

Circular 54 / 2013



**To: Masters, Officers, and Other Interested Parties**

**Subject: Guidance Regarding Port State Control Inspections**

**Date: 05 April 2013**

**Summary**

This Circular is to provide assistance and guidance regarding Port State Control (PSC) inspections.

Port State Control authorities are finding an increase in deficiencies, due to lack of maintenance and training in this period of economic hardship for ship owners. Detentions are increasing and unless we improve the performance of ships flying the Cook Islands Flag we risk falling onto the Paris MOU Black List.

Recent detentions have been as a result of deficiencies for critical equipment not working properly, cleanliness (excessive oil) in machinery spaces, vessels not being adequately supplied and maintained, and inadequately trained crews. PSC inspectors are issuing detentions for failure of the ships safety management system when several deficiencies are noted which, when taken separately, would not otherwise be reason for detention. PSC detentions are time and resource consuming events for ship-owners and managers, which will add more to a company's operating costs than proper maintenance and training.

The Cook Islands Administration has prepared guidance to assist owners and operators preparing their vessels for PSC inspections in order to minimize deficiencies and prevent PSC detentions.

**The PSC Inspection Process:**

During a PSC inspection, the Inspector will first conduct an initial inspection, which includes examination of the ship and crew certificates; an inspection of critical areas and equipment and will also probably involve fire and abandon ship drills.

If the inspector is of the opinion that the vessel is substantially in compliance after the initial inspection, then no further inspection should be necessary. Therefore, it is essential that the Master and crew demonstrate a positive first impression. This will reduce the time the inspector(s) is/are on board and may prevent an in depth inspection (the attached checklist has been developed to assist).

**More detailed Inspection:**

If the ship or crew certificates are incomplete or invalid, or if there are clear grounds to suspect that the ship and/or its equipment or crew may not be in substantial compliance with the requirements, a more detailed inspection will usually be undertaken. A more detailed inspection is expanded in scope and increases the chance of disrupting the ships schedule and delay in the port if deficiencies are found that require correction or that lead to a detention. A record of serious deficiencies and detentions will lead to negative PSC and safety compliance ratings on the vessel and the ship managers which will lead to more frequent PSC inspections.

**Guidance to Masters:**

The attached check list shows the most common detainable deficiencies. If a master knows that his ship has any deficiencies he can avoid detention by identifying and reporting these deficiencies to this Administration, Class, and local Port State Authorities prior calling at the port.

**PSC Guidance:**

IMO Resolution 1052(27) provision 2.3.7 states that if a Master advises his/her Administration, Class and local Port State Authorities of a deficiency that has, or may, impact the vessel's seaworthiness, that deficiency should not be considered as grounds for detention, unless the ship intends to sail with the deficiency un-addressed. This does not mean that a deficiency will not be recorded, or that the vessel will be permitted to depart without rectifying a normally detainable deficiency. It simply means that actions to rectify the deficiency will be monitored to ensure proper remedial actions are taken, and that the vessel can be considered to be seaworthy before it is allowed to depart. Most importantly the possibility of a detention and corresponding record against the vessel or the vessel operator will be significantly reduced.

**Reporting:**

Even if the deficiency has not been reported by the ship or company prior to arrival, most PSC inspectors provide an opportunity for the Master at the opening meeting of a PSC inspection to declare, whether any known defects exist, prior to the inspection commencing. The Master should directly inform the inspector about the deficiencies and what remedial actions are in place. In doing so, it is possible that the Master may avoid a detention or even a deficiency being assigned.

**Flag Assistance:**

In case of a defective device or problems with the vessel's statutory certificates or crew's certificates, this Administration can assist in several ways, which may prevent a detention. Please contact this Maritime Cook Islands Head Office on [fleet@maritimecookislands.com](mailto:fleet@maritimecookislands.com) or 24/7 mobile +682 54538 or one of our Deputy Registrars; contacts available from [www.maritimecookislands.com](http://www.maritimecookislands.com)