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READY FOR INSPECTION?

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND DEAL WITH A PORT STATE CONTROL INSPECTION

SINCE THE FIRST PORT STATE CONTROL (PSC) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WAS SIGNED IN 1982, PSC INSPECTIONS HAVE BEEN AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR DEALING WITH SUBSTANDARD SHIPS. THEY ALLOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO INVESTIGATE AND CHECK THE SAFETY STANDARDS AND SEAWORTHINESS OF ANY FOREIGN SHIPS ARRIVING WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION.

Detention by the PSC authorities can be expensive and can result in delays and loss of hire, so it is important that a ship is ready and prepared for these inspections at all times – and each member of the crew plays a vital role.

REPORTING Do not try to hide deficiencies. SOLAS states that defects must be reported to the local PSC authorities as well as to the flag state. This is important in order for the ship to obtain the necessary approvals to operate with a defective piece of equipment until it can be rectified.

HOUSEKEEPING First impressions are important. When the PSC Officer (PSCO) walks up the gangway they are forming their first impressions – make sure the ship appears well-maintained and managed by a competent crew.

PROFESSIONAL The gangway watch should greet the PSCO and complete boarding formalities efficiently before escorting them to the master. Everyone should be polite and never argue with the PSCO during the inspection.

DOCUMENTATION Make sure that all certificates and records are kept in an organised manner so that they can easily be retrieved for review during the PSC inspection.

ACCOMPANY Do not let the PSCO walk around the ship alone. Make sure that they are escorted by a senior crewmember who can readily assist with any questions the PSCO may have.

When the inspection is finished, the PSCO presents their findings to the master. If the master believes that any of the deficiencies raised by the PSCO are unjustified, they should tell the PSCO straight away and, if necessary, contact the owners' office for support.

WHEN THE PSCO HAS DISEMBARKED, THE PSC INSPECTION REPORT SHOULD BE FILED ON BOARD AND A COPY SUBMITTED TO THE OWNERS' OFFICE. FOR EACH DEFICIENCY IDENTIFIED, A CORRECTIVE ACTION REPORT SHOULD SET OUT THE ROOT CAUSES IDENTIFIED AND THE PREVENTIVE ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED TO AVOID ANY REPEAT OF THE DEFICIENCY.