

Foreword by Bill O'Neil

by Mr. W.A. O'Neil

Secretary General The International Maritime Organization The introduction of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code was a turning point in the way that maritime administrations saw the future improvement of standards. Its origins lay in a number of high profile accidents where the ships were technically meeting all the convention and classification standards; the officers were well qualified and the crew sufficient and well trained for their roles. Sadly, despite this, systems failed with tragic loss of life or major pollution.

In one particular case — the loss of The Herald of Free Enterprise — because it was so thoroughly investigated, the outcome challenged the existing order to come up with a better solution. Shipping, however, was not the only industry to be having accidents which were totally unexpected. The explosion and fire on the rig Piper Alpha showed all the same symptoms which had been exhibited in the nuclear near-catastrophe at Three Mile Island. And the aviation industry has had to learn the same lessons and has procedures and practices for training pilots and maintaining airframes which are based upon human element principles. Similarly, the chemical industry, as exemplified by Du Pont, which started as a manufacturer of explosives, has incorporated risk-based safety management into its operations, which is at the heart of health and safety legislation.

The evidence on all these incidents and practices is clear. Safety cannot be left to chance. It has to be managed. Normally in life we may choose to take risks with our own safety, when crossing the road for example, but on a ship and in an international industry which is offering a public service, the exercise of this personal freedom is not acceptable if it could lead to the loss of lives or the pollution of a coastline.

It is for these reasons that I am committed to the effective implementation of the ISM Code. In my view it is one of the most significant steps forward that IMO has taken in maritime safety since its foundation, not because it supersedes that status of all the other IMO Conventions, but because it embraces their standards and provides the framework through which they can be implemented.

Dr. Philip Anderson is to be congratulated on his research into the response of both seafarers and shore staff to the implementation of the Code. He has demonstrated that it has received a mixed reaction, and perhaps that should have been expected. After all, the shipping industry has good and proud traditions, not dissimilar to the aims of the Code, but the Code requires some fresh thinking and individuals who may see themselves as 'free spirits' may perhaps feel inhibited by the new strictures.

I understand this, and so too do the other authors in this well-presented book, who are able to demonstrate how safety management can become the focus of efficient operations and well-motivated crews.

This is surely what we are all aiming for.

I am touched that this book has been dedicated to me. It breaks new ground in the way that it takes on a leadership role, which will inspire those who read it, and it gives me particular satisfaction, as I believe strongly that the ISM Code and the safety culture it engenders is the right way to go.