
02053.GEN - Annual fleet letter

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It is with a lump in my throat, considering the events of September 11, 2001, that I wish you and yours a Happy New Year! It is my sincere hope that we have already seen the absolute worst in man last September, and that the future will forever see mankind strive to expunge hatred, bias, fanaticism, and intolerance from its lexicon.

In 2001 we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the registry, closing the year with 528 ships, an increase of 43 ships from end 2000. The registry's excellent overall record -- port state control detentions, accidents, injuries, deaths, pollution incidents -- evidences its commitment to safety.

Consider:

- Vanuatu's Port State Control detention rates were down 22 % from the previous year.
- The number of safety inspections increased by 5 % over 2000. The total number of deficiencies dropped, but deficiencies in licensing, drills, and record keeping remained high.
- Vanuatu completed its second self assessment and is preparing an additional submission to IMO on training facilities, with specific reference to the Vanuatu Maritime College.
- Vanuatu reached agreements with 43 administrations under STCW 95 for recognizing certificates issued by those administrations.
- VMSL was found by an outside auditor to be in compliance with ISO 9002.
- There were no pollution incidents; one allegation of a violation of the Collision Prevention Regulations; and one violation of failing to comply with mandatory reporting schemes.
- Five safety seminars were held in 2001: Warsaw, Aberdeen, London, Tokyo and Seoul. Vanuatu attended MAIF 10 in Busan.

On the negative side:

- Vanuatu lost 3 fishing vessels: 1 struck a submerged object and sank; 1 was blown aground in heavy weather; and 1 caught fire and was declared a total loss. There were no injuries or loss of life: human error was a contributing factor in each incident.
- The fleet recorded three deaths during the year, 1 from natural causes and 2 suicides.
- 1 fraudulent license was confiscated and turned over to the Philippine authorities for criminal prosecution. Vanuatu presented a paper on fraudulent documents to IMO.
- The number of false EPIRB alerts remained high -- more than two per month. Seven incidents involved deleted or unknown vessels.

Looking ahead to 2002 and beyond:

- The STCW 95 transitional period ends in 24 days. There will be no extensions: vessels will be detained if officers or ratings are found without STCW compliant documents.
- On July 1, 2002, Phase 2 of ISM comes into force. (For companies with Phase 2 vessels, please complete the enclosed questionnaire.)

- All officers must have valid 1995 STCW compliant licenses and Vanuatu endorsements on board ship with them.

Officers applying for Vanuatu endorsements are required to know the legislation and regulations affecting them. See Maritime Bulletin # 108.

- Realistic fire and abandon ship drills must be conducted weekly by all manned vessels including fishing vessels. Lifeboats, where fitted, must be launched, line throwing device instructions given, and steering gear drills conducted and logged quarterly.

- An administrative charge for processing false EPIRB alerts will be passed on to owners.

- Each Vanuatu vessel is subject to a safety inspection at any time. If your vessels were not inspected in 2001, please provide their itineraries to this office.

- Please notify this office immediately if your vessel has been detained by a Port State Control officer or is alleged to have violated MARPOL, the IMO Routeing Schemes, the Collision Regulations, the ITU Radio Regulations, or fishing treaties or conventions.

- Each manned vessel must have a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate. For self propelled vessels other than fishing vessels, these must be updated if they do not already address GMDSS or STCW requirements.

Best wishes for a safe & prosperous year 2002 !

Donald J. Sheetz
Executive Vice President