UK P&I CLUB

Ship Type: All   Trade Area: USA

Bulletin 362 - 05/04 - USCG ISPS Code / MTSA Inspection Criteria - USA

Compliance with the ISPS Code / MTSA 2002 will be mandatory from the 1ˢᵗ July 2004. It is particularly important to know precisely what the United States Coast Guard (USCG) boarding inspectors will be looking for when they carry out Port State Control examinations from that date.

The USCG programme now incorporates changes that integrate verification and enforcement of the ISPS Code and MTSA 2002 into the Port State Control safety examinations hitherto carried out. It relies on several elements to ensure that ships not in compliance with safety and security standards do not enter or pose a hazard to the United States. These elements focus on poor performance of owners, operators, charterers, flag Administrations and recognized organizations (RO) or recognized security organizations (RSO) through:

- risk-based screening of ships;
- on board verification on potentially non-compliant ships; and
- enforcement actions that may include denial of entry, detention, or ordering a ship out of port.

Security examinations will be carried out at a location specified by the COTP (Captain of the Port) based on the priority established by targeting risk factors. For example, an arriving ship that receives a high risk score could be boarded at sea, prior to port entry, for the purpose of conducting a security and safety sweep of the vessel. Ships posing less risk may be boarded for examination at the pier or not at all.

The scope of the security examination shall be as determined by the COTP based on the ISPS Code and MTSA 2. Every ship selected for a Port State Control safety boarding may also be subject to some measure of security examination in accordance with the ISPS Code (Parts A and B).

The attached examination book (enclosure 6) is an extensive list of possible examination items related to security equipment, operations, plans and records. It is not the intention of the USCG to inspect all items listed in the checklist during each individual examination. It will be used by the inspector as a reminder of the various items that may be examined during a security examination. It is divided into three sections:

1   Section A - Complete certificates / equipment data / records information
2   Section B - Review vessel security practices and competencies
3   Section C - Expanded examination (only if clear grounds are exist).

We advise Members to familiarise themselves with the attached document and to inform their ships' masters accordingly.

Source of information: United States Coast Guard