to leave the vessel unless there is a crew member on the exit gate, and you ensure that there is no gap between the vessel and the pier.

Please make sure that you have taken all your belongings with you before you go ashore.

And we ask you to leave the vessel and the surrounding area in a quiet and orderly fashion so as not to disturb the local residents

On behalf of Thames Cruises I hope that you have enjoyed your cruise.

Have a safe journey home, and we hope to see you again.

THAMES CRUISES

October 2008" [sic]

MAIB Safety Bulletin 3/2008

MAIB SAFETY BULLETIN 3/2008

Passenger fatality during disembarkation from a
Class V passenger vessel on the River Thames

17 August 2008

MAIB SAFETY BULLETIN 3/2008

This document, containing urgent safety recommendations, has been produced for marine safety purposes only, on the basis of information available to date.

The Merchant Shipping (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2005 provide for the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents to make recommendations at any time during the course of an investigation if, in his opinion, it is necessary or desirable to do so.

This Safety Bulletin is issued to ensure, through the relevant certification and licensing bodies, that Class V passenger vessels on the River Thames are being operated to a standard which ensures the safety of their passengers and crew.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Meyer".

Stephen Meyer
Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

This bulletin is also available on our website: <http://www.maib.gov.uk>

Press Enquiries: 020 7944 6433/3387; Out of hours: 020 7944 4292
Public Enquiries: 020 7944 3000

BACKGROUND

On 17 August 2008, a passenger fell overboard from the Class V passenger vessel *Hurlingham* when attempting to disembark the vessel at Westminster Pier on the River Thames. Despite an extensive search of the river, the passenger's body was not recovered from the river until five days later.

The safe operation of Class V passenger vessels operating on the River Thames and utilising piers in Greater London is governed by the need to comply with the requirements of the UK Domestic Safety Management Code and also a licence agreement issued by London River Services Ltd.



ISSUE

Preliminary findings of the MAIB's investigation into the causes and circumstances of this accident have raised concerns over the safe operation of Class V passenger vessels operating on the River Thames.

The main areas of concern are as follows:

- **Vessel mooring**

Strong anecdotal evidence suggests that, notwithstanding general advice to the contrary, the practice of using a single mooring line and engine power to hold a boat alongside is widespread on the River Thames. While this may be adequate in some circumstances it is not appropriate when disembarking large numbers of passengers.

- **Passenger control**

Like many other Class V passenger vessels on the River Thames, *Hurlingham* operates as a venue for social occasions and the bar is a prominent feature of the boat. In these circumstances it is likely that passengers' judgment and spatial awareness may be impaired due to the effects of alcohol. It is therefore vital that robust procedures are observed to ensure the supervision, control and safety of passengers especially during embarkation / disembarkation.

- Vessel management

All Class V passenger vessels require a valid Domestic Safety Management (DSM) certificate and a Licence to operate from London piers. The initial investigation into this accident has highlighted a number of key areas where the requirements of the DSM certificate and Licence were not achieved.

RECOMMENDATION

The **Maritime and Coastguard Agency** and **London River Services** are recommended to:

2008/170

- Take urgent action to satisfy themselves that all companies operating licensed Class V passenger vessels on the River Thames have effective systems in place to ensure the safe operations of their vessels in accordance with the Domestic Safety Management Code and the LRS licence agreement.