

Tanker Management and Self Assessment

ISM IS NOT ENOUGH



Introduction - TMSA

In June of 2004, the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) released a new publication – Tanker Management and Self Assessment (TMSA) – A Best-Practice Guide for Ship Operators. TMSA contains guidelines addressing the continual improvement of tanker operations. Now 34 years old and comprised of 47 energy companies, the OCIMF has drawn from its collective experience and produced, with the help of advisors, this standard that promotes zero safety and pollution incidents aboard ship.

Given that all merchant ships today are “managed,” to include “self-assessment” (all controlled within an ISM Code safety management system), should tanker operators be concerned about the presence of TMSA? The answer is a resounding YES if they intend to carry cargo for one of the OCIMF [member](#) companies.

At least one article published in July indicated some degree of tanker industry acceptance, particularly with the knowledge that existing internal audit practice will allow easy application. Perhaps. But auditing your management system to these guidelines is just the laying of the first keel block in what could be a long “refitting period” for your safety management system.

Briefly described

The TMSA is divided into four parts: Part One introduces this quality system initiative, explains the format of the guidelines, and describes the cycle of continuous improvement (Plan-Act-Measure-Improve). Part Two contains all 12 elements and their subparts, and is truly the substance of the TMSA. Each subpart contains stages of improvement progress and indicators for each of four stages. Part Three contains TMSA application information and references related to its content. Lastly, Part Four contains a glossary of related terms.

Why it is different

A bit misleading in name, the Tanker Management and Self Assessment (TMSA) guide is in fact a **quality management system standard**. To this end, operating petrochemical tankers only in accordance with an ISM Code-defined safety management system is no longer sufficient.

Why? The TMSA takes the approach of the ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management Systems Requirements and heavily promotes continual improvement of processes through a variant of the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. The TMSA addresses issues beyond those required by the ISM Code.

Such issues include as examples:

- The use of performance indication (benchmarks) to measure progress – approximately 250 performance indicators have been documented in this guide;
- Significant emphasis on leadership (the role of top management);
- Significant emphasis on the recruitment and maintenance of shore-based staff – to including retention benchmarks;

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- Significant emphasis on environmental policy and management – stating and pursuing objectives to reduce pollution – eventual attainment of ISO 14001 accreditation;
- A controlled management of change process;
- Formalized (documented) risk assessment programs;
- Formal navigational audits by the master; and
- Greater emphasis on feedback mechanisms, to specifically include the customer.

Important to understand, minimum compliance to all elements of the TMSA only establishes the baseline from which your company must improve.

Benefits

The TMSA quality system initiative provides several benefits to tanker operators, including:

- Key Performance Indicators – examples to incorporate as specific results to measure;
- Goals by way of Best Practices – established for each stage of implementation;
- Directly addressing leadership – one of quality management principles;
- Compelling operators to establish benchmarks and measure the results of important activities;
- Directing your organization based on factual information, the result of measurement and analysis; and
- Allowing each OCIMF member to charter from those operators who excel in safety and environmental practices.

But, does it affect me?

Ignoring TMSA is done at your own commercial peril in carrying for OCIMF members.

The OCIMF, affirming the purpose of the TMSA, states “there is a clear distinction between the standards of those ship operators that embrace the spirit of the ISM code and those that aim to fulfill only its minimum requirements.” An industry trade publication has referred to the TMSA as a set of voluntary guidelines. While there is nothing in the guidelines stating that all operators must meet the best practices suggested by tomorrow, there is also nothing that states that the use of these guidelines is voluntary.

A quality management principle states that organizations depend on their customers and should meet customer requirements and strive to exceed customer expectations.¹ Energy companies, through the OCIMF and similar organizations, have documented their requirements, including guidance, for many years.

Tankers are presently customer-inspected under various vetting programs including the Ship Inspection Reporting Exchange (SIRE) system. An element of these frequent vetting events is a check on the operator’s self-assessment activities (internal audit

¹ ISO 9000-2000 – Introduction.

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results). Experience has shown that facts stated in internal audit reports are often recorded in the vetting report. As with internal audit results, vessel operators are expected to provide vetting inspectors the results of their TMSA effort if requested. In fact the capability of “posting” the status of an operator’s TMSA effort to an OCIMF website has been created to allow sharing of results as desired by the operator.

The OCIMF member companies will take note if these guidelines are not formally used to alter and improve your present safety or safety and quality management system. With respect to this program, the OCIMF clearly states that “oil companies are taking due diligence in selecting well-maintained and well-managed vessels for charter.”

How we can help

SMS is an industry leader in the development and modification of management systems. We review management system requirements and results, and recommend subsequent improvement through numerous audits. We have OCIMF operators for clients and have worked with their safety and quality management systems for many years. We can modify your management system as needed to better align it with the requirements of TMSA and provide you with an end result that will satisfy both to the letter of the guidelines and to the unique requirements of your organization.

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