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MSC-MEPC.4/Circ.2
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PORT STATE CONTROL-RELATED MATTERS*

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR PORT STATE CONTROL OFFICERS

1 The Marine Environment Protection Committee, at its fifty-sixth session (9 to 13 July 2007), and the Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-third session (3 to 12 October 2007), approved the text of the Code of good practice for port State control officers.

2 Member Governments and regional port State control regimes are invited to apply the Code of good practice for port State control officers as appropriate and to bring it to the attention of officials exercising port and coastal State actions and other parties, as appropriate.

* In order to facilitate the identification and retrieval of information circulated by means of joint MSC-MEPC circulars, from now on such information will be disseminated through the following circular series:

- 1 Organization and methods of work, as MSC-MEPC.1/Circ...
- 2 General matters, as MSC-MEPC.2/Circ...
- 3 Casualty-related matters, as MSC-MEPC.3/Circ...
- 4 Port State control-related matters, as MSC-MEPC.4/Circ...
- 5 Survey and certification-related matters, as MSC-MEPC.5/Circ...
- 6 National contact points for safety and pollution prevention and response, as MSC-MEPC.6/Circ...
- 7 Human element-related matters, as MSC-MEPC.7/Circ...

ANNEX**CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR PORT STATE CONTROL OFFICERS
CONDUCTING INSPECTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE
REGIONAL MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT
ON PORT STATE CONTROL****Introduction**

1 This document provides guidelines regarding the standards of integrity, professionalism and transparency that regional port State control (PSC) regimes expect of all port State control officers (PSCOs) who are involved in or associated with port State control inspections.

Objective

2 The object of this Code is to assist PSCOs in conducting their inspections to the highest professional level. PSCOs are central to achieving the aims of the regional PSC regime. They are the daily contact with the shipping world. They are expected to act within the law, within the rules of their Government and in a fair, open, impartial and consistent manner.

Fundamental principles of the Code

3 The Code of good practice encompasses three fundamental principles against which all actions of PSCOs are judged: integrity, professionalism and transparency. These are defined as follows:

- .1 integrity is the state of moral soundness, honesty and freedom from corrupting influences or motives;
- .2 professionalism is applying accepted professional standards of conduct and technical knowledge. For PSCOs' standards of behaviour are established by the maritime Authority and the general consent of the port State members; and
- .3 transparency implies openness and accountability.

4 The list of the actions and behaviour expected of PSCOs in applying these principles are set in the annex to this document.

5 Adhering to professional standards provides greater credibility to PSCOs and places more significance on their findings.

6 Nothing in the Code shall absolve the PSCOs from complying with the specific requirements of the PSC instruments and applicable national laws.

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ANNEX

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR PORT STATE CONTROL OFFICERS

Actions and behaviour of PSCOs

The PSCOs should:

- 1 use their professional judgement in carrying out their duties;

Respect

- 2 remember that a ship is a home as well as a workplace for the ship's personnel and not unduly disturb their rest or privacy;
- 3 comply with any ship housekeeping rules such as removing dirty shoes or work clothes;
- 4 not be prejudiced by the race, gender, religion or nationality of the crew when making decisions and treat all personnel on board with respect;
- 5 respect the authority of the Master or his deputy;
- 6 be polite but professional and firm as required;
- 7 never become threatening, abrasive or dictatorial or use language that may cause offence;
- 8 expect to be treated with courtesy and respect;

Conduct of inspections

- 9 comply with all health and safety requirements of the ship and their administration e.g., wearing of personal protective clothing, and not take any action or cause any action to be taken which could compromise the safety of the PSCO or the ship's crew;
- 10 comply with all security requirements of the ship and wait to be escorted around the ship by a responsible person;
- 11 present their identity cards to the Master or the representative of the owner at the start of the inspection;
- 12 explain the reason for the inspection – however where the inspection is triggered by a report or complaint they must not reveal the identity of the person making the complaint;
- 13 apply the procedures of PSC and the convention requirements in a consistent and professional way and interpret them pragmatically when necessary;
- 14 not try to mislead the crew, for example by asking them to do things that are contrary to the Conventions;

- 15 request the crew to demonstrate the functioning of equipment and operational activities, such as drills and not make tests themselves;
- 16 seek advice when they are unsure of a requirement or of their findings rather than making an uninformed decision, for example by consulting colleagues, publications, the flag Administration, the recognized organization;
- 17 where it is safe to do so accommodate the operational needs of the port and the ship;
- 18 explain clearly to the Master the findings of the inspection and the corrective action required and ensure that the report of inspection is clearly understood;
- 19 issue to the Master a legible and comprehensible report of inspection before leaving the ship;

Disagreements

- 20 deal with any disagreement over the conduct or findings of the inspection calmly and patiently;
- 21 advise the Master of the complaints procedure in place if the disagreement cannot be resolved within a reasonable time;
- 22 advise the Master of the right of appeal and relevant procedures in the case of detention;

Integrity

- 23 be independent and not have any commercial interest in their ports and the ships they inspect or companies providing services in their ports. For example, the PSCOs should not be employed from time to time by companies which operate ships in their ports or the PSCOs should not have an interest in the repair companies in their ports;
- 24 be free to make decisions based on the findings of their inspections and not on any commercial considerations of the port;
- 25 always follow the rules of their administrations regarding the acceptance of gifts and favours e.g., meals on board;
- 26 firmly refuse any attempts of bribery and report any blatant cases to the maritime Authority;
- 27 not misuse their authority for benefit, financial or otherwise; and

Updating knowledge

- 28 update their technical knowledge regularly.
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