

***CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ORGANISING AND CONDUCTING
INSPECTIONS OF TANKERS***

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***European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC)
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ship inspections are carried out for a number of different reasons and the scope of them can vary according to the objective. However, in the main, the principal objective is to provide a snapshot view of the condition of a vessel and her immediate fitness for a specific purpose. A secondary objective may be to measure the extent of any improvement which has occurred since the last inspection and the third be to provide an incentive to cause some further improvement.
- 1.2 Internationally agreed standards, national legislation, industry guidelines and the measures of the classification societies will continue to form the basis against which the condition of the vessel can be fairly judged. Nevertheless, it must not be overlooked that it is the diligence, integrity and skill of the Shipowner and his crew which will ultimately determine whether a ship is satisfactory or not.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Code of Practice is to lay down some guidelines concerning the manner in which a ship inspection should be organised, conducted and concluded in order to achieve consistence and increase efficiency.
- 1.4 Ship Inspections, because of their different objectives and scope, tend to fall into different types. Some of these are listed below:
 - Governmental surveys including Port State and US Coast Guard inspections.
 - Class inspections and surveys carried out by the classification societies.
 - Charterer's Inspections mainly carried out on behalf of or by the major oil and chemical companies.
 - Cargo owners, underwriters, P & 1 and hull insurers inspections.
 - Inspections carried out at the loading or discharging terminals.
 - Shipowner inspections.
- 1.5 It is apparent from the above that there are a large number of inspection types involving a wide range of organisations. The cost and time involved and the pressure brought to bear on the vessel's safety and anti-pollution resources when several inspections may coincide while a vessel is also involved in loading or discharging has become a concern to the industry.
- 1.6 Therefore, this Code of Practice aims to suggest procedures which if followed will help to ensure that multiple inspections in a single port are minimised, that the style and manner of inspections is similar and becomes familiar to both Inspectors and ship's personnel. In due course it may be possible for similar type inspections to be coordinated and information shared, leading to a reduction in the total number of inspections required.

2. Arranging a ship inspection

- 2.1 Based on the foregoing, it is obvious that some inspections will occur in any case due to their mandatory requirements and/or due to defined periods having elapsed between surveys or renewal of certificates. Port State Control Inspections will depend upon the availability of an Inspector and the target number of inspections set by the National Maritime Authority. Owners inspections, Classification Society inspections and P&I inspections should be capable of some control by the Shipowner while Charterers and Terminal inspections will depend on commercial, political and technical considerations.
- 2.2 Arranging an inspection to minimise the chance of it clashing with other inspections will require considerable planning and effort. This is often not considered in any depth before arranging or agreeing to an inspection which itself may allow some degree of flexibility to be applied. An initial requirement when arranging an inspection will involve early communication between the organisation requiring the inspection and the Shipowner or Ship Manager who should have a fair idea of inspections over which he has some control. It will be in the Inspector's interest to have the full attention of the necessary senior ship's personnel if he is to carry out the inspection effectively and efficiently and therefore it is recommended that he ascertains from Shipowner or Ship Manager whether other inspections have been arranged for the same port visit.
- 2.3 In any case, little or no preparation for the inspection can be made by the Shipowner if he is not adequately forewarned of the visit and, for security reasons, he must be given the name of the Inspector and who he represents. Other details may help speed up the inspection. For example, the blank Inspection Report can be sent to the Shipowner or Ship Manager in sufficient time for it to be sent to the ship. The ship can, if required, complete some of the data input which will then be subject to confirmation by the Inspector. In addition, the inspection format will provide the ship with some idea of the scope, personnel required, time required etc., in order that the Ship's Master can better plan the use of his own resources. In the event that more than one inspection will occur during a single port visit, the Shipowner or Ship Manager should be encouraged to have his own representative available on board during the inspection procedure. Such a representative may assist the Master in attending to the Inspector and by being present during the debriefing process following an inspection.
- 2.4 Where a Charterer wishes to inspect a number of ships owned or managed by a company, it may be useful to develop a schedule of inspections for the fleet.
- 2.5 While each Inspector may wish to perform the inspection according to some predetermined routine or route requiring the presence of specific senior ship's personnel, any pre-warning of these requirements will be useful.
- 2.6 The Shipowner should be encouraged to have the necessary log books, records, certificates, manuals and procedures to hand in one or two locations on board in order to minimise time locating this documentation or bringing it to the Inspector.

3. Qualification and Terms of Reference for Ship Inspectors

- 3.1 The quality of the Inspector is paramount if good and proper results are to be obtained. Indeed, it is possible that the experience of the Inspector is such that he can identify deficiencies which may not have been noticed by the ship's personnel. In any case, circumstances will arise where the Inspector's capability to deal with such issues in a constructive and useful manner will greatly affect the support he receives from the ship's personnel and the efficiency of the inspection process. Therefore, some attention to handling personnel and associated situations should be considered along with any other training given to the Inspector.
- 3.2 The perfect objective would be for all Inspectors carrying out the same type of inspection to be able to report in a consistent manner in respect of a given set of circumstances. Each group of Inspectors may receive different training and be given different standards against which to measure quality, safety and performance. A standard training procedure coupled with a standard Inspection Report for each inspection type would indeed be an ideal situation. It will always be very difficult to achieve such a level of consistency even within a single organisation with a single training programme. It is recommended that wherever possible, experienced Inspectors accompany inexperienced or newly appointed Inspectors on at least two inspections. Each should complete the Inspection Report independently and compare and review the results. In this way consistency in reporting should be improved and improvements to the Inspection Report document may also be identified.
- 3.3 Formal training of Inspectors is carried out in various locations.
- 3.4 Course content should include some background philosophy including the legal issues surrounding Ship Inspections and the Ship Inspection Reports. Inspectors should be aware of such aspects as liability or defamation of character. Other issues such as Quality Management, ISO 9000 series standards and IMO conventions covering Safety and Pollution Management procedures will be relevant depending on the objectives of the inspection. Refresher courses may also be worth considering.
- 3.5 As inferred above, the scope and depth of training for Inspectors should be arranged to match the objectives of the inspection. A ship/shore checklist type inspection will concentrate on those issues pertinent to the ship's mooring and cargo handling equipment and procedures and any safety or anti-pollution factors which are important while the vessel remains at the berth.
- 3.6 On the other hand, a long time charter arrangement will require an inspection which covers all parts of the ship and all the associated policies and procedures which have been set up to manage the maintenance and operation of the ship. Thus, in this latter case, the training scope and the qualifications of the Inspector will be significantly greater. While the format of the blank Inspection Report will give a fair idea of the scope of the inspection, it is recommended that the Inspector carries Terms of Reference which identifies the scope of the inspection, for whom the inspection is being made and clearly describes what the Inspector is empowered to say and do regarding the deficiencies he may identify and his overall opinion of the state of the vessel, its crew and its procedures.

4. Use of standard inspection formats and procedures

- 4.1 On boarding the ship to be inspected, it is of the highest importance that the Inspector introduces himself to the Master, and/or the Owners Representative to discuss his Terms of Reference and the scope and order of the inspection procedure. The Inspector should ensure that he provides himself with all the necessary safety clothing and equipment necessary while he is on board the vessel and conducting the inspection procedure.
- 4.2 Some Inspectors may have developed their own Inspection Report formats or it may have been developed to fulfil the specific objectives of an organisation or a company. Ideally, it would be beneficial to all concerned if inspections of the same type and with the same objectives followed a similar or identical format. Coupled with a consistency of understanding among Inspectors, this could lead towards a situation where inspections of different ships are thoroughly comparable.
- 4.3 Today, it is possible for two inspections of the same ship to reach quite different conclusions due either to the difference in the scope of questions asked or item inspected or to the understanding of the Inspector regarding what is or is not satisfactory. Perfection in this regard is probably impossible and what is sought is a fair degree of consistency coupled with an appreciation of the degree of error which may accompany any inspection.
- 4.4 National Authorities, Classification Societies, P&I Clubs, Shipowners, Ship Managers, Charterers and Terminal Operators are urged to work together to produce common Inspection Report formats and inspection procedures wherever possible to suit a particular inspection type. This will assist in improving the efficiency of the inspection in as much as the scope will be anticipated by the ship's personnel and they should thus be able to assist in ensuring that material is available for the inspection in the form of either equipment or documentation.
- 4.5 A further benefit will be achieved because of the use of a common format when Inspection Reports can be shared among interested parties e.g. Shipowners, Ship Managers, Charterers and Terminal Operators and others, thus reducing the number of inspections.
- 4.6 In the meantime, it is recommended that Shipowners train their own superintendents and senior staff to use and complete Inspection Reports on their vessels which are at least identical with the best of the Charterers Inspection Reports until some common format is achieved. Where Charterers will accept self assessment to some degree, the ship's own Inspection Report may be used by bodies organising and conducting ship inspections subject to verification of items on a random basis.
- 4.7 This will either increase or decrease the Inspector's confidence in the ship's personnel when he compares the ship's self assessment with his own observations.
- 4.8 Considerable criticism of Ship Inspection Reports results from the degree of subjectivity which has to be used by the Inspector. In order to reduce subjectivity it is necessary to break down more generalised questions into specific and objective elements.
- 4.9 For example, one Inspection Report may simply ask if the condition of a cargo tank is satisfactory or not. Another Inspection Report may require the Inspector to comment upon each of the internal surfaces of the tank bottom, top, sides etc and require him to assess the percentage area of discoloration, blistering, rusting etc affecting each surface. He may additionally be provided with standards of acceptability for each aspect and the decision on the acceptability of the whole tank will become less and less subjective.

- 4.10 This increases the effort required to complete the inspection and, to some extent, it reduces the reliance on the experience and professionalism of the Inspector. It can also lead to a considerable duplication in the questions asked. Nevertheless, it does allow a better comparison between two tanks or two ships or the previous inspections and the current inspection. If any sort of rating system is to be used then, from a legal point of view alone, it must be important to minimise subjectivity in relation to the answers to the question.
- 4.11 A number of guidelines have been produced by the maritime industry suggesting the format to be used in Ship Inspection Reports,
- 4.12 The Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) has been responsible for a number of these covering oil tankers and gas carriers. More recently, the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) has produced its own Inspection Reports covering gas carriers and chemical carriers. Another guideline covers marine barges.
- 4.13 In general, it is recommended that questions should be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No". Wherever possible, references should be given to the legislation, resolution, recommendation or guideline upon which a question is based. This helps to provide the minimum acceptable standard for which the Inspector can tick a "Yes" rather than a "No".
- 4.14 In addition, the Inspector should be provided with a guidance note covering each question. In time these should be updated to include information and assistance in areas where the questions have been found to be more difficult to answer

5. Post inspection debriefing with ship's senior personnel and /or owner's representatives

- 5.1 The Inspector, whether he is employed by the Owner, a Charterer or Terminal Operator, should ensure that he has sufficient time before he has to leave the ship to collate the list of deficiencies, if any, and to present these to the Master and other relevant senior ship's personnel.

To assist in this matter, it is recommended that deficiencies are highlighted in the Inspection Report as they are found. This will assist in their collation at the end of the inspection.

- 5.2 It is recommended that the Inspector allows the ship's senior personnel to make comments on each deficiency relating to the accuracy of the Inspectors statement, the ship's intentions regarding the correction of the deficiency, particularly noting whether spares are available and any special circumstances which may effect its remedy.
- 5.3 It is not recommended that the Inspector offers any of his own views regarding the manner in which the deficiency may be corrected or any opinion he may have regarding whether the ship will be acceptable to charterers etc., unless he is specifically empowered to do so in his Terms of Reference.
- 5.4 The comments of senior ship's personnel should be recorded in an appropriate part of the Inspection Report. At the very least, the Inspector should obtain the Master's signature to confirm he has been made aware of the deficiencies.
- 5.5 The Inspector and the Master may agree the relative importance of the deficiencies in relation to the safe and proper operation of the vessel.
- 5.6 Where the inspection has been carried out on a limited scope, i.e. a terminal inspection or ship/shore checklist, and deficiencies have been found, the Ship's Master or Shipowner/Manager should, if he disputes the deficiency, be given the right to ask for re-inspection by a trained Inspector. This is of particular importance if these deficiencies will be recorded on to a database of deficiencies which may be used in the future to judge the quality of the ship.

6. Formal notification of the inspection results to the Shipowner or Ship Manager following a Charterer's or Terminal Operator's inspection

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Ship's Master will report any deficiencies found by the Inspector to his Owners immediately following the inspection. He may also be expected to advise his Owners of any comments he made to the Inspector regarding these deficiencies.
- 6.2 The Inspector will be responsible for advising his organisation or company the results of the inspections and any comments he received from the Master.
- 6.3 In conjunction with his organisation/company or not, as the case may be, the results of the inspection should be promptly relayed back to the Shipowner or Ship Manager.
- 6.4 Where deficiencies exist, an indication of the acceptable time to remedy the deficiencies should be indicated to the Shipowner or Ship Manager. This indication should be provided by the organisation requiring the inspection. The time allowed will depend upon the severity of the deficiency and may range from instant remedy to remedy within a stipulated time frame.
- 6.5 Where the information relating to the inspection and any deficiencies found is to be stored for future reference, it is important that, when the deficiencies are corrected, the information is updated accordingly. In every case it should be the responsibility of the Shipowner to advise the necessary organisation that the deficiency has been remedied.
- 6.6 Re-inspection may be requested by a Shipowner in the event that he wishes to ensure that any record of past deficiencies will be favourably corrected. In this event the Shipowner or Ship Manager should fully accept any inconvenience which this re inspection might cause him.