

PRESS RELEASE

Guidelines Address Potential Gaps in Safety Management when Using Alternative Fuels On board Ships

Latest report presents guidelines for developing and implementing a Safety Management System under The International Safety Management (ISM) Code addressing application of alternative fuels on board ships.

April 4, 2024. HOUSTON The Maritime Technologies Forum (MTF) has released guidelines highlighting recommendations for developing and implementing the Safety Management System (SMS) under the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, addressing specifically, potentially more hazardous alternative fuels used on board ships. This report follows last year's publication, 'Operational Management to Accelerate Maritime Decarbonisation', which identified critical gaps in implementing three current regulatory Conventions and Codes.

The MTF's guidelines address potential gaps related to Safety Management Systems (SMS) development and implementation; including emergency procedures; and maintenance measures. Through collaboration with industry stakeholders, MTF members developed recommendations after reviewing the ISM Code's Part A implementation for each section.

Some of the highlights from the report may be listed as below:

- While the experience with alternative fuels will at first be limited, the MTF guidelines outline actions for companies to develop new or strengthen existing SMS for alternative fuels on board their fleet.
- Companies should implement a structured risk management within SMS to proactively identify improvements and learn through non-conformities, accidents and hazardous occurrences related to alternative fuels, or through other companies or pilots.
- The SMS should be versatile to accommodate mixed fuel operations and adapt to be ready for new fuel scenarios as alternative fuels are progressively scaled and become more mainstream throughout the industry.
- Safe operations with alternative fuels will require an assessment of the competency, training, familiarisation and resources relevant to the specific alternative fuels. The human element in the operations associated with the handling, storage and utilisation of alternative fuels is critical, and should be considered to ensure safe operations.

Commenting on the guidelines and recommendations, Teo Eng Dih, Chief Executive for the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said:

"As new fuels play a more prominent role in the maritime industry progressively, it is important for the shipping community to adopt safety by design, so that the residual risks to

other vessels and the port ecosystem are reduced to a minimum. MPA welcomes the development of such work to support the holistic design of new and retrofitted vessels, and to distil learning points to develop training for maritime professionals.”

Additional comments on the report were provided by Nick Brown, CEO of Lloyd’s Register, saying:

“These guidelines and recommendations from the MTF are an important step forward to achieving safe and sustainable operations and a great starting point to begin preparing for the use of alternative fuels. The ISM Code provides a top-down approach to safety and is the ideal vehicle through which to drive training and skills for the safe handling of these fuels, not only under routine operations but also during emergencies such as equipment failures, fires, collisions, and malicious attacks. Our biggest strength, however, will be learning from each other throughout the energy transition, ensuring we have a solid foundation to promote safety for our people at sea and in port.”

Download the full report by clicking [here](#).

Please join us for a panel event during Singapore Maritime Week where we will discuss the findings of this report and more. View the agenda and register by clicking [here](#).

About MTF

MTF is a forum of Flag States and Classification Societies established to provide technical and regulatory expertise to benefit the maritime industry. The role of the Forum is to work together on research that it publishes to the maritime industry and draw on regulatory expertise to be able to offer unbiased advice to the shipping sector. It seeks to give guidance on the use of alternative fuels and increased levels of automation in the industry. Furthermore, it allows for the safe testing and adoption of new technologies and it helps shape world-leading regulation.

The Flag State administrations include Maritime Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan; the Norwegian Maritime Authority; the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, United Kingdom; and the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA). The Classification Society members are ABS, DNV, LR and ClassNK.

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