

NAVIGATIONAL SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

INFORMATION NOTE No. 1

The Navigational Safety Management System

Introduction

The Port of London Authority (PLA), as the Statutory Harbour Authority for the tidal Thames, is responsible for the management of navigational safety in the Port of London. It is obliged, under the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code (the Code) to maintain a navigational safety management system (SMS) based on formal risk assessment. In simple terms the Code requires the PLA to assess what incidents may happen, take reasonable precautions to prevent such incidents happening and keep appropriate records. The Code requires that risks should be managed so that they are reduced to as low 'as reasonably practicable' (ALARP). This proactive management of risks must be recorded and is subject to continual review and formal audits.

As with any Safety Management System the personnel involved in it need to have their roles clearly defined. This extends from the highest levels of authority down through all levels of management and to the staff. Everybody in the "team" needs to know what is expected of them and how to meet that expectation.

Navigational Safety Policy

The PLA's Navigational Safety Policy and complementary Marine Policies define the organisation and arrangements that the PLA has established to monitor, promote and proactively manage the conduct of navigation and associated marine activities. These policies are key components of the navigational SMS.

The Navigational SMS

The main provisions of the PLA navigational SMS are set out in this, and in the three other accompanying SMS Information Notes. They describe, at a high level, the overall framework for the management and co-ordination of marine activities necessary for the effective facilitation of navigational safety.

Navigational SMS procedures and guidelines fulfil the requirements of the Code including, but not limited to the following:

- Identifying hazards to navigation and ensuring such hazards are mitigated to acceptable levels.
- Making risk control the basis of all marine activities, procedures and regulations applied to or required of port users.
- Using risk assessment to identify the requirement for navigation aids.

- Applying risk assessment to all harbour works, wrecks and obstructions.
- Periodically reviewing the provision of safe anchorages.
- Maintaining systems to implement the findings of risk assessments.
- Identifying and designating safe pilot boarding and landing areas.
- Reporting deficiencies on visiting vessels.
- Regulating the use of harbour craft and ensuring powers are sufficient to govern the mooring of vessels.
- Maintaining and developing a competence based PLA training scheme to support delivery of all marine functions. This includes cross-training with tug crews.
- Maintaining appropriate plans and procedures for emergency response and associated training exercises.
- Using verification/audit systems.

The PLA undertakes a formal review of how it meets the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code every three years.

Hazard Database

All currently identified hazards to navigation are maintained in a dedicated management software programme. This database contains comprehensive details of all identified hazards, together with the associated risk control measures employed to mitigate those hazards. All hazards are maintained within the system in ranked order, based on the outcome of the risk assessment process. This ranking structure changes with time as the hazards and risk controls continue to be reviewed, reassessed and rescored.

Incident Database

The PLA also maintains a comprehensive record of all reported navigational incidents. The system holds the details of all reported navigational safety incidents and other occurrences having significance to the maintenance of navigational safety. The inputs are provided by the district Harbour Master.

Once a record has been initiated, additional information is included in respect of the outcome of the Harbour Master's regulatory investigation, and subsequently details of any follow-up disciplinary action and/or prosecution. The Harbour Master's findings and recommendations (if any) of his navigational safety investigation are also recorded in respect of the incident's impact on the Navigational SMS.