



Introduction to Port State Control

A short introduction into background, objective and inspection procedures of port state control. Knowledge and understanding on the PSC scheme and the way it functions will ease communication between ship's crew and PSC officers and avoid misunderstandings.

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What is Port State Control?

Port State Control (PSC) is the inspection of foreign ships in national ports to verify that the condition of the ship and its equipment comply with the requirements of international regulations and that the ship is manned and operated in compliance with these rules. The inspection is done by officers representing the national Port State Authority in each country.

The primary responsibility for ensuring that the ships comply with applicable regulations and standards lies with the Flag State. Port State Control is not and can never substitute for the proper exercise of Flag State responsibility, but is regarded as measure complementary to the Flag State Control.

Objective

Port State Control aims, through a system of harmonized inspections procedures, to ensure compliance with international regulations and target sub-standards ships with the main objective being their eventual elimination.

Instruments

Only internationally accepted conventions shall be enforced during Port State Control inspections. These, referred to as instruments, are as follows:

- **SOLAS 74/78/88** – Safety of Life at Sea
- **Load Lines 66/88**
- **MARPOL 73/78** – Prevention of Pollution from Ships
- **STCW 78** – Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers
- **ILO 147** – Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention
- **COLREG 72** – Preventing Collisions at Sea
- **Tonnage 69** – Tonnage Measurement of Ships

New:

- **AFS 2001** – Antifouling System Convention
- **Maritime Labour Convention** (from 2011)

PSC Regimes

In recent years, a few shipping disasters, causing alarming damage to the environment, made the whole world concerned about protection of their coastal water. The result of this concern, and to combat sub-standard shipping, regional agreements between different port States have been concluded. These regional agreements, called “Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on Port State Control, are to this date:



Paris MOU : <http://www.parismou.org>

Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Spain

Tokyo MOU : <http://www.tokyo-mou.org/>

Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russian Federation, Salomon Islands, Singapore, Thailand, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Hong Kong (China).

Vina del Mar : <http://www.acuerdolatino.int.ar/>

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela

Mediterranean MOU : <http://www.medmou.org/>

Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Palestine Authority

Indian Ocean MOU

: <http://www.iomou.org/>

Australia, Eritrea, India, Iran, Kenya, Maldives Islands, Mauritius, Oman, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Yemen

Caribbean MOU

: <http://www.caribbeanmou.org/>

Anguilla, Antigua and Barbados, Aruba, Bahamas, Bermudas, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands

Black Sea MOU

: <http://www.bsmou.org/>

Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine.

West & Central Africa (Abuja) MOU

Benin, Cape Verde, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauretania, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo

Riyadh MOU

: <http://www.riyadhrou.org/>

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE

And the

United States Coast Guard

: <http://homeport.uscg.mil/mycg/portal/ep/home.do>

Note: A few countries are members of several MOU's (example Canada, Australia, Russia)

Inspection Procedures

A Port State Control visit on board will normally start with examination of ship's certificates and documents. In addition the PSC Officer conducts a general inspection of several areas on board to verify that the overall condition of the ship (including the engine room and accommodation, and including hygienic conditions) complies with that required by the various certificates.

If a ship is found to comply with applicable conventions and rules, the PSC inspector will issue a "clean" inspection report (form A) to the Master of the vessel. The "Inspection A" report must be retained onboard for a period of three years and be available for examination by Port State Control officers at any time. This Tool Kit has dedicated space where a vessel can keep these reports, together with class rectification reports.

If valid certificates or documents are not onboard, or if there are "Clear Grounds" to believe that the condition of a ship, its on board operational procedures or compliance, its equipment or its crew does not substantially meet the requirements of a relevant Convention, a more detailed inspection will be carried out.

Examples of “Clear Grounds” are

- a report or notification by another Maritime Authority,
- a report or complaint by the Master, a crew member, or any person or organization with a legitimate interest in the safe operation of the ship, shipboard living condition, working condition or the prevention of pollution, unless the Authority concerned deems the report or complaint to be unfounded. The identity of the person lodging the report or complaint must not be revealed to the Master or the ship-owner of the concerned vessel.
- The vessel is accused of an alleged pollution violation
- The vessel has been involved in a collision, stranding or grounding on its way to the port.
- The ship has been identified as a priority case for inspection
- The ship is flying the flag of a non-party to a relevant instrument
- Lack of principal equipment or arrangements required by the conventions
- Excessively unsanitary conditions onboard the vessel
- Information or evidence that the Master or crew is not familiar with essential shipboard operations relating to the safety of ships or the prevention of pollution, or that such operations have not been carried out
- Indications that the relevant crewmembers are unable to communicate appropriately with each other, or with persons other persons onboard, or that the vessel is unable to communicate with shore-based authorities either in a common language or in the language of those authorities

The above list is not exhaustive. More details can be found on the webpages of the MOU's.

If an inspector decides that clear grounds are present, he may:

- o In areas where “clear grounds” has been established, a more in detail inspection may be conducted.
- o Carry out more detailed inspection in other areas at random
- o Include further checking of compliance with operational equipment onboard.

Expanded Inspections

Certain types or categories of vessels are automatically subject to mandatory expanded inspections such as for “high risk” vessels identified in for Paris MOU as:

- o Oil tankers older than 15 years and over 3000 GT
- o Bulk carriers older than 12 years
- o Passenger vessels
- o Gas/chemical tankers older than 10 years

For more details, check the website of the relevant PSC MOU.

Concentrated Inspection Campaigns

PSC Regimes periodically conduct what is called “Concentrated Inspection Campaign” (CIC) on specific topics. These campaigns are carried out during routine PSC inspection and run typically for duration of 3 months. Detailed information of the expected inspection campaigns are posted on the webpages of the different MOU’s.

Target system for selecting vessels to inspect

The different PSC Regimes have different systems for selecting vessels to inspect, and some are in process of updating these systems, such as Paris MOU that is introducing a “New Inspection Regime” (NIR) coming into force from 1st January 2011.

For the latest up to date information on targeting systems, please consult the webpage for the MOU, or attend one of the DNV PSC courses arranged around world.

Deficiencies, detention and rectification

In principle, all deficiencies must be rectified before departure of the ship. However, PSC Officer, taking in consideration the nature of the deficiencies, may give other actions to be taken such as to rectify deficiency in 14 days or at next port of call, or as per agreed imposed Condition of Class etc. The description of the deficiency and the corresponding action taken are filled in on the inspection report.

Invalid certificates and serious deficiencies clearly hazardous to safety, health or environment or numerous deficiencies, which together constitute a potential threat to safety, health or environment, will cause ship’s detention.

Remember to keep documentation showing rectification and what was done, together with the PSC inspection report and for the same time period. The PSC Tool Kit is intended to assist you as storage space for this information.

DNV Attendance when detained by Port State

In cases of detention, it is important to request DNV surveyor to attend on board as:

- According to DNV Rules, in case inspections by port or flag authorities reveal deficiencies related to certificates issued by DNV, the customer shall immediately notify the Society and request attendance onboard
- The class surveyor shall communicate and co-operate with the PSC Officer in order to **expedite the release of the ship**. This may include clarification on applicability, interpretation, temporary rectification and alternative solutions.

Port State Control and Safety Management

PSC Officer has the right to check the ISM system on board as per SOLAS Convention.

The PSC Officer will not conduct an audit onboard; he/she will

- (i) examine the ship's ISM certificates (SMC and DOC) and documentation and
- (ii) ask Master and crew questions in order to determine that the Safety Management System (SMS) is satisfactorily implemented.

Several technical deficiencies may indicate possible failure of the Safety Management System (SMS) and PSC Officer may request an audit to be conducted by the ISM certifying body.

Based upon the findings recorded during Port State Control inspections and eventual shipboard audit by the ISM certifying body, the Flag State may require additional audit of the Company managing the ship.

With well established procedures in the SMS, operational failures of equipment and technical systems may be identified before they result in hazardous situations.

**ISM Code is not a paper exercise.
A good implemented SMS will reduce the risk of detentions
during Port State Control inspections.**