

September 5, 2002

**MR'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-30-2002**

**TO : ALL STEAMSHIP AGENTS, OWNERS, AND OPERATORS**

**SUBJECT: ISM CODE COMPLIANCE FOR TRANSITING VESSELS**

1. On 1 July 1998, the ISM Code became mandatory under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and from that date it applied to passenger vessels, including passenger high-speed craft, oil tankers, chemical tankers, gas carriers, bulk carriers and cargo high-speed craft of 500 gross tons and above.
2. On July 2002, the ISM Code became mandatory for all cargo vessels and mobile offshore drilling units (MODUs) of 500 gross tons and above.
3. The ISM Code establishes safety-management objectives and requires a safety management system (SMS) to be established by "the Company", which is defined as the shipowner or any person, such as the manager or bareboat charterer, who has assumed responsibility for operating the vessel.
4. Following the international requirements established by the SOLAS Convention and the ISM Code, only vessels possessing a valid Safety Management Certificate (SMC) will be allowed to trade and only companies with a valid Document of Compliance (DOC) for the specific types of vessels they manage will be allowed to operate.
5. A valid copy of the Safety Management Certificate (SMC) and a valid copy of the operator's Document of Compliance (DOC) shall be kept on board and presented to ACP officials when requested.
6. Safety is of the utmost concern to the Panama Canal, and as such, all vessels arriving for transit are expected to comply with the requirements of the ISM Code. Vessels that fail to comply with the ISM Code, as required by the international convention, will be denied transit of the Panama Canal.

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

Jorge L. Quijano  
Maritime Operations Director