

## Emergency calls from copy-cats

Imitation, it is said, is the sincerest form of flattery. One of Gard's Members, Thome Ship Management Pte. Ltd. of Singapore, was well prepared for the ISM Code implementation, having started to develop a quality assurance system in the early 1990's. The firm obtained ISO 9002 and DnV SEP certification in 1993 and the ISMA certificate in 1994.<sup>1</sup> Thome Ship Management was the first firm in the world to have all three certificates in place, a combination they proudly called "Triple Crown".

This company's efforts in devising good quality procedures have not gone unnoticed by others. Thome's safety manager has several times been advised that their procedures have been copied for use in vessels not under Thome's management. One such occurrence illustrates a serious contravention of the intentions behind the ISM Code, but also has a quite humorous touch to it.

A superintendent from a major oil company was carrying out a vetting survey of an oil tanker offered for charter in Singapore, when he discovered that several

quality assurance documents appeared to be copies of Thome Ship Management's manuals. He contacted Thome's safety manager to report the matter:

"I want to inform you that I have just been on board an oil tanker where I found a contingency plan which has obviously been copied from a Thome original", reported the vetting inspector.

"Oh, well, that is not the first time", replied Thome's safety manager, "so we normally don't make a big fuss about it...".

"I thought you would say that", replied the vetting inspector, "but I think you should know that your name and telephone number are given in the emergency procedures guide as the person to contact in case of an emergency!".

Some copy-cats have obviously gone too far. ■

<sup>1</sup> See article "ISM Code - Status of implementation and a comparison with other certification schemes" in this edition of Gard News.

## Warning - Brazil Visa requirements for crew members of vessels operating on the Brazilian coast

The following warning was issued by the Association in the form of a Gard News Flash on 9th February 1999.

Members whose vessels may be chartered to operate on the Brazilian coast should be aware of potential problems in respect of visa requirements for the crew. These problems may involve vessels of any type (i.e., tankers, bulk carriers, supply boats, tug boats, dredgers, etc.), as long as they operate under a foreign flag, have a non-Brazilian crew and trade temporarily on the Brazilian

coast. In such cases crew members must obtain a temporary visa (Visa V, or "visto 5") before arrival in Brazil. Failure to do so may result in heavy fines on the shipowners and the crew member(s) may have to leave the country.

The Association has received detailed advice on this problem from its Paranagua correspondents, which will be published in the June 1999 issue of Gard News. In the meantime, copies of the advice may be obtained from the Association upon request. ■

## MARPOL Special Areas

In Gard News issue 152 we advised readers that certain areas within North West European waters would become MARPOL special areas on 1st February 1999. We wish to clarify that whilst the special areas were established on

1st February 1999, the regulations prohibiting the discharge of oil will not be effective in respect of these new areas until 1st August 1999. ■