

31 December 2002

## **FLEET/SAFETY LETTER 02058.GEN**

### **RE: END OF THE YEAR SAFETY LETTER**

As the year 2002 comes to a close, we would like to wish every one a happy and healthy New Year! As we end this year with 517 vessels on the registry, we continue to refocus our attention on operating a quality, safety focused registry.

#### **Over the Past Year:**

- Port State Control detentions have decreased by 50%.
- Safety inspections have increased 15% over 2001 inspections.
- We have agreements with 73 administrations under STCW 95 to recognize by endorsement certificates issued by those administrations.
- We have continued our ISO 9002 system compliance, and we are moving into compliance with ISO 9000-2000.
- Natural cause deaths have been our single largest safety concern: we sadly end the year with 12 total deaths, up almost 800% from previous years.

#### **Looking Ahead:**

##### ***Registry News and Reminders***

- A Vanuatu Safety Seminar is scheduled for April or May in the Houston area.
- An administrative charge for processing false EPIRB alerts will continue to be passed on to owners.
- Each Vanuatu vessel is subject to a safety inspection at any time. Vessels not inspected in 2002, must provide their itineraries to this office for their 2003 inspection schedule. Vessels may be boarded at any time by any authority whether flag state, port state, etc. Owners are responsible for safe operation of ships at all times.
- 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. All other accidents must be reported in accordance with Chapter 7 of the Vanuatu Regulations.
- 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. All deck officers on a GMDSS vessel must have General Operators Certificates.

**Regulatory Updates:**

**The Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS)** has once again been updated to meet the current world wide merchant marine concerns. New requirements to Chapter XII, XI, V, and II are now published.

Chapter XII/12 includes new measures and additional technologies added for bulk carrier safety regardless of vessel construction date. The implementation date for this requirement is 1 July 2004.

Chapter XII/13 requires the installation of a pumping system and drainage for dry space bilges and ballast tanks forward of the collision bulkhead.

Chapter XI of SOLAS implements the new and much awaited International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) in two parts:

- Part A is mandatory for all ships over 500 gross tons, including high speed craft, mobile offshore drilling units, and port facilities serving vessels on international voyages. It outlines actions and security requirements for vessels, including designated responsibilities for vessel owners, masters, and security officers.
- Part B is voluntary measures for vessels and port facilities.
- Implementation dates for this chapter are 1 July 2004.

The ISPS Code is closely linked to the Maritime Transportation Security Act passed by the US Congress and signed into law on 25 November 2002 in the United States. It applies to both US and foreign flag vessels calling in US ports. For further details on maritime security requirements, plans, and associated material, see the January issue of the New Vanuatu Newsletter.

Chapter XI-1/3 details how ships are required to visibly mark their identification numbers permanently on the hull or superstructure. This is to be complied with by 1 July 2004.

Chapter XI-1/5 requires ships to carry a Continuous Synopsis Record (CSR). This document is intended to provide a record of the vessel's history, including everything from the name of the vessel to owner history. All must be maintained continuously onboard the vessel.

Chapter V of SOLAS updates Automatic Information System (AIS) to be installed no later than the first safety equipment survey after 1 July 2004, or by 31 December 2004, whichever comes first. This is a deadline change from previous SOLAS requirements.

Changes to Chapter II of SOLAS have also been made which affect new bulk carrier and oil tanker construction to improve access to all parts of the vessel for inspections.

**MARPOL** also has a deadline coming up on 1 January 2003. This is the compliance date for all vessels over 150 gross tons, carrying noxious liquid substances in bulk to have a Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan (SMPEP).

**Other Items of Note:**

There are a few things that we would like to reiterate to all our vessels and owners with regard to upcoming safety inspections. See the January issue of the new Vanuatu newsletter for more details.

This is a reminder to all seafarers and companies that apply for mariner documents. With the onset of STCW the number of documents being processed by our office has almost tripled. There will be about a four week delay from receipt of applications to the completion of processing. Please send your documents to us as early as possible, and keep copies of the applications onboard the vessels. If you are stopped by a port state control officer, or inspected by one of our safety inspectors, there must be evidence that the document processing is underway. Remember that there are significant consequences to a vessel and owners if licensed Vanuatu mariners are not onboard your vessels. These can range from penalties or possible suspension from the flag state, up to port state control intervention, detention and possible delay to the vessel.

Happy New Year!

Donald J. Sheetz  
Executive Vice President



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