



# Dienststelle Schiffssicherheit BG Verkehr

ISM-Circular No.: 01/2011

**Subject:** Internal safety audits in accordance with the ISM Code and interpretation of these requirements

**Rule reference:** ISM Code 12.1

**Remark:** This circular needs to be carried on board of ships on international voyages.

**Date:** 01.03.2011

This circular informs shipowners, shipmanagers, designated persons and masters of German flagged ships about the procedure for performing internal audits on board of ships flying the German flag and ashore in Companies holding a German Document of Compliance (DOC).

Paragraph 12.1 of the ISM Code requires that the Company should carry out internal safety audits on board and ashore at intervals not exceeding twelve months. In exceptional circumstances, this interval may be exceeded by not more than three months. In order to clarify the a.m. requirements the Ship Safety Division of the BG Verkehr, as the competent German flag state authority, has therefore approved the following procedure for planning and conducting the required internal safety audits.

1. Basically, the Company is requested to plan their internal office and shipboard audits at intervals not exceeding twelve (12) months.
2. If due to exceptional circumstances the respective audit can not be carried out as planned and it is foreseeable that the interval of 12 months will be exceeded, the Company should sufficiently document the fact, which will cause the postponement, and should ensure that the overdue audit will be conducted within the timeframe of 15 months from the last internal audit.
3. Since the term 'exceptional circumstances' is not specified, the Company should carefully consider on a case-by-case basis which exceptional circumstances are acceptable to meet the provisions of paragraph 12.1 of the ISM Code.
4. Sufficient documentation regarding the postponement should be kept readily available onboard and ashore.
5. A special authorization for the exceeding of the 12 months interval is not required.

**Action required:**

Companies are requested to take note of this circular and to inform their masters.

Copies of the ISM Circular can be found at our website:

<http://www.bg-verkehr.de/service/downloads/ship-safety-division/ism/overview-ism-circulars-and-ism-info-mails>

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