



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Prevention Regulation and Standards Directorate
2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave, SE, STOP 7501
Washington, DC 20593-7501

MSIB Number: 03-20
Date: 06 February 2020
Contact: LT Kim Gates
Phone: 202-372-1455
E-Mail: Kimberly.M.Gates@uscg.mil

Resources for Voluntarily Establishing a Safety Management System

Recently, the Coast Guard has received several inquiries about the use of safety management systems onboard passenger vessels. The purpose of this bulletin is to inform the maritime community of helpful resources for those vessels choosing to voluntarily establish a safety management system (SMS).

A SMS is a structured tool, which has proven effective in many cases to reduce human error, create a culture of safety at all organization levels, and decrease the probability of maritime accidents. The objectives of a SMS are to provide safe working practices for ship operation, to continuously assess and identify risks to the vessel, personnel and the environment, to establish appropriate safeguards to those risks, and to improve safety management skills of personnel ashore and onboard ships.

In an effort to increase passenger vessel safety, vessel owners and operators not already required to have a SMS, are encouraged to voluntarily develop a SMS as established in Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 96. While this set of standards may not be suitable for every passenger or small passenger vessel, the below are additional references which may be taken in whole or in part to help establish an appropriately structured SMS:

- International Maritime Organization standards:
 - Resolution A.741(18), as amended by MSC.104(73), MSC.179(79), MSC.195(80), MSC.273(85), and MSC.353(92) - The International Safety Management Code
 - Resolution A.1071(28), Revised Guidelines on the Implementation of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code by Administrations
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI) - ANSI/ASQC Q9001-1994, Quality Systems - Model for Quality Assurance in Design, Development, Production, Installation, and Servicing, 1994
- Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 05-99, Change 1- Guidance Regarding Voluntary Compliance with the International Management Code for Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention
- COMDTINST M16000.7 (series), U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Manual (MSM), Volume II, Section E, Chapter 3: This reference contains useful information about the SMS certification process.
- Equivalence Program for Vessels Inspected under 46 CFR Subchapter T: this Homeport website contains information and resources for vessels inspected under 46 CFR Subchapter T that could be used to adapt a SMS described in 33 CFR Part 96:

<https://homeport.uscg.mil/Lists/Content/DispForm.aspx?ID=2350&ContentTypeId=0x010077A263807AAFE54DBF09C291D3EAA816008BFEC11A80BC564EB4241068A94ACD2E>

- U.S. Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance (CG-CVC) website: This website contains links to the current policy letters and guidance documents for vessels looking to implement a safety management system. Link: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Inspections-Compliance-CG-5PC-/Commercial-Vessel-Compliance/>
- Passenger Vessel Association (PVA) Flagship Safety Management System: A voluntary alternative safety management system that is accepted by the Coast Guard to meet the objectives and functional requirements of a SMS in 33 CFR Part 96.

Please note that not all elements of these references may be applicable to each passenger vessel type and operation, but are listed for completeness and to provide structure. Vessel owners or operators may contact their local Coast Guard Officer in Charge, Marine Inspections for further information on this voluntary option.

-uscg-