

Based on the ISPS Code
(International Ship and Port Facility Security Code)

Handbook for ISPS Audits

(Containing requirement for Japanese flagged ships)

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Revision History

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2003.07	Initial edition	- Initial issue
2017.09	17	- Revised "Introduction". - Added online audit application service (e-Application). - Revised the required documents for SSP amendment approval and notification of amendments.
2021.10	18	- Revised the handling of SSP approval due to the introduction of the SSP electronic approval system.
2022.02	19	- Revised descriptions due to the introduction of electronic audit records.
2024.06	20	- Revised due to the discontinuation of MS-SPA: Schedule for Review and Approval of SSP, and general editorial updates.
2026.07	21	- Revised overall structure. - Added Requirements for Japanese-flagged Vessels.

Please refer to ClassNK's website for the jurisdiction of each Branch or Office.

HOME > About ClassNK > Directory

https://www.classnk.or.jp/hp/en/directory/dir_top.aspx

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Abbreviations and Definitions of Terms

ISPS Code	International Ship and Port Facility Security Code
ISSC	International Ship Security Certificate
SSP	Ship Security Plan, a plan developed to ensure the application of measures designed to protect persons on board, cargo, cargo transport units, ship's stores, or the ship from the risks of a security incident. (A/2.1.4)
SSA	Ship Security Assessment (A/8)
CSO	Company Security Officer, the person designated by the Company for ensuring that a ship security assessment is carried out; that a ship security plan is developed, submitted for approval, and thereafter implemented and maintained; and for liaison with the SSO and port facility security officers (PFSO). (A/2.1.7)
SSO	Ship Security Officer, the person on board the ship, accountable to the Master, designated by the Company as responsible for the security of the ship, including implementation and maintenance of the ship security plan and liaison with the CSO and PFSO. (A/2.1.6) Since 1 July 2009, the SSO has been required to hold a Certificate of Proficiency issued by the Administration in accordance with STCW Regulation VI/5.
RSO	Recognized Security Organization, an organization with appropriate expertise in security matters and with appropriate knowledge of ship and port operations authorized to carry out assessment, verification, approval, or certification activities required by SOLAS Chapter XI-2 or by Part A of the ISPS Code. (SOLAS XI-2 Reg. 1.16)
DOC	Document of Compliance (ISM Code A/1.1.5)
SMC	Safety Management Certificate (ISM Code A/1.1.6)
SSAS	Ship Security Alert System (SOLAS XI-2 Reg.6)
Company	Company as defined in regulation IX/1 of SOLAS, which is the same as the "Company" defined in the ISM Code. (SOLAS XI-2 Reg.1.7)
Anniversary date	The day and month of each year that correspond to the date of expiry of the ISSC.

Introduction

In accordance with SOLAS Chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code, passenger ships, cargo ships of 500 gross tonnage and above, and mobile offshore drilling units engaged in international voyages must carry out an SSA, develop an SSP based on the SSA, implement the SSP on board, pass the Initial Audit, and hold an ISSC.

ClassNK has been authorized by many Flag Administrations as an RSO. On behalf of Flag Administrations, and in accordance with ClassNK's Rules for Ship Security System and Guidance for the Approval and Certification of Ship Security Systems, ClassNK conducts SSP approvals and shipboard audits and, except for certain Flag Administrations (e.g. Panama, Japan), issues ISSCs.

According to ISPS Code A/9.4.11, the SSP is required to be reviewed periodically after approval.

The texts of SOLAS XI-2 and ISPS Code are available on the ISPS site of ClassNK's website.

ClassNK's services, including this Handbook, are available on our website.

- Checklists: <https://www.classnk.or.jp/hp/en/activities/statutory/isps/index.html>
- Application forms: https://www.classnk.or.jp/hp/en/download/dl_appli.aspx
- Ship in Service / e-Application: <https://portal.classnk.or.jp/portal/index.jsp>

1 Overview

1.1 Certificates

Please refer to Section 3.1.

1.2 Audit

1.2.1 Types of SSP Approval and Confirmation

- .1 Initial approval
- .2 Approval of the amendments to the SSP
- .3 Confirmation of the amendments for which approval is not required (Minor amendment)

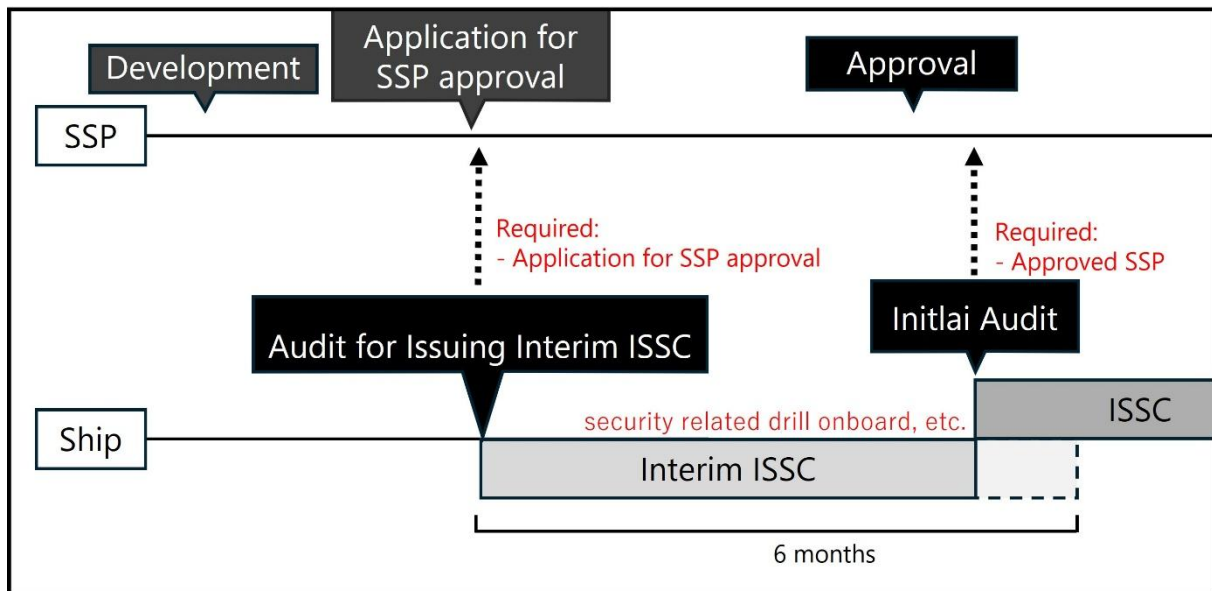
1.2.2 Types of Shipboard Audits

- .1 Audit for issuing an Interim ISSC
- .2 Initial Audit: Audit to issue an ISSC for the first time
- .3 Intermediate Audit: Audit to be conducted between the second and third anniversary date
- .4 Renewal Audit: Audit to renew an ISSC within a period not exceeding five years
- .5 Additional Audit: Examples are as follows.
 - a. To clear NCs
 - b. After approval of substantial amendments to the SSP
 - c. Others
 - Particular changes such as ship's name, GT etc.
 - Replacement of SSAS

1.3 Procedure for Obtaining an ISSC

The following is an example of the procedure for obtaining an ISSC for a ship newly placed under management.

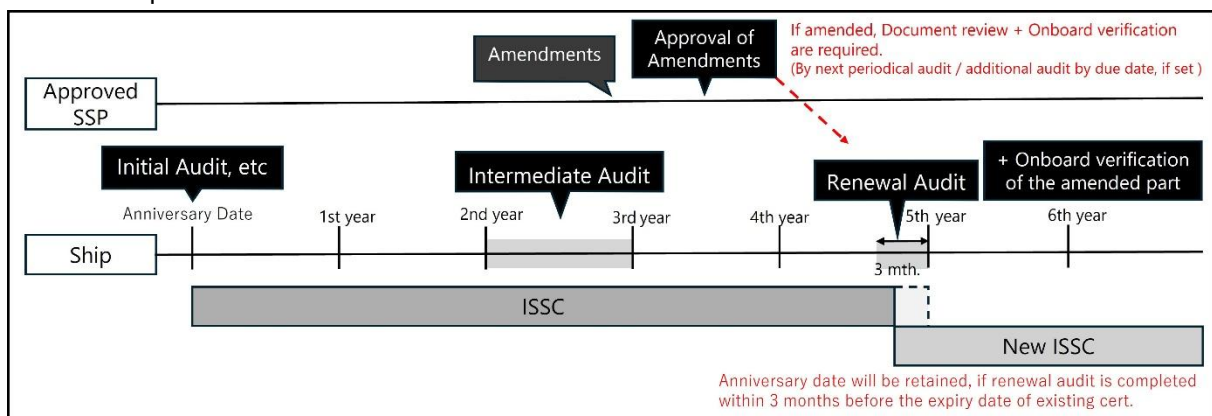
- .1 To carry out an SSA, develop an SSP, and apply to Flag or RSO for initial approval.
- .2 To apply for an audit for issuing an Interim ISSC. The audit may be conducted if the SSP has been submitted for initial approval. Upon satisfactory completion of the audit, the Auditor issues an Interim ISSC.
- .3 Complete an Initial Audit within the expiry of the Interim ISSC. The SSP must be approved. Upon satisfactory completion of the audit, the Auditor issues an ISSC valid for five years, except for Panama, Japan, and some flags.



1.4 Maintenance of ISSC

An Intermediate Audit is conducted between the second and third anniversary date, and the certificate is endorsed. And a new ISSC is issued with the same anniversary date if a Renewal Audit is completed within three months before the expiry of the ISSC.

In case an SSP is amended, re-approval or notification of the amendment to the SSP is required. And then, onboard verification for the re-approval of the amendment is required.



2 Applicable Ships (SOLAS XI-2 Reg.2)

Ships subject to the ship security requirements under SOLAS Chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code, and therefore subject to ISPS audits conducted by ClassNK, are the following ships engaged in international voyages:

- .1 Passenger ships
- .2 Cargo ships of 500 gross tonnage and upward
- .3 Mobile offshore drilling units

3 Certificates

3.1 Types of Certificates and Validity

3.1.1 Interim ISSC (ISPS A/19.4.1)

An Interim ISSC, normally valid for six months, is issued in the following circumstances:

- .1 A ship on delivery or prior to its entry or re-entry into service after lay-up beyond 6 months.
- .2 Flag change
- .3 Company change

3.1.2 ISSC (Full term ISSC) (ISPS A/19.1-19.3)

An ISSC is issued upon completion by an auditor of the verification that the ship's security system and any associated security equipment complied with SOLAS XI-2, Part A of the ISPS Code, and the approved SSP. An ISSC is valid for five (5) years subject to intermediate audit. However, where the Flag itself issues an ISSC (i.e. Panama, Japan), the Company is required to apply to the Flag by themselves.

3.1.3 Short term ISSC

A Short term ISSC may be issued in special cases with specific authorization by the Flag.

3.2 Revision, Invalidation, Return, and Re-issuance of Certificates

3.2.1 Revision

In case of changes of the particulars on the ISSC such as ship's name except company's name and/or address, an Additional Audit is required to re-issue the ISSC. However, if only the Company's name and/or address is changed, an Additional Audit will be conducted based on the submitted documents, without attendance on board by an Auditor.

For changes to the information contained in the SSP, please consult the ClassNK Branch or Office nearest to the Company's location, as necessary.

3.2.2 Invalidation

An existing ISSC becomes invalid in the following circumstances:

- .1 A periodical audit (Renewal Audit or Intermediate Audit) has not been completed
- .2 An NC identified during an audit has not been rectified within the specified period
- .3 A part of the SSP requiring re-approval has been amended without re-approval
- .4 The Company ceases to manage the ship
- .5 The ship's flag is changed

- .6 The fees and expenses have not been paid
- .7 For an Interim ISSC, an ISSC has been issued
- .8 The Company applies for deletion of the ship from the ISPS Register

3.2.3 Returning

In the case of e-certificate, it is not necessary to return a printed copy. Please dispose of it as appropriate.

3.2.4 Re-issuance

Re-issuance is handled by Head Office. Please contact Ship Management Systems Department(SMD).

4 SSP Approval and Confirmation

4.1 Initial approval

The Auditor in charge reviews the submitted SSA/SSP and approves if it complies with SOLAS Chapter XI-2, the ISPS Code, and Flag requirements. If our auditor in charge thinks it does not comply, the Auditor may request corrections. The approved SSP will be stamped and returned to the Company as a tamper-protected file. The Company is requested to send it to the ship and keep it both at the Company and on board.

And ClassNK keeps only copies of the cover page with approval stamps, revision record, and index of the SSP as well as the cover page of the SSA, and the auditor issues a Letter of the approval (MS-LOA / Approval of Ship Security Plan).

4.2 Amendment approval

The Auditor in charge reviews the submitted SSP and approves if the amended parts of the SSP comply with SOLAS XI-2, Part A of the ISPS Code, and Flag requirements. The approved SSP will be stamped and returned to the Company as a tamper-protected file. The Company is requested to send it to the ship and keep it both at the Company and on board.

The auditor issues a document certifying the approval of the amendments (MS-LOA-AMD / Approval of Amendments to Ship Security Plan and MS-LOA-AMD-ATT / Attachment to MS-LOA-AMD).

The MS-LOA-AMD-ATT specifies the due date by which the amended part should be verified on board. In the case of major changes such as SSAS replacement, on board verification is required by the due date within three (3) months. In other cases, on board verification is required by the next periodical audit.

Please apply an additional audit if on board verification is required by setting a due date. An additional audit may be conducted together with a periodical audit if the timing allows.

4.3 Confirmation of the amendments for which approval is not required

For the amendments that do not fall under ISPS Code A/9.4.1 to A/9.4.18, and for items for which the Flag does not require approval, approval is not always necessary, but the amended parts must be notified to ClassNK.

In this case, the submitted document should be reviewed to confirm that amended parts of the SSP do not require approval. The submitted SSP may be stamped and then returned to the Company as a tamper-protected file. The Company is requested to send it to the ship. In this case, MS-LOA-AMD and MS-LOA-AMD-ATT are not issued.

4.4 Note

ClassNK cannot re-approve the SSP for amendment that was initially approved by another RSO. If an amendment is required, the application will be accepted as an initial approval.

5 Shipboard Audit

5.1 Audit for issuing Interim ISSC

5.1.1 An Auditor visits the ship and issues an Interim ISSC if the following items can be verified.

- .1 The SSA has been completed, and the SSP has been submitted for initial approval. The SSP need not have been approved at this stage.
- .2 A copy of the SSP is maintained on board and is implemented.
- .3 The Master, SSO, and other crew members assigned security duties are familiar with their duties and responsibilities.
- .4 The SSO is designated and understands the duties and responsibilities.
- .5 SSAS is configured with the designated destination in accordance with Flag requirements.
- .6 The SSAS test has been carried out with successful results.
- .7 A copy of a valid DOC (or Interim DOC) is available on board.

5.2 Initial Audit, Intermediate Audit and Renewal Audit

5.2.1 An Auditor visits the ship and conducts the audit along with the "Audit Plan" sent in advance. The audit includes interviews with the Master, SSO, and security personnel, verification of records, and confirmation of shipboard security measures.

5.2.2 When deficiencies (MNC or NC) are found, an ISSC cannot be issued until the rectification of such deficiencies is confirmed.

- 5.2.3 At an intermediate or additional audit, where an NC is identified and cannot be rectified during the audit, the ISSC may be endorsed although the NC must be rectified thereafter. In such cases, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) should be submitted within two weeks, and additional audit shall be conducted within three (3) months. The CAP must be agreed by the auditor.
- 5.2.4 If an “additional audit to confirm rectification of NC” is required, the ISSC will become invalid unless the additional audit is conducted and the rectification of the NC is confirmed by the specified due date.
- 5.2.5 The Auditor may request that a security-related drill be conducted.
- 5.2.6 Internal audits and reviews of security activities should be conducted at the intervals specified in the SSP, and the records should be kept on board.
- 5.2.7 Audit records issued by ClassNK at the time of audit should be kept by the Company and on board the ship for at least five years.

5.3 Additional Audit after approval of the amendment to the SSP

Where ClassNK has approved amendments to the SSP, and a due date for on board verification is specified as described in 4.2, please apply for an additional audit. In principle, the scope of the audit is limited to the parts related to the amendments. (See 4.2)

5.4 Other Additional Audits

5.4.1 Additional Audit for change of the ship's name

In case of ship's name change, an additional audit on board is required. At the audit, auditor verifies the Certificate of Registry and statutory certificates that were duly revised and either witnesses an SSAS test or verifies the test record with a successful result.

5.4.2 Additional Audit required by a Flag Administration

Flag Administrations sometimes require RSO to conduct an additional audit. In such cases, ClassNK conducts the audit with the scope considering the reason for the requirement.

5.4.3 Additional Audit for confirmation after SSAS replacement or repair

Please refer to 5.5 below.

5.4.4 Additional Audit at flag change

Generally, an audit for issuing an Interim ISSC is required. However, where the Company remains unchanged and the Flag authorizes, an additional audit may be conducted and an ISSC with the same validity as the previous ISSC may be issued. Even in such cases, the SSP must incorporate the requirements of the new Flag and be initially approved before the additional audit.

5.4.5 Additional Audit to clear NCs

This is the audit to verify the implementation of the CAP: Corrective Action Plan which was determined by the company and agreed by the auditor who raised the NC. The NC would be regarded as rectified where the verification is completed. If the NC was found at the renewal audit, the certificate is issued after the rectification.

5.5 Procedures for SSAS Replacement

5.5.1 The instructions, guidance, and other relevant information for the SSAS must be included in the SSP (ISPS Code A/9.4.18). Therefore, in case of SSAS replacement, the SSP must be amended and approved beforehand. The Auditor who approved the amendment requires an on board verification within three months.

5.5.2 At the replacement of the SSAS, SSAS checklist should be made by a radio technician with tests that the SSAS complies with the requirements of SOLAS XI-2 Reg. 6, para 2 to 4. Our auditor in charge of the additional audit conducts the audit with confirmation of the SSAS checklist. However, in the case of a Self-Contained SSAS (SSAS-SC*), the SSO can conduct the test and prepare the SSAS Checklist.

* Self-Contained SSAS

Self-Contained SSAS is defined as "a SSAS which does not require any interface with, and/or depends on input from, radio and/or navigational equipment required by SOLAS IV and V to meet the performance standards required by SOLAS XI-2/6." (IACS PR 24)

5.5.3 The company is requested to arrange an ISPS additional audit in conjunction with the SSAS replacement work. The Auditor will verify the SSAS Checklist on board and confirm that the SSAS test has been conducted satisfactorily.

6 Application

Applications should be made through "Ship in Service" or "e-Application" in the "ClassNK Customer Hub (Web Service Portal)" on ClassNK's website.

(<https://portal.classnk.or.jp/portal/index.jsp>)

Alternatively, the application forms available on ClassNK's website may be downloaded and submitted to the office in charge by e-mail, etc.

(https://www.classnk.or.jp/hp/en/download/dl_appli.aspx)

6.1 Application for SSP Approval

Please apply to the Branch or Office nearest to the Company's location. Where applying through e-Application, requests for correction and other communications

can be conveyed through the online chat function, thereby facilitating the review process smoothly. Applications by e-mail are also accepted; however, SSA/SSP files must never be attached without appropriate security measures. For Japanese-flagged vessels, ClassNK Branch or office in Japan is responsible.

6.1.1 Documents to be submitted

6.1.1.1 Initial approval

- .1 SSP
- .2 SSA
- .3 Copy of CSO's Training Certificate
- .4 Copy of (Provisional) Certificate of Registry
- .5 Copy of valid DOC (not required if issued by ClassNK)

If the following documents are not included in the SSP, please also submit them.

Documents containing the following information (related to SOLAS XI-2 Reg.5):

- i) Person responsible for appointing shipboard personnel
- ii) Person responsible for deciding the employment of the ship
- iii) Contracting party if the ship is employed under a contract

6.1.1.2 Approval of the Amendment to the SSP

- .1 Cover page of the amended SSP (not required if an approval stamp on the cover page is not requested)
- .2 Revision record of the SSP (updated one to indicate the amended items), table of contents, and applicable amended pages
- .3 SSA report on which the amendment to the SSP was based (Note 2)
- .4 Existing pages containing the amended parts, or documents showing a comparison between the old and new versions
- .5 Copy of the CSO's Training Certificate
- .6 Copy of valid DOC (not required if issued by ClassNK)
(Note 2)

Depending on the revision (e.g., a change of CSO), it's not always necessary. Please consult with the assigned auditor as necessary.

6.1.1.3 Confirmation of the amendment for which approval is not required (Minor amendment)

- .1 Cover page of the SSP (if amended)
- .2 Table of contents (if amended)
- .3 Revision record of the SSP (updated one to indicate the amended items)

.4 Existing pages containing the amended parts, or documents showing a comparison between the old and new versions

.5 Applicable amended pages

Even if the amendment is only for correction of typographical or clerical errors in the SSP, please submit the above documents to the office in charge. When applying, please indicate in the remarks that the amendment is only for correction of typographical or clerical errors. In such cases, no changes should be made to the cover page, table of contents, or revision record of the SSP.

6.2 Application for Shipboard Audit

Please submit the application to the Branch or Office nearest to the port where the audit is scheduled to take place. Application through e-Application is recommended. Where the security level of either the ship or the port is 3, shipboard audits cannot be conducted.

Please note that, in principle, shipboard audits cannot be conducted for ships that are not in normal operation condition, such as ship in dry-dock or laid up, except for an audit for issuing Interim ISSC and an additional audit for SSAS confirmation.

6.2.1 Documents to be submitted

- .1 Copy of (Provisional) Certificate of Registry (in case of non-ClassNK class ships)
- .2 Copy of DOC and SMC (not required if issued by ClassNK)
- .3 SSO Certificate of Proficiency issued by the Administration in accordance with STCW

7 Other Cases

7.1 Application for transfer of ISPS Certification from other IACS member societies

7.1.1 If the Company wishes to transfer an ISSC issued by other IACS member societies (hereinafter "Losing Society") to ClassNK, please apply to the Ship Management Systems Department together with the following documents. The procedure for the transfer, including obtaining information from the Losing Society, may take several days.

- .1 Copies of the ISSC, latest DOC and SMC issued by the Losing Society
- .2 Copy of the latest audit record issued by the Losing Society
- .3 Document certifying approval of the SSP

7.1.2 The application cannot be accepted for the following cases.

- .1 The ISSC is invalid
- .2 The management company is changed

- .3 Any audit has been applied to the Losing Society, but not completed yet.
- .4 Any deficiency, which is pointed out by the Losing Society, is not rectified yet.
- 7.1.3 ClassNK contacts the Losing Society and obtains audit data in the past.
- 7.1.4 The audit is conducted as an additional audit equivalent to an intermediate audit. However, an initial or periodical audit is conducted if the ship is within the due window of them.
- 7.1.5 The ISSC issued by ClassNK will remain the expiry date of the ISSC issued by the Losing Society.
- 7.1.6 For Panama-flag ships, ClassNK will conduct the audit after notifying the Flag in advance. Following an additional, intermediate, or renewal audit, the ISSC will be endorsed. No new ISSC will be issued. In the case of an initial audit, no certificate will be issued by ClassNK. The company is requested to apply to the Flag for issuance of a full term ISSC.

7.2 Extension of Certificate

7.2.1 Extension of Initial Audit

The due for an Interim ISSC cannot be extended. However, the Flag may authorize the issuance of a consecutive Interim ISSC. Please consult with Ship Management Systems Department.

7.2.2 Extension of Intermediate Audit

Because the due window is one year, most Flags are cautious about granting an extension. Once the second anniversary date is reached, we recommend arranging the intermediate audit as early as possible.

7.2.3 Extension of Renewal Audit

According to ISPS Code A/19.3.5, many Flags may authorize an extension for the necessary period but not exceeding three months. Please consult with Ship Management Systems Department.

8 Special Requirements for Japanese-flagged Vessels

- 8.1 Interim ISSCs and ISSCs for Japanese-flag vessels are issued by the Flag Administration (JG). In addition to the ISM Company, the name and address of the following parties are stated on these certificates:

- .1 Registered owner, or Ship manager as registered owner
- .2 Ship Charterer

Submission of the above information is required for the initial approval of the SSP and for the audit for issuing an Interim ISSC.

- 8.2 Changes to the Owner or Ship Charterer may, as with a change of the ISM Company, require procedures starting from the Interim process.
- 8.3 SSP approvals are handled by ClassNK Branches or Offices in Japan. SSPs for companies located outside Japan are handled by ClassNK East Japan Regional Office.
- 8.4 JG requires SSAS testing between the ship and the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) as follows:
 - .1 An RSO auditor is required to attend the test and make the 24-hour advance notification to JCG.
 - .2 The test should be conducted on the following occasions:
 - Upon installation of SSAS or replacement with a different type of SSAS;
 - At the audit for issuing an Interim ISSC; and
 - At initial and renewal audits. The test is not required at intermediate audits.
- 8.5 In relation to SSP amendments, certain items such as change of CSO, are treated as "minor changes" and do not require approval. They are handled as minor amendments under 6.1.13.
- 8.6 The CSO must be reported to JG by the owner. Please contact JG regarding the procedure.
- 8.7 Any person appointed as an SSO must have completed, prior to appointment, a training course provided by the Japan Agency of Maritime Education and Training for Seafarers (JMETS). JG issues a Certificate of Qualification for Ship Security Officer to seafarers who hold a training certificate issued by JMETS.