

Ship surveys - ship safety: New central phone number (11.11.2020)

From 1 January 2021 you can reach our "Zentrale Einsatzsteuerung" (a central deployment centre) for ship safety surveys under the **central phone number +49 40 361 37-298**. You can still send the application per email to besichtigungen@bg-verkehr.de.

The "Zentrale Einsatzsteuerung" of the Ship Safety Division of BG Verkehr receives the customers' requests for ship surveys and plans the deployment of the surveyors. With the new uniform phone number, the BG Verkehr enhances their service for shipping companies.

Ship recycling: List of hazardous materials required (08.10.2020)

At the end of the year at the latest, ships with more than 500 GT on international voyages require a IHM Certificate (International Certificate on Inventory of Hazardous Materials) of the Flag State and an approved List of hazardous materials contained in the structure or equipment of the ship. These requirements are stipulated in Regulation EU 1257/2013 on ship recycling. Further information can be found in ISM Circular 03/2019.

Employees of shipping companies should note: Please assign a classification society or an assessor to prepare the IHM if this has not been done yet.

World Maritime Day of the IMO (24.09.2020)

The importance of the shipping industry has once again become evident during the corona pandemic. A functioning trade network connects the world and helps to support all parts of the world at a global level. When rebuilding the economy after this crisis, shipping will play a central role, according to Kitack Lim, IMO Secretary General. And this is also why this year's theme of the World Maritime Day "Sustainable Shipping for a Sustainable Planet" is so vital. Shipping has to become more environmentally friendly to play its part in leading the world into a sustainable future.

Already, the IMO makes an effort towards this goal having introduced several environment requirements such as energy efficiency for ships, sulphur limits for fuel, provisions for sewage and garbage etc. Thereby, the IMO and the shipping industry implement some of the 17 sustainable development goals as part of the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. Further plans to protect the environment are being planned, such as the reduction of green house gases produced by maritime traffic.

Especially, because the crucial importance of shipping and its employees has become evident during this pandemic, the current situation on board many ships worldwide will be a topic at the World Maritime Day 2020. On many ships, crew changes have not been possible for many months. At land, many seafarers wait to commence their service, and receive the wages they need, while on board, seafarers are waiting to be relieved as they worry about their family during the pandemic and require a break from their work out at sea, not just from the perspective of labour law but also from a humanitarian perspective.

On 24 September Secretary General Lim will hold an online panel where he and other experts of the topic sustainable shipping will speak. Via Twitter @IMOHQ and the hashtag #WorldMaritimeDay anyone can participate in the discussion.

Navigational charts: German and British hydrographical service cooperate (14.09.2020)

The Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) and the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) will cooperate from October 2020 on the production, maintenance and distribution of nautical charts in A0 format for German waters. These nautical charts are mainly used by the commercial shipping industry, which is obliged to equip its vessels. The faster transmission and provision of corrections for international shipping will increase the safety and ease of navigation in the German sea area.

Due to this cooperation of the two authorities the BSH's nautical charts will reach a wider range of users than before, and both authorities will save resources due to the division of labour in production, corrections and distribution. The BSH will continue to be responsible for the chart content and its correction, while the UKHO will take over the printing and distribution of the charts and the publication of corrections. Until now, the two services have produced nautical charts for the same area independently of each other. As a result, corrections were first reported by the BSH as German Notice to Mariners, which were forwarded to the UKHO which then included them as corrections in their nautical charts. The cooperation of the services enables the direct and thus faster transmission of corrections.

Distribution and maintenance of the cooperation charts will begin on October 1 for initially five nautical charts. By the end of 2021, BSH and UKHO will extend the cooperation to all 15 nautical charts for the North Sea. To enable this, both parties coordinated the area coverage, nautical chart content, publication dates and also developed routines for correcting the nautical chart content.

Practical tips for more cyber security (10.09.2020)

The issue cyber security becomes increasingly important for maritime shipping as a crucial part of the logistics chain. If not before, than at the latest since the attack with the malware "NotPetya" in 2017 resulting in damages of several hundred million Euros for the shipping company Maersk alone, the extent of maritime cyber attacks has become evident.

With resolution MSC.428(98), the IMO urges shipping companies to protect against cyber risks from 2021. Ship operators should integrate appropriate measures in their existing ISM systems.

The new circular "ISM Cyber Security" by the BG Verkehr, the BSH and the BSI provides an overview of the issue maritime cyber security and aids shipping companies in developing a consistent cyber risk management. As a minimum, the three authorities advise the IT-Grundschutz Profiles by the BSI for shore operations and for ship operations. These model security concepts contain specific recommendations for IT security measures on board and onshore.

COVID-19 Guidance updated (19.06.2020)

COVID-19, more commonly known as the coronavirus, has developed into a global pandemic. In order for maritime shipping to continue its operations, shipping companies should undertake measures to protect their members of crew and passengers. In the new guidance document "Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers", the International Chamber of Shipping ICS explains the right protection measures for the novel coronavirus and how to react if a case of illness or a suspect case occurs on board.

In the guidance document, it is explained how seafarers should generally protect themselves preventatively, especially with hygienic preventative measures such as regular hand washing and the right conduct when coughing and sneezing (i.e. with a tissue or into the crook of the arm). Following the recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO), ICS also assess that wearing masks on board in general should not be mandatory. Where it is not possible to keep the necessary distance, it is recommendatory however. The Guidance introduces different ways to create a mouth-nose cover yourself.

On their website and in Annex A, ICS provides posters that can be put up by ship operators on board their ships for information purposes for crew and passengers. The crew should be informed about how to deal with suspect and confirmed cases. A ship-specific outbreak management plan should be developed for concrete guidance of the crew. In addition, WHO developed a guide directed in particular at authorities dealing with COVID-19 outbreaks.

Additionally, the Guidance provides specific and important advice for persons responsible for medical care on board the ship. Personal protection with suitable protective equipment, effective isolation and disinfection as well as competent care of the patients should all be equally ensured.

The Guidance identifies three groups in relation to containing the outbreak potential: confirmed cases, suspect cases and people who have been in close contact to confirmed or suspect cases. Any suspect case has to be reported by the master to the next port of call. The virus has to be verified by a laboratory. The subsequent measures are given in the Guidance.

Prior to any persons entering the ship, their health condition needs to be checked. The questionnaire in Annex C can be used for this. The Guidance discusses the pros and cons of tests prior to boarding. The so called Shipboard Self-Distancing for the first 14 days on board is recommended and explained.

Despite the current and ongoing precautionary measures, there may be entry restrictions in ports, restrictions on crew changes and cargo operations or general delays. The Guidance also addresses this issue. A link to a regularly updated map on current port restriction is provided. A new Annex outlines under which conditions seafarers can obtain their personal prescriptions in the different countries and what needs to be done in advance to ensure that medication reaches the ship.

Worries about family, other crew members and oneself can have serious effects on the mental health of seafarers. Impeded crew changes and extension of service times on board for several months add to this. Every person deals differently with stress, isolation and emotions like fear, anxiety and worry. The guidance discusses thoroughly what can be done to deal with difficult moments and develop uplifting behaviour.

Easy regulations for laid-up ships (20.05.2020)

Some flag states have extensive requirements for laid-up ships, e.g. changes of ship registration or extensive lay-up plans. The German Flag, however, has no such bureaucratic obligations.

Neither do laid-up ships under German flag require a separate Safe Manning Certificate. For short-term shifting of a ship from a port or anchoring place to another location, shipowners can apply for a Safe Manning Certificate that is valid for up to 48 hours with the Ship Safety Division of BG Verkehr. The prerequisites for this are given under our header "Ship`s manning".

Database for MED equipment has moved (13.05.2020)

The approval of marine equipment is subject to a multistage certification process carried out by notified bodies under the EU Marine Equipment Directive. At the end of the certification, a so-called wheelmark is attached to the approved equipment item; it shows that the approval is valid all-over Europe. Equipment requiring approval includes life-saving appliances, equipment for marine pollution prevention, fire protection equipment, navigation and radio-communication equipment, equipment required under COLREG and under SOLAS Chapter II-1.

An updated Implementing Regulation listing all of the approved equipment along with the individual approval requirements supplementing the Marine Equipment Directive is published annually. The approval process is outlined in the Directive itself.

The new MED Database by the EU Commission is maintained by EMSA (European Maritime Safety Agency). It lists in detail the ship's equipment that has been approved. After a registration, the following can be found:

- manufacturer, product information, approval information and approving body,
- the Directive as well as any amendments currently in force.

In comparison to the former database, some changes have been introduced: manufactures can now actively participate in the new system and add information on their product. Adding an e-tag facilitates further functions. In addition, the market surveillance authorities have an extended access to product data.

Now, after some test participants of the different user groups tested the new MED Database with regard to its functionality, it is open to the public with the data sets from the old system as well as all current entries.

The previously used MarED Database remains online on the website of MarED (Group of Notified Bodies for the Implementation of the European Marine Equipment Directive) but is no longer updated.

Further information on the topic approval of marine equipment is given under our heading "Construction - Equipment".

Seamen's Mission offers online counselling (17.04.2020)

The DSM has a widely spread network with its 16 national and 14 international stations with seamen's clubs, hotels and on-board counsellors. However, the corona pandemic has completely changed the work of the seamen's missions as well. The popular facilities for seafarers had to close and the on-board counselling cannot take place in same manner as it did before either. Long counselling sessions are not possible – because of the fear of infection. Sometimes what remains is a small talk on the gangway so that the connection with the outside world does not completely break off.

In this situation, the DSM has started their chat counselling which can be accessed worldwide via the internet address <https://dsm.care>. Co-initiator Matthias Ristau, seamen's pastor of the German "Nordkirche", explains: "All encoded and safe, available from early in the morning till late at night". Especially now that many seafarers fear for the well-being of their families, such a service is all the more important, he says.

On the chat platform, seafarers meet professional counsellors, experienced social workers and psycho-social experts of the DSM who are most familiar with the special living situation and working environment of seafarers.

DSM.care was developed by a DSM team and is an additional offer for seafarers under these changing conditions of maritime navigation. This way, seafarers can be provided counselling support during straining situations right there and then and no matter where with the click of a mouse or via the smartphone. The DSM affirms: Even if the internet cannot replace personal contact, the members of staff of the German Seamen's Mission are there for the seafarers as contact partner.

No EU export stop for medical ship equipment (25.03.2020)

Due to the current Corona pandemic, the EU Commission has recently enacted to permit the export of medical protective equipment only after an official export authorisation (Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/402 of 14 March 2020). Subsequently, some pharmacies were not able to supply without impediment the mandatory gloves and face masks as part of the medical equipment on board German-flagged sea-going vessel.

The Directorates-General for Mobility and Transport (DG Move) and Taxation and Customs (DG TAXUD) of the EU Commission have now clarified in a joint communication to the German Shipowners' Association (VDR) of 23 March that medical equipment for sea-going vessels does **not** come under the current export restriction. This is based on a special regulation for ship equipment. According to Article 269 Paragraph 2 letter c of Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 (Union Customs Code): "goods delivered, VAT or excise duty exempted, as [...] ship supplies are not subject to customs formalities in relation to export from the EU customs area - and therefore are also not subject to the current export restrictions for medical protective equipment.

Notwithstanding customs restrictions, pharmacies equipping ships can continue to supply and send medical protective equipment to sea-going ships.

Annual Report 2019 on the German Maritime Labour Act (24.02.2020)

Since 2013 the Maritime Labour Act implements the International Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) on ships under German flag. With these provisions, mandatory and comprehensive regulations regarding working and living conditions of seafarers have been established. Important topics like hours of work and rest, food and catering, payment of wages, occupational health on board and many more are now clearly regulated and are verified on a regular basis.

36 MLC surveyors inspect international ships abroad and nationally regarding their compliance with the requirements of the Convention for the Ship Safety Division of BG Verkehr. Maritime Labour Certificates and Fishing Labour Certificates are typically issued as electronic certificates by now.

The employees of the ISM / ILO Department attend to complaints of seafarers about working and living conditions, approve private recruitment agencies and ensure that shipping companies under German flag are informed about current topics of this topic area. The ISM / ILO Department has now published its Annual Report 2019.

In the middle of the year 2018, the fully revised Guidelines on the implementation of the Maritime Labour Act on board of German flagged ships was published. Compared to its previous version, the experts of the Ship Safety Division completely revised the topic area health and safety protection and accident prevention. New information about drinking water on sea-going ships as well as maps of the trading areas for medical equipment were added. For the first time, the Guidelines contain specific information about contracts of employment and hours of work and rest for work on board fishing vessels.

With this QR Code, you can download the MLC Guidelines directly to your phone and have them at the ready whenever you need them:

Establishment of the association "Friends of WMU Germany e.V." (12.02.2020)

Maritime internationality finds an expression in the World Maritime University. The WMU was founded in 1983 at an Assembly meeting of the International Maritime Organisation IMO as an UN institution. In many countries outside of Europe and North America, appropriate educational facilities to realize the UN's sustainability goals for protection and usage of the seas do not exist.

At three locations over the world – Malmö/Sweden the main location, Shanghai/China and Dalian/China – maritime-related courses of study offer the students to expand their knowledge and further develop their ongoing career in the maritime sector in an international setting. Various Master and PhD programmes as well as programmes for professional development offer the opportunity to influence the future of maritime shipping. Many graduates afterwards take on important positions as maritime executives in industry, politics and administration in their countries. The study contents range from safety, environment protection in shipping, to ocean governance and maritime executive issues. The WMU takes part in a variety of research projects all over the world that help gain new insights into sustainable maritime development.

So far 5 000 students from 165 countries have studied at WMU. The establishment of the association "Friends of WMU Germany e.V." further deepens the partnership between Germany and the WMU. The Federal Republic of Germany has supported the WMU since its foundation. Among other things, it financially supported the studies of Kitack Lim, the current IMO Secretary General.

The association is located in Hamburg, hence why the WMU president Dr. Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry and Prof. Jens-Uwe Schröder-Hinrichs as well as 17 founding members of the German maritime politics, administration,

industry and academia met at a legal office in Hamburg for the inaugural meeting. By election, the board is headed by Reinhard Klöng head of the Central Affairs Department at the Ministry for Traffic and Digital Infrastructure and further consists of Frank Leonhardt of the shipping company Leonhardt & Blumberg and Dr. Axel Henriksen, Rechtsanwälte Blaum Dettmers Rabstein.

As the university is mostly financed through fees, non-material and/or financial support are important so that a high-quality education and profound, far-reaching research remain possible. The association extends the German support to the larger maritime sector. The purpose of the association is not just providing financial support but also developing the study contents through cooperation with the university, mediate cooperation for research and field studies as well as, generally, work as a network between the German maritime sector and maritime academia.

Ship's wastewater in ports: New publication about handling wastewater of ships in ports (11.02.2020)

The German Flag is strongly involved in further developing environment protection in the Baltic Sea. In doing so, it also supports those involved with its practical implementation. HELCOM together with the BSH has developed a technical guidance for handling ship's wastewater in ports in the Baltic Sea Special Area (in accordance with MARPOL Annex IV). It is aimed at port operators, local administrations as well as communal wastewater companies and shipowners. Further information on the topic can be found at:

- Press release of the BSH
- Interview with Dr. jur. Susanne Heitmüller (BSH)
- Technical guidance for the handling of wastewater in ports

Port State Control verifies compliance with sulphur limits (29.01.2020)

From now on, Port State Control inspections under the Tokyo and Paris Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) will check for the compliance with the new sulphur limits for sea-going vessels. Since 1st January 2020, only ships with Exhaust Gas Cleaning System (EGCS), so called scrubbers, may be operated with high sulphur heavy fuel oil. All other ships have to use fuel with a sulphur content of not more than 0.50 % m/m. In the SECAs, which include the North and Baltic Sea, a sulphur content of not more than 0.1 % m/m has been in place for a while now.

From 1st March 2020, the provisions will become even stricter: Non-compliant fuel may only be carried on board if an EGCS is fitted. In cases where non-compliant fuel cannot be obtained, a Fuel Oil Non-Availability Report (FONAR) has to be submitted to the flag state and the responsible authority at the next port of call.

At its 73th session, the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) agreed that it was not necessary for the Port State Control authorities to take a 'practical and pragmatic' approach, since compliance with the new limits from the date of coming into force was expected. Therefore, ParisMoU and TokyoMoU have agreed that they will enforce the requirements in terms of the application without exception. This also includes the carriage ban of non-compliant fuel from 1st March 2020. More on this in their press release.