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Chapter 5 – Master’s Responsibility and Authority

References: [ISM Code] International *Safety Management Code* (2018)

1. Introduction

1.1 Regulatory Backdrop:

The ISM Code requires us to clearly establish, define, and document our vessel **Master’s** responsibility to effectively implement the SMS, direct the vessel crew as needed to achieve SMS realization, and engage with shore-based management in a timely manner to address matters contrary or detrimental to SMS-compliant outcomes.

1.2 Overriding Authority:

On each of our vessels the **Master** is in command with ABSOLUTE and OVERRIDING authority to make decisions and take action to ensure the safe and responsible operation of the vessel and to ensure the safety of all personnel on board. The **Master** is also responsible for operating the vessel in an environmentally sound manner and ensuring that our SMS is enforced according to the specifications of this SMM. The **Master** is expected to request assistance from shoreside management or any other appropriate source to meet these obligations. The **Master** will not be constrained by our company, the ship owner, or a charterer from making decisions that are necessary in his professional judgment for the safe and sound operation of the vessel..

2. Primary Responsibilities

2.1 Command & Leadership:

- Exerts authority over all onboard personnel in matters of ship operation and safety
- Issues orders and instructions to the crew in a clear and simple manner
- Writes and posts his own standing orders
- Stands regular bridge watch

2.2 Security:

- Always maintains security standards consistent with ISPS standards
- Provides for safe and secure gangway access to the vessel, including
 - making sure gangway is secured in such a way that allows for tide fluctuations and at a slope that provides easy access for loading and unloading groceries and luggage
 - ensuring the landing platform from gangway-to-deck is made of proper stairs or sturdy surfaces and not temporary equipment such as milk crates or buckets
 - stating when gangway watch is required
 - providing gangway watch schedule and supplies

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2.4 Safety:

- Responsible for safe and effective daily operation of the vessel
- Designates and empowers the vessel's acting **Bridge Officers**
- Demonstrates and reinforces adherence to our HSE policies by all personnel on board
- Plans, trains, and directs emergency operations
- Coordinates with **Port Captain** to ensure that
 - SMM procedures are followed and updated as necessary,
 - reports and records are maintained, communicated, and updated in the System
 - the crew receives all training necessary for their jobs

2.5 Maintenance:

- Maintains the seaworthiness of the vessel
- Maintains vessel navigation equipment
- Maintains vessel documents

2.6 Survey Ops:

- Consults with **Party Chief** and **Port Engineer** regarding survey project equipment, requirements, and mission specifics
- Communicates with the **Party Chief** in matters pertaining to the survey mission of the voyage

2.7 Crewing:

- Conducts crew evaluations
- Takes disciplinary action through verbal warning, discussion, written action, and / or removal from the vessel

2.8 Regulatory:

- Complies with the laws of navigation, regulations, codes, and statutes that regulate the safe operations of ships
- Liaises with marine agencies and regulatory organizations
- Works under the supervision of Port Captain

2.9 Reporting:

- Completes and records all required documentation
- Turns in required reports in a timely manner and as directed
- Reports environmental incidents, near misses, casualties, failures, or otherwise noteworthy events to **Port Captain** and **DPA** with urgency and as soon as possible.
- Completes and submits a Master's Review of the SMS each year

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4. Additional Responsibilities

4.1 Policies, Plans, and Specifications:

The Master must be conversant in, and able to implement and enforce the following policies and procedures.

- Safety Management System as defined in the Safety Management Manual (SMM)
- Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plans - SOPEP or NTVRP
- ISPS and the Vessel Security Plan
- International, federal, and state regulations applicable to the vessel
- Master's standing orders

4.2 Accommodation Habitability Assurance:

The **Master** is responsible for ensuring that his designee conducts weekly inspections of vessel accommodations to ensure they adhere to the 1949 Revised Accommodation of Crew Convention (No. 92, and the 1970 Supplementary Provisions for the Accommodation of Crews (No. 133) as modified or expanded by the retention standards of the vessel's flag or class documents. During these inspections, attention should be given to hazard identification and mitigation, including but not limited to, fire plan equipment placement and non-obstruction, egress passageways are clear, adequacy of lighting (both normal and emergency power sources), bypassing of safety devices (such as fire doors blocked open), ventilation effectiveness, the presence of mold or other biological hazards, adequacy of hazardous material storage, and the removal of any slip, trip, or fall hazards. A brief description of the inspection conducted including areas covered, findings, and correction actions taken, shall be logged in the vessel's official logbook.

4.3 Review of Crew Qualifications Documents:

Upon arrival aboard, and prior to getting underway, crewman and officers assuming positions identified in the vessel's manning document or otherwise engaged in vessel essential vessel functions (including navigation, propulsion, emergency response) shall report to the master for document review. The **Master** shall first review all documents against those required as listed in the Seaman's Employment Agreement and note in the ship's log that all crewmen have been found certified and qualified and sign the entry.

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