



To all shipowners and shipmanagers
of German ships

SHIP SAFETY DIVISION
International Safety Management (ISM)

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Our Re. (Please indicate in your reply)

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GUIDELINES ON THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF A SHIPBOARD OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAMME MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.3

Dear Sir/Madam,

this circular informs about recommendations and national requirements concerning occupational health and safety on board ships.

1. The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the IMO, at its eighty-first session, recognized that guidance should be provided for shipowners and shipmanagers for implementing the ISM-Code, with regard to occupational health and safety on board ships. The guidelines of a shipboard occupational health and safety programme (SOHSP) are set out in the annex to the attached circular [MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.3](#).

2. These guidelines describe the basic elements of a SOHSP. The elements address the following activities:

- Executive Management commitment and leadership
- Employee participation
- Hazard anticipation, identification, evaluation and control
- Training
- Record keeping
- Contract or third party personnel
- Fatality, injury, illness and incident investigation
- Systematic programme evaluation and continuous improvement

The a.m. elements are described in appendix 1 to 8 of the annex to MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.3 and they are applicable to all types of vessels and useful for implementing, improving or auditing the effectiveness of a SOHSP. An effectively implemented SOHSP is a supporting tool to achieve the objectives given in paragraph 1.2 of the ISM-Code.

3. The Company should consider in any case that the German legislation provides some mandatory sets of rules, which are related to occupational health and safety. The employer has the general responsibility to ensure that measures for preventing accidents and diseases are in place. To meet this requirement, the company should observe relevant rules and regulations, e.g.:

- Arbeitsschutzgesetz (ArbSchG)
- Arbeitssicherheitsgesetz (ASiG)
- Betriebssicherheitsverordnung (BetrSichV)
- SGB VII
- UVV-See

4. The core function of any occupational health and safety programme is prevention. Therefore potential hazards and unsafe operating procedures need to be identified and addressed so that they will not endanger employees or the public. Hazard evaluation by the Company is a statutory requirement as laid down in §5 ArbSchG and §3 BetrSichV.

5. In order to assist the company (employer) in the tasks of occupational health and safety, the employer has to appoint

- Experts for occupational safety (§5 ASiG, §59 UVV-See);
- Safety Warden (§22 SGB VII, §12 UVV-See); and
- Occupational Physicians (§2 ASiG)

The intention of this is to ensure that

- the regulations for work protection and accident prevention are applied in accordance with the particular operational circumstances;
- sound knowledge on occupational health and safety can be applied for the improvement of work protection and accident prevention;
- the measures for work protection and accident prevention achieve the maximum possible effectiveness.

6. In order to review matters of work protection and accident prevention, the company should establish occupational safety committees. (please refer to §11 ASiG)

7. Shipowners, shipmanagers and designated persons are advised to take note of this circular and the attached MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.3. Companies should develop, implement and improve procedures within their Safety Management System (SMS), which ensure occupational health and safety, based on applicable rules, regulations and guidelines.

8. Any questions to the a.m. subject should be addressed to the Ship-Safety-Division/Department ISM.

Best regards
Ship-Safety-Division
International Safety Management (ISM)
by order

T.Berger

This circular is electronically sent and is therefore not signed