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Implementing and Enforcing Maritime Law Globally:
An Analysis for Improving Safety

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday – We think we know under what circumstances this term is used, but there are an infinite number of tragic events which can necessitate its broadcast. A seagoing vessel may have oars, sails, steam, diesel or nuclear propulsion: each has its pros and cons. This is an inquiry and examination of what has happened in the past, what was learned by mariners and investigators and to identify actions that can be taken to increase safety at sea for all mariners.

From the infamous *Titanic* to accidents involving modern-day cruise ships, disasters at sea touch a person's deepest fears. From cruise ships to supertankers and car ferries to bulk carriers, maritime accidents are the worst of all transport disasters. More than 190,000 people have been killed in shipping accidents in the last twenty years.
(California Maritime Academy)

A review of maritime accidents and painstaking forensic investigation will facilitate the reduction and prevention of accidents but will never eliminate their occurrence. Many problems arise when common sense runs up against the complex system, electrical or mechanical, both of which seafarers have become dependent on.

An example of technology overriding common sense is when a seafarer becomes too accustom to warnings or notifications from a radar system; ignores or disables the indicators and results in a mid ocean collision or more commonly an unreported near miss.

The investigation of each incident may reveal a single and easily solvable problem, or build an unsolvable mystery. Many investigations reveal matters of common sense applied to simple questions of cause and effect. More often the investigations illuminate complex layers of technical information that requires years of expert examination.

Only through the investigation of failures, can designers improve the safety of complex systems. However, there is always the possibility that improvements may introduce new opportunities for disaster. Government investigators, insurance analysis and maritime engineering professionals continue to argue that the conventional engineering approach to ensuring safety--building in more warnings and safeguards--fails because systems complexity makes failures inevitable.

There are many arenas that are being advanced to improve safety at sea. The primary focus of this document will be maritime law and enforcement issues. For completeness there are additional high priority examples.

- Maritime safety legislation.
- Effective monitoring of traffic
- Identification systems that automatically communicate with coastal authorities.
- Seafarer education and certification
- Vessel design and manufacture
- Vessel inspection and registration
- Navigation and weather forecasting systems

The advancement of accident research should bring a greater degree of safety while minimizing the opportunity for disaster. The ultimate goal is the successful unraveling of the cause of disaster to ensure that such harmful or fatal accidents never happen again.

The improvement of maritime safety requires multiple efforts to be unified toward a single purpose. The prevention of future disasters must include understanding of the past accidents and support global cooperation in the future. To achieve a unified approach we must appeal to all maritime entities from both a social and economic perspective.

Security Risks on the High Seas

What does the average tourist on a cruise ship and the crew member on a supertanker have in common? They both face life and death security risks just by sailing on a vessel at sea. The risks are diverse in nature that the following observations will focus only on cruise ship security, cargo security, terrorist security, and modern day piracy. The vulnerability of the world's seagoing vessels is underestimated by virtually all of the maritime community. It is the "Won't happen to me" syndrome in action and a review of the changes and improvements currently being implemented provide only a marginal sense of safety.

To reiterate for clarity; More than 190,000 people have been killed in shipping accidents in the last twenty years. (California Maritime Academy) This is a large number and only includes reported accidents. Consider that may grow to a much larger number if the security risks are not addressed in a globally effective manner.

The recreational cruising ships are aware of the problem and have implemented crew and passenger tracking systems but have done little to screen cargo or baggage. Imagine how easy taking over a cruise ship would be and holding thousands of people hostage. It could be as simple as a small sailboat carrying guns, explosives or poison.

The world's cargo is at great risk due to the sheer quantity and points of origin. The United States imports 95% of its goods through the maritime industries. In 2002 more than 7 million shipping containers entered US ports. (GAO DHS Report) The Department of Homeland Security can only inspect an incredibly small portion of these containers and generally consists of comparing the container weight to the shipping manifest. Consider the hundreds of tons of illegal drugs that are smuggled into the country inside shipping containers and apply that number to more dangerous and hazardous cargo.

The terrorist threat to the seagoing vessel remains impossible to quantify except to be assured that seagoing vessels are on the target list and have already been threatened, if only in failed attempts and false alarms. These false alarms display our inability to respond in a timely and meaningful way. The example of how effective a terrorist attack at sea can be compared to the impact of a single food poisoning incident on a cruise ship. This of course in not terrorism, but does have a similar, immediate and widespread impact to passengers. Like terrorism we only have the ability to respond after the fact.

The last and most obscure security threat is modern day piracy. These incidents are underestimated due to the poor methods of reporting acts of piracy. The available statistics showed that there was an increase of 57% in the year 2000 over the previous year with Indonesian waters recording the highest number of attacks. The reported statistics for 1998 show 15 merchants vessels high jacked by pirates; 138 merchant vessels boarded by pirates; 11 merchant vessels fired upon by pirates; 35 merchant crew members badly injured; over 400 merchant crew members taken hostage by pirates; and over 75 merchant crew members murdered. Current statistics are beginning to indicate that the incidents are increasing by over

50% per year. (Source:IMB). These statistics make even the most salty of sailors' questions whether they want to sailing in the Indian Ocean or South Pacific?

I believe that these examples alone indicate an immediate need for action. Understandably the number of primary players is immense; still, initiating incremental changes to improve global maritime security are essential to our global economy and personal safety. A unified effort needs to be undertaken to protect human life and economic resources.

Consistency and Enforcement issues with Maritime Law

While traveling throughout the country on our interstate highway system, you know the basic rules of driving and operate accordingly. You may cross a state line and the laws could change regarding seatbelts or speed, but these are generally posted. Still the baseline regulations remain the same and provide confidence and insure your safety. You always assume that other drivers are operating by the same basic rule set and expect law enforcement and emergency services to respond with exactly the same response. Now consider that you are on the ocean's waterways; What are the rules? Where is my vessel currently operating and under what Country's jurisdiction is it? Who will hold the vessel traveling next to me accountable? What is he carrying? How safe am I? Who would save me? There needs to be an immediate answer to all of these questions or we are operating in the Wild Wild West only floating. International regulations must be globally implemented to provide consistency in the application and enforcement of the laws to increase the safety of seafarers and their cargo.

Suggestions for Change

The first example of international regulation that could positively impact security and safety is consistent education and certification for all involved in ocean going vessels. A template for this education and certification process is the curriculum of "The Nautical Institute."

This organization aims to promote and co-ordinate nautical studies world-wide by promoting high standards of qualification, competence and knowledge among those on or concerned with the sea. The Nautical Institute facilitates the exchange and publication of information and ideas on nautical science and seeks to establish and maintain professional standards. The Nautical Institute also co-operates with government departments and others concerned with qualifications, and with educational institutes and authorities to promote the training and practice of nautical science. (The Nautical Institute) Imagine the benefits of genuine qualification requirements for all seafarers and vessels.

I'm not recommending a global Coast Guard, just a consistent set of regulations and requirements that can be equally enforced to improve all levels of security and safety. The example of the US Coast Guard can be used because of its clear charter including a blend of humanitarian, security and law enforcement, diplomatic and military capabilities. (Department of Homeland Security) Regardless of the template used, the most important accomplishment is to reach global consistency in maritime law and enforcement.

I am stating that there is immediate need for follow through on many failed historical efforts. The example of a significant effort is the rejection of the international treaty drafted in 1982. This treaty was rejected by the United States and other countries. There were valid objections but they were not resolved to the member's satisfaction. Kudos to the United Nations for holding 3 conferences on "Law of the Sea" but still no international agreement exists.

A precise and current overview of Global Maritime Law

There are 25 maritime authorities documented in Appendix #1 at the end of this document.

Below is an exact description of the current implementation of Maritime Law. The complexity and dilution of authority becomes clear and compromises maritime safety at all levels.

Laws to regulate international shipping are not enacted by an international legislative body nor are they enforced by an international court. Rather they are enacted and enforced by three different regulatory authorities: 1) the classification society, 2) the flag state and 3) the coastal state. The regulations may be safety and environmental, though the focus is on the former.

Three agencies of the United Nations (UN) have been active in the organization and drafting of maritime conventions:

- The International Maritime Organization (IMO)
- The International Labor Organization (ILO
- The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The labor and trade organizations are not addressed in this document.

Classification Societies – Vessel Inspection and Certification

There are 15 of these organizations listed in Appendix #2 at the end of this document,

Classification societies, which are generally privately-owned, non-profit and hold no real authority, set ship-quality standards and inspect ships to ensure that they are seaworthy. They

produce ship specification rules and supervise the design and construction of ships to see whether these rules are followed; and inspect ships to determine if they are in compliance with the classification societies' regulations, national laws and international conventions. New and existing ships are classified. If a ship passes inspection, the classification society issues a Classification Certificate; if the ship fails the inspection, a certificate is not issued or an existing certificate is withdrawn. Classification societies number more than 50 worldwide and some date back more than 200 years. Five of the largest classification societies (based upon the number of ships classed) are: Lloyd's Register of Shipping, Nippon Kaiji Kyokei, American Bureau of Shipping, Det Norske Veritas of Norway and Bureau Veritas of France.

A ship owner is not required to have his ships classed by a classification society. However, since marine underwriters must be confident that ships are seaworthy, they will only insure classed ships. A ship owner without a Classification Certificate cannot obtain the necessary trading certificates required by ports of call. The Classification Certificate is the industry standard for establishing that a ship is seaworthy.

International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) was established in 1968 to address this problem. The IACS is an association of eleven Classification Societies, including the ten largest. The purpose of the association is twofold: 1) develop uniformity among classification-society rules and 2) represent classification societies in their calibration with other shipping rule-setting organizations (Stopford, 1997). Over 160 sets of IACS Unified Requirements have been developed, e.g., the use of steel grades for various hull members, cargo containment on gas tankers, a minimum longitudinal strength standard, loading and guidance information and fire protection of machinery spaces. The IACS has a governing council which is supported by a general policy group and 23 technical-specialty working parties. IACS members

classify over 90 percent of the world's merchant-ship gross registered tonnage and more than 50 percent of the merchant ships afloat (Ozcayir, 2001).

The IACS has responded to the criticism of classification societies by using the IACS Code of Ethics and Quality System Certification Scheme (QSCS) to address ship standards; IACS members are bound by the QSCS service standards that they render.

Flag States – The first level of apparent authority

The legal jurisdiction over a ship is connected with its nationality. The nationality of a ship refers to the state which has authority over and responsibility for the ship. The symbol of a ship's nationality is the flag that it flies and a flag state is the ship's state of nationality. Prior to the concept of nationality, regulation conflicts arose among states when the ship of a given state entered the territory of another state. International law has established that the seas and oceans between states should not be regarded as part of any state's territory, i.e., the freedom of the high seas. Consequently, on the free seas every state possesses authority, though not absolute, over its own ships. "Under freedom of the high seas, vessels belonging to all nations have unrestricted access to all parts of the sea that are not included in the territorial sea or internal waters of a state" (Ozcayir, 2001, p. 1.5).

Coastal States – The second level of apparent authority

Only the flag state has jurisdiction (with certain exceptions) over a ship on the high seas. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines high seas as "all parts of the sea that are not included in the exclusive economic zone, in the territorial sea or in the internal waters of a state." The coastal state has jurisdiction (with certain exceptions) over a ship on waters other than the high seas. Coastal state jurisdiction (or lack thereof) over shipping

has been defined in terms of distinct maritime water zones: the internal waters, the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone.

The territorial sea is the area of water adjacent to internal waters. The maximum width for this water as recognized by the 1982 UNCLOS is 12 nautical miles, but in practice states use a range of three to 200 nautical miles, with the most common being 12 nautical miles.

The flag state has the primary responsibility to ensure that ships comply with internationally accepted standards. However, deficiencies in ship-standard enforcement by flag states, in particular open registers, have prompted the use of port state control. The 1982 UNCLOS permits coastal states to legislate navigation safety, i.e., to provide for port state control (PSC) to inspect ships entering a port and detain any for necessary repairs that do not meet international safety standards. In 1982 twelve European countries signed the Paris PSC Memorandum of Understanding, arranging to inspect safety and other certificates carried by ships of all flags (including each other's) visiting their ports, and to insist, by detention if necessary, on deficiencies being rectified. In 1995 member countries inspected 8,834 ships, of which almost half had deficiencies; ships were detained in port when deficiencies were regarded as so serious that the ship or those on board were in danger, or where the marine environment could be threatened (Porter, 1996). In Britain approximately 60 percent of inspected ships have some type of deficiency and 6 percent have such serious defects to prevent, until rectified, their sailing (Goss, 1994, p. 103). Although PSC systems are also found in Australia, Canada, United States and elsewhere, much of the world remains unaffected by PSC. Port state control has broadened the responsibility for enforcing ship standards beyond the flag state. “The willing acceptance by the flag state of a mechanism (PSC) for the direct intervention of other sovereign

states in matters affecting its registered ships has been a significant departure from the principle that those ships are an extension of its own territory" (Farthing and Brownrigg, 1997, p. 193).

International Maritime Organization

The IMO is an UN agency which is responsible for improving the safety of international shipping and preventing pollution from ships. In 1948 the UN convened in Geneva an international conference to consider establishing an international organization devoted exclusively to maritime matters. It was believed that such maritime matters as maritime safety would be more effectively addressed at the international level rather than by individual countries acting unilaterally. The conference lead to the establishment of the UN agency, the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO). In 1982 its name was changed to the International Maritime Organization. The IMO has 158 member and two associate member states. In the last 30 years the IMO has promoted the adoption of 30 conventions and protocols and adopted over 700 recommendations and codes for maritime safety, the prevention of pollution and related matters.

The IMO organizational structure consists of the Assembly, the Council, five committees (which undertake most of the work) -- Maritime Safety Committee, Marine Environment Protection Committee, Legal Committee, Technical Co-operation Committee and Facilitation Committee -- and the Secretariat. The Assembly which consists of all member states and meets once every two years is the governing (or legislative) body of the IMO. It approves the work program and budget, makes decisions regarding international conferences and adopts resolutions which will be recommended to member states for their action. The Council is composed of 32

member states elected by the Assembly for two-year terms. In between Assembly sessions, the Council acts as the IMO governing body.

The Maritime Safety Committee (MCS) is the IMO's senior committee for technical work and addresses a wide range of safety-at-sea issues. Its subcommittees are concerned with the construction and equipment of ships, aids to navigation, the prevention of collisions, handling of dangerous cargoes, safety in ship manning, safety procedures and requirements, hydrographic information, casualty investigation, navigation records, salvage and rescue and other factors directly affecting maritime safety. The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) coordinates IMO activities in the prevention and control of pollution from ships, especially those related to oil pollution. The Legal Committee is responsible for any legal matters that arise within the scope of the IMO. The Technical Co-operation Committee is responsible for coordinating the technical assistance of the IMO, e.g., helping governments implement adopted technical conventions. The Facilitation Committee is responsible for IMO activities that facilitate international maritime traffic, e.g., reducing the formalities and simplifying the documentation required of ships when entering and leaving ports. The Secretariat (appointed by the Council with the approval of the Assembly) consists of the Secretary-General and nearly 300 international civil servants based at IMO headquarters in London.

IMO conventions normally develop with a committee or a subcommittee undertaking the initial work. A draft instrument is submitted to a conference consisting of invited delegations from all UN (IMO and non-IMO member) states. The final text adopted by the conference, i.e., the convention, is then submitted to governments for their ratification. The convention comes into force (or is ratified) when a specified number of countries have ratified it and fulfilled any

other requirements. Implementation of the convention is mandatory on countries which have ratified it. The IMO not only gives technical assistance to ratifying flag states which lack the means to implement conventions but also provides for a process of internal and external audits of flag state implementations (De Bievre, 1997).

IMO Safety Conventions

In 1960 the IMO organized its first conference, adopting the International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) which came into force in 1965. The 1960 SOLAS Convention was designed to improve the safety of shipping. Its provisions cover navigational safety, ship design and stability, electrical and machinery installations, fire protection, radio communications, life-saving appliances and the transport of dangerous goods. The 1974 SOLAS Convention modified the 1960 Convention by including the amendment procedure whereby SOLAS can be updated for changes in the shipping environment without having to call a conference, i.e., amendments adopted by the MSC enter into force on a predetermined date, unless objected to by a specific number of states

IMO Recommendations and Codes

In addition to promoting the adoption of conventions, the IMO Assembly adopts recommendations and codes for practices that are not generally suitable for regulation by formal treaty instruments. Although the recommendations and codes are not usually binding on governments, many governments adopt them by their incorporation in national legislations and regulations. Codes become mandatory when they are part of adopted and ratified conventions.

Recommendations and codes often provide guidance for implementing provisions of conventions and clarify questions which arise in their interpretation. Also, they clarify questions

related to specific maritime measures and attempt to ensure their uniform interpretation and application by governments.

An example of an IMO mandatory code is the International Safety Management (ISM) Code. It was adopted by the IMO in 1993 and brought into force at the 1994 SOLAS Conference when its provisions became mandatory under a new Chapter IX to the SOLAS Convention. The ISM Code recognizes that environmental pollution and loss of life at sea are influenced by how companies manage their ships. The Code seeks to insure safe practices in ship operation by improving ship management. The Code requires shipping companies to develop, implement and maintain a Safety Management System (SMS) which includes:

1. A safety and environmental protection policy;
2. Procedures and instructions to ensure safety and environmental protection;
3. Defined lines of communication and levels of authority between and among shore and shipboard personnel;
4. Procedures for reporting accidents;
5. Procedures for responding to and preparing for emergencies;
6. Procedures for management review and internal audits.

By July 1, 1998 all commercial passenger ships, oil tankers, chemical tankers, gas carriers, bulk carriers and cargo high-speed craft of 500 gross tons or larger are to comply with the Code. By July 1, 2002 all other commercial cargo ships and mobile offshore drilling units of 500 gross tons or larger are to comply with the Code (O'Neal, 1998).

Conclusion

The time is now; the dangers and threats are real and growing. International cooperation can be forced by disaster or fostered with forward thinking, vision and action. Achieving consistency in Maritime Law and Enforcement is essential in achieving the highest levels of safety for all seafarers. Clearly, choosing the proactive route is the only course to navigate through these troubled waters.

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Appendix #1

The organizations below are the top level authorities in maritime legal and regulatory issues.

International Maritime Organization (IMO)
The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is the UN specialized agency responsible for improving maritime safety and preventing pollution from ships. International conventions concluded under its auspices include the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) conventions. IMO News, a quarterly magazine, and IMO Circulars are available online. IMO's Directory of Maritime Links is exhaustive, with many sites indexed worldwide. See also the World Maritime University site.

International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI)
The Institute was established in 1989 under the auspices of the IMO for the training of specialists in maritime law, the international legal regime of merchant shipping and the general law of the sea. Special emphasis is placed on furthering the purposes and

objectives of the IMO. The Institute offers a post-graduate course leading to the degree of Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International Maritime Law. The main purpose of the course is to train lawyers from developing countries to become specialists in maritime law.

United Nations (UN)
Homepage for the United Nations. The website locator for UN Organizations and other international organizations is here. Northwestern University also maintains an index of intergovernmental organization web sites. See also the Union of International Associations index of virtually all governmental and non-governmental international organizations.

UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
A division of the UN Office of Legal Affairs that is responsible for issues relating to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Division serves as the Secretariat of the Convention and also the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The Convention and related material are available at the site. See also the **International Seabed Authority**, the international body established by the UN Law of the Sea Convention to manage the exploration and use of seabed resources.

International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
The court established by UNCLOS to adjudicate disputes under the Convention.

UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
The UN body primarily responsible for environmental matters, including conventions for the protection of the marine environment. UNEP's Regional Seas Programme is involved in the management of marine and coastal regions.

UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
UNCTAD is the principal organ of the United Nations General Assembly in the field of trade and development, with an emphasis on trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. In the area of transport, it has concluded conventions on the International Carriage of Goods by Sea (1978), the International Multimodal Transport of Goods (1980), the Conditions for the Registration of Ships (1986) and on Maritime Liens and Mortgages (1993). (See the International Conventions page of this guide for links to these conventions.) The UNCTAD/ICC Rules for Multimodal Transport Documents are included at the site.

UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)
UNCITRAL is the United Nations' primary legal body for international trade law. The Commission's areas of responsibility include the international sale and transportation of goods and the resolution of disputes through arbitration. Its latest work has been in the area of Electronic Commerce.

International Labour Organization (ILO)
The ILO is the UN agency the promotes internationally recognized human and labor

rights. It was founded in 1919 and became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946. The ILO has been responsible for a significant number of conventions concerning the rights of seaman, which are available at its web site.

International Court of Justice
The Court has jurisdiction over disputes between nation states. See also the Max Planck Institute's World Court Digest of opinions.

International Law Commission
The International Law Commission was established by the UN General Assembly in 1947 to promote the progressive development of international law and its codification. Most of the Commission's work involves the preparation of drafts on topics of international law.

Hague Conference on Private International Law
The Hague Conference is an intergovernmental organization that works toward the progressive unification of the rules of private international law. It has been responsible for a significant number of treaties in this area. (See the International Conventions page of this guide.)

International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (Unidroit)
Unidroit is an independent intergovernmental organization that examines ways of harmonizing the laws of nations to provide for the adoption of uniform rules of private law.

International Joint Commission
The American/Canadian organization that seeks to engender cooperation on common boundary waters, most particularly the Great Lakes. See also the Great Lakes Commission.

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)
The Commission was founded in 1960 and is focused on promoting international oceanographic research. IOC's Electronic Library has many IOC publications available for downloading.

International Hydrographic Organization
The International Hydrographic Organization is an intergovernmental consultative and technical organization that was established in 1921. The organization's primary goal is to develop the field of hydrographic research and nautical chart-making.

International Whaling Commission
The International Whaling Commission (IWC) was set up under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling which was signed in Washington D.C. on 2 December 1946. The purpose of the Convention is to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry.

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)
ICES is the oldest intergovernmental organization in the world concerned with marine and fisheries science.

European Union (Europa)
Official web site of the European Union. Information concerning Transport legislation in force is published at the site. Maritime Transport issues are under the Directorate General for Transport. The site also includes a **European Governments On-line** links page to the main government pages of each European nation. See also the Court of Justice of the European Communities site.

Equasis
Equasis is an information gathering organization developed by the European Commission and the French Maritime Administration to collect existing safety-related information on ships from both public and private sources for posting on the Internet.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
An inter-governmental organization with 29 member countries in an organization that provides governments a setting in which to discuss, develop and perfect economic and social policy. The OECD addresses transport and e-commerce issues.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
ITU is headquartered in Geneva and is the international organization within which governments and the private sector coordinate global telecommunications networks and services.

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
WIPO is responsible for promoting the protection of intellectual property throughout the world through cooperation among States, and for the administration of various multilateral treaties concerning the legal and administrative aspects of intellectual property.

World Trade Organization (WTO)
WTO, an intergovernmental body, is responsible for the negotiation of trade and tariff agreements. Texts of WTO agreements are provided at the site.

Appendix #2

Below is list of Certification Societies. These organizations certify vessels…

American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)

Bureau Veritas
-Veristar Info

China Classification Society

ClassNK (Japan)

Cyprus Bureau of Shipping

Det Norske Veritas

Germanischer Lloyd

Hellenic Register of Shipping (Sweden)

Korean Register of Shipping

Lloyd's Register of Ships

Polish Register of Shipping

Registro Italiano Navale (RINA)

Russian Maritime Register of Shipping

Turk Loydu

International Association of Classification Societies (IACS)
The site provides a list of ships withdrawn from class in the member societies and the International Safety Management (ISM) Code White List of certified ships.

Appendix #3

The resources below are available thorough and subscription with

www.thesafetylibrary.com

46 CFR, Chapter II Maritime Administration, Dept of Transportation
Full text of the maritime regulations of the USA

American Board of Shipping Rules
Selected Rules, Corrigenda, Rule Change Notices (RCN) and updates to ABS Rules & Guides

Compilation of US Maritime Laws
The text of selected US maritime acts

Federal Laws & Regulations on Boating Safety
Title 46 US Code, Title 33 CFR, Title 46 CFR

Life Safety & Fire Safety Regulations for Commercial Vessels

Full text of those sections of 46CFR relating to life safety and fire safety regulations

Maritime Laws & Regulations
Guidance on maritime laws published by the US government

National & International Marine Safety Standards
US Coast Guard guidance on ASTM & ISO standards related to marine safety

Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circulars
US Coast Guard NVICs from the 1970's to the present

Navigation Rules: International - Inland
Full text of Nav rules

Reference Guide to State Boating Laws
Information about state laws related to recreational boating

State Boating Laws
Overview of boating laws and regulations in 25 of the states

US Coast Guard Federal Requirements for Recreational Boaters
US Coast Guard federal regulations for recreational boaters

US Code Title 33: Navigation and Navigable Waters
Full text of US Code Title 33 - Navigation and Navigable Waters

US Code Title 46 Appendix Shipping
Sections of former Title 46 that are not included in Title 46, Shipping

US Code Title 46: Shipping
Full text of US Code Title 46 - Shipping

USCG Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Program Regulations
US regulations affecting commercial vessel safety, port safety, marine safety, environmental safety

Marine Safety / Marine Safety Manuals
Sample marine safety programs, crewman's handbook, etc