

2.4 Health, Safety and Environmental Policy

Companies employing 5 or more employees must have a general written statement concerning the policy for health and safety and its implementation. This can be revised as necessary.

The Health, Safety and Environment Policy (which is typically a single page mission statement) can be broken down into the following:

- Health and Safety Policy – to provide a safe working environment for all personnel and associated companies
- environmental – prevention of pollution as per MARPOL
- food safety and hygiene – training of personnel involved in handling food, including the various methods of disposing of food waste, in line with current regulations
- drug and alcohol policy – statement concerning restrictions on alcohol consumption onboard and the ban of drugs being carried, possessed or used
- quality – for an effective Quality Management System (QMS) focused on satisfying customers and improving services so that profits are maximised by meeting international management standards
- security – compliance with the ISPS (International Ship and Port Facility Security Code) to provide effective counter-terrorist and security measures onboard each ship. Each ship should have a security manual detailing these measures meticulously.

These policies should be reviewed regularly at Health, Safety and Environment meetings.

2.5 The Employer



In a marine context, the employer can be considered as the owner of the ship, or any other organisation or person (such as the manager or bareboat charterer) who has assumed responsibility for operating the ship.

2.5.1 Duties of the Employer

The employer has a statutory obligation to provide all employees with a safe workplace together with the correct tools to carry out allocated jobs. This work area includes all spaces that an employee is expected to work in or move or pass through.

2.5.2 Tools, Safety Equipment and Machinery

Employers must provide employees with the appropriate tools, safety equipment and machinery in a safe working area. The employer may be held responsible if an accident is caused due to poor order or unavailability of tools or equipment.

Employers have a duty of care to themselves and the employee. The employer should ensure both that the appropriate tools are available and that they are used correctly.

2.5.3 Workplace

The employer is responsible for providing a safe workplace. For example, under the Merchant Shipping (Safe Movement on Board Ship) Regulations 1988, the employer and master must ensure that:

- A safe means of access is provided and maintained to any place on the ship where personnel may go
- all areas of work and transit are fully illuminated.

Under the Regulations, if a safe workplace is not provided, employers and Masters can face summary convictions, fines and possibly imprisonment.

2.5.4 Competency

The employer must ensure that employees have the necessary abilities for the job that they are employed for. An incompetent employee can be a danger to himself and fellow workers, possibly leading to accidents or near misses. They can also cause stress and an increased workload for other employees, resulting in fatigue, frustration and potential accidents. A continuous review of self-training should be carried out to ensure that the skill level of the workforce is kept in line with ever changing technology.

2.5.5 Operating Procedures System

The use of defined procedures provides greater continuity and consistency of operation that can prove effective in the long run.

Established procedures, commonly known as Safe Operating Procedures, exist for routine tasks onboard such as berthing/unberthing, loading/discharging cargo, bunkering etc. These procedures can be found in the Safety Management Manual (SMM). Copies of the SMM must be available and accessible to all crew members onboard, and copies are usually kept on the bridge and in the crew mess room.

A ship may use external contractors for non-routine or infrequent tasks such as a ship's dry-docking. The contractors' safety is primarily the responsibility of their employer but, when working onboard, the ship must ensure their safety.

To ensure the task is completed successfully, there must be an understanding and communication between the ship's staff and the external contractors.

A safe system must be established by both parties taking into account the circumstances, personal capabilities and the job that is to be completed.

Tool box talks, risk assessments and method statements are ways of ensuring that all parties are aware of what is required, the potential risks and the necessary safety requirements/measures.

A method statement is a summary of hazard identifications and risk assessments to produce a safe system of work.

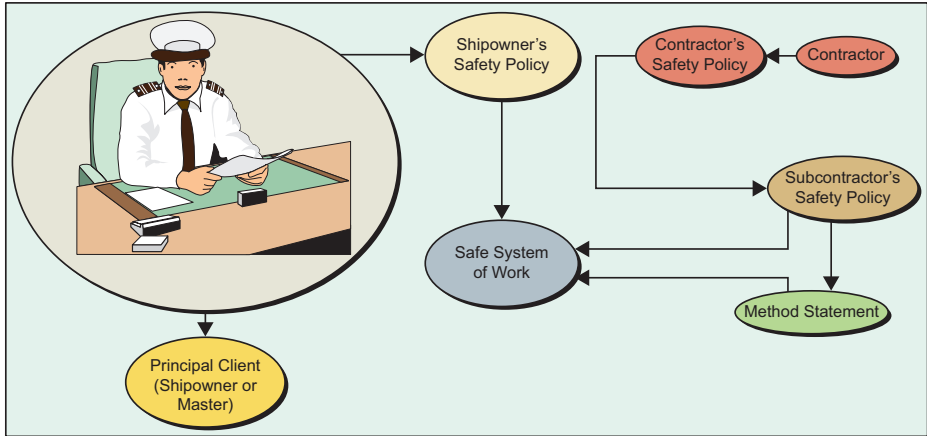
A method statement is usually required from the contractors so it can be integrated into the ship's safety system or adapted to give a safe system of work for all involved. It provides a way of ensuring communication and contact between the contractors and the ship.

General items that should be included are:

- Details of the contractor/subcontractor including their address and emergency contact numbers
- details of the task/jobs to be carried out
- details of the workers/employees employed to complete the task
- description of the procedure required to complete the task
- risk assessment, identified hazards, associated risks, and methods to control risks and to manage safety.

<i>Method Statement</i>	
Contractor Details	Emergency Contacts
.....	Name
.....	Phone.....
Client Details	Name
.....	Phone.....
.....	
.....	
Activity	Main Job Cleaning of forepeak (ballast) tank in the drydock
	Sub Task Entry into confined space
Hazard Identification and Risk Control	
Identified Hazards	Control Methods
1. <i>Atmospheric hazards, ie lack of oxygen, existence of combustible or toxic gases or other irritants such as sulphurous or solvent fumes</i>	1. <i>Atmosphere test prior to entry, adequate ventilation prior to and during the operation.</i>
2. <i>Physical hazards such as</i> a) <i>temperature (both high and low)</i> b) <i>noise levels</i> c) <i>lighting</i> d) <i>access and egress</i>	2. a) <i>Continuously monitor temperature and control by ventilation</i> b) <i>Ear defenders or plugs</i> c) <i>Sufficient lighting by portable approved lights</i> d) <i>Marked and kept clear of obstructions</i>
3. <i>Communication between the personnel in the confined space and at the entrance</i>	3. <i>Portable waterproof VHF/UHF radios</i>
4. <i>Actions in an emergency</i>	4. <i>Supervisor to monitor all communication on VHF/UHF radio and to initiate the first response.</i>

Example Method Statement



Method Statement for Ships

2.5.6 Employer's Liability

If a seafarer is injured, disabled or dies due to injuries suffered in the course of their duty onboard ship, the employer is generally required to pay compensation.

2.6 Competent Person

A competent person is someone who is qualified, trained and has sufficient knowledge and experience to carry out any duties given to them within the regulations or requirements of a flag state's health and safety legislation.



Which crew member looks competent and responsible?