



सत्यमेव जयते

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Sub.: Issuance of Document of Compliance for the carriage of dangerous goods on Indian flag cargo ships - reg.

1. Regulation 19.4 of chapter II-2 of the Safety of Life at Sea [SOLAS] Convention requires the Flag Administration concerned to provide its ships with a Document of Compliance [DOC], as an evidence of compliance in respect of its construction and equipment for the carriage of dangerous goods on its board.
2. Section 331 of the Merchant Shipping [M.S.] Act, 1958, as amended, deals with the safe carriage of dangerous goods. Under the provisions of the said Act, the M.S. (Carriage of Cargo) Rules, 1995, was notified on 27.12.95. Rule 9.2 ibid specifies the issuance of a Document of Compliance for the carriage of dangerous goods, on board an Indian flag ship, by the Principal Officer of the Jurisdictional Mercantile Marine Department [MMD].
3. On 18.03.13, the Directorate General of Shipping [DGS], Govt. of India issued the DGS Order No.6 of 2013 [F.No.ENG/Misc.29(73)/09] dated 18.03.13 authorising Recognised Organisations [ROs] to carry out surveys for an issuance of statutory certificates for Indian flag cargo ships. Accordingly, these ROs have been issuing DOCs for the carriage of dangerous goods by Indian flag ships.
4. A DOC for the carriage of dangerous goods on board an Indian flag merchant ship includes the carriage of IMDG [International Maritime Dangerous Goods] Class 1 & Class 7 cargo [i.e. explosives and radioactive materials, respectively]. Such cargoes carried on ships/vessels could lead to serious consequences if an adequate care thereto is not taken. In view of the same, direct oversight of the jurisdictional MMD is required to confirm compliance of the requirements of the applicable instruments before the vessel is issued with a DOC for the carriage of dangerous goods.

5. The ROs are, accordingly, required to inform the jurisdictional MMD for participation in the survey for an issue of a DOC for the carriage of dangerous goods, as well as for its renewal if the Indian flag merchant vessel/ship is in India. Indian vessels undergoing survey for issue of DOCs for the carriage of dangerous goods outside India shall have the relevant aspects verified during the first Flag State Inspection [FSI] of the vessel after its return to India by the jurisdictional MMD.
6. The Principal Officer of the jurisdictional MMD shall ensure compliance with the requirements of the IMDG Code, INF Code, applicable provisions of the relevant international instruments, Merchant Shipping Act and its Rules etc., before concurring with the issuance of a DOC for the carriage of dangerous goods to the vessel concerned by the ROs.
7. Such vessels in possession of DOCs for the carriage of dangerous goods will need to be in possession of the latest edition of the IMDG Code, while handling/carrying/loading/unloading IMDG cargo on/from the vessel. An electronic version of the IMDG Code is acceptable, provided officials of the ship demonstrate familiarity with use of its electronic version. The vessel shall also comply with the operational requirements specified in the IMDG Code, International Code for the Safe Carriage of Packaged Irradiated Nuclear Fuel, Plutonium and High-Level Radioactive Wastes on board Ships (INF Code), applicable provisions of international instruments etc., as well as the provisions of the Indian Merchant Shipping Act, and the Rules framed thereunder, during carriage as well as while handling/loading/unloading of dangerous goods on/ from the vessel.
8. To ensure compliance with national and international instruments pertaining to the carriage of IMDG cargo, all vessels loading IMDG cargo in Indian ports shall continue the existing practice of submitting stowage plan [in respect of IMDG cargo], sufficiently in advance, to the jurisdictional MMDs. Surveyors of the Indian National Maritime Administration [MMDs] may inspect such vessels to ensure compliance with the relevant requirements, as provided for under section 331(4) of the Merchant the Shipping Act, 1958, as amended. However, with regard to carriage of Class 1 & Class 7 IMDG cargo, the jurisdictional MMDs shall ensure that its Surveyors inspect the stowage aspects on the vessel and issue NOC for the vessel to sail out of the port with such cargo.
9. This is issued with the approval of the Director General of Shipping & Additional Secretary to the Govt. of India.

  
(Capt. K.P. Jayakumar)

Deputy Nautical Adviser to the Govt. of India