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OCEANOGRAPHY AND MARINE METEOROLOGY (JCOMM)
SHIP OBSERVATIONS TEAM

FOURTH SESSION

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VOSP-V ISSUES FOR THE VOS

Impact of National Regulations on VOS Operations

(Submitted by Ms Julie Fletcher, Chairperson of the JCOMM VOS Panel)

Summary and purpose of document

Since the introduction of the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS Code), all personnel visiting ships must carry authorised identification. All equipment delivered to ships may be subject to inspection, and in some cases, Customs documentation is required to move instruments and scientific equipment on and off the respective vessels. This document reviews the impact of the ISPS regulations on the VOS Programme.

ACTION PROPOSED

The VOS Panel is invited to:

(a) Remind the National Meteorological Services and Port Meteorological Officers about the need to keep up to date on national compliance regulations and comply, as required;

(b) Recognise that failure to comply with National Regulations may result in personnel or equipment being denied entry to a port or ship;

(c) Include ISPS compliance when planning any SOT/VOS ship visit activities.

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DISCUSSION

Background

The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) is a comprehensive set of measures to enhance the security of ships and port facilities, which was developed in response to the perceived threats to ships and port facilities in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

The purpose of the Code is to provide a standardised, consistent framework for evaluating risk, enabling Governments to offset changes in threat with changes in vulnerability for ships and port facilities through the determination of appropriate security levels and corresponding security measures.

Because each ship and each port facility is subject to different threats, National Administrations determine and approve the method by which they will meet the specific requirements of the ISPS Code.

Since the introduction of ISPS Code on 1 July 2004, National Administrations have examined all aspects of border control and port security. In many countries the enforcement of regulations pertaining to Port Security and Customs practices has become more rigorous. All personnel visiting ports and ships now need authorised identification cards, and any equipment delivered to ships is subject to inspection and may require certified documentation.

ISPS Requirements

To comply with the ISPS Code, all PMOs and NMS staff visiting ports for SOT business requires accredited identification cards. These ID cards may be issued by port companies or by state or national authorities. Unfortunately, the requirements can differ from port to port, so security clearance and a relevant ID pass must be obtained for each port a PMO visits. In addition to having the correct identification, most ports now require prior notification of the intention to visit a ship before entry to the port is allowed. The PMOs must register with ships' agents to get their names on the Ship's 'Visitor's List'.

All meteorological and scientific equipment issued to, or retrieved from ships undertaking SOT programmes may be inspected before port entry is approved. The same equipment may also be subject to Customs regulations and some national Customs Agencies may require Export or Import Entries to be logged.

The requirement for documentation may impact on SOT activities, for example, the issue of meteorological instruments to newly recruited ships, the replacement of faulty instruments, the retrieval of instruments when a ship is decommissioned, the loading of floats, and buoys or XBT probes.

Impact on VOS Operations

The ISPS Code and Customs regulations are interpreted and enforced differently in each country. The respective NMS and PMOs need to be keep informed on issues regarding national regulations and to comply with these requirements so that PMO visits to ships and the issue of equipment can proceed without delay.

ID for Personnel

All PMOs must have current identification cards for the relevant ports. Before an ID card is issued, the PMOs maybe subjected to Police security checks, and required to undertake port security and safety training courses. In addition to the port security requirements, the PMO must follow the port safety standards by wearing the specified protective clothing. The PMOs must make arrangements to be listed on the Ships' 'Visitor's List' to ensure port access to a ship is given.

Failure to have the right identification or be on the 'Visitor's List' may mean access to the port is denied

and the opportunity to visit a ship is missed. This may be a waste of time for a PMO, but more importantly the chance to recruit a ship or load met buoys or floats are lost.

Equipment Documentation

The NMS and PMOs need to keep appraised on issues regarding national regulations pertaining to the supply or retrieval of meteorological and scientific equipment on ships. If Customs documentation is required, the respective NMSs must comply with these requirements. It is important that PMOs do not try to shortcut these regulations, as this may expose the PMO to suspicion of breaching security regulations, and could unnecessarily expose a ship to the same scrutiny.

If Export or Import entries are required, the NMS or PMO needs to work closely with a Customs broker to facilitate the timely production of required documentation, so that the PMO can visit to recruit a ship, or load buoys as planned.

NMS Experience to date

Most of the NMSs have indicated that the biggest impact from the ISPS Code has been the requirement to obtain authorized identification for all personnel visiting ports. Obtaining the required documentation has taken time, and experience has shown that the PMOs may require specific identification cards for each port visited, because the ISPS compliance regulations can differ from port to port. The NMSs have reported that some ports require the PMOs to attend security and safety courses, and that at many ports PMOs must use the port transport to a ship's berth, which makes the delivery of bulky items, such as buoys or floats more difficult. Some PMOs have faced the frustration of not being able to visit a ship because their names have not been on the 'Visitor's List'. The NMSs have reported that compliance requires advanced planning, and that the PMOs must be well informed on the requirements of the ports they visit.

Only a few countries reported the need to complete Customs documentation in order to get instruments on or off the wharf. In these countries the NMSs is working with the national authorities to ensure they comply with the regulations.

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