

PRESS RELEASE

11 December
2007EMSA Launches RuleCheck
Port State Control System

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EMSA has just launched RuleCheck, which is a system to enable ship inspections in ports to be undertaken more efficiently and effectively. Over time, the international rules governing port state control (PSC) related ship inspections have become more and more complex. RuleCheck makes the inspector's job easier, by clearly showing the different rules that apply to a selected ship at the time of an inspection. RuleCheck was developed under a contract with the Korean Register of Shipping (KRS).

"Port state control is right at the heart of ensuring that ships operate safely, and RuleCheck will make a big difference to ship inspections in EU ports," said EMSA Executive Director Willem de Ruyter. "For years, port state control officers have had an increasingly difficult time trying to ensure that the many different rules are applied properly in carrying out their work. The new system will simplify their decision making process, thus enabling ship inspections to be carried out in a more efficient and effective way in the future. It should also be remembered that this is only the first version of RuleCheck, so there will be further improvements to come."

Background

Conventions have been getting more and more complex over time. For example: they are increasing in number; they often contain amendments; they have varying dates of implementation and; they often do not apply to all ship types. In addition, further regulatory changes will only make the situation more complicated in the future. Against this background, the job of the port state control officer would have become more and more difficult if nothing was done to improve the situation.

Consequently, some time ago, all member states within the Paris Memorandum of Understanding (Paris MoU - which deals with port state control inspections in the EU and surrounding countries) agreed on the need for a simplified system. This would not only inform port state control officers (PSCOs) of the regulations which apply to a specific ship, given the ship type and the date of build, but would also provide a link to the instruction issued by the Paris MOU. Such a system would assist in the harmonisation and standardisation of the inspection process across the whole port state control regime.

For more information, please contact EMSA External Communications:
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EMSA is the organisation which, on behalf of the European Commission, is tasked with ensuring that EU Member States comply with EU and international legislation relating to port state control. Within this framework, and as part of its involvement with the Paris MoU, EMSA called for tenders to design, develop and deliver the RuleCheck system. KRS won the competition and, during the development process, input from Paris MOU members was very valuable in ensuring that the system serves the needs of the end users in the best way possible.

When using the system, PSCOs only have to input the ship type and the date of build (as a minimum) and they can immediately obtain the full set of regulations which apply to that particular ship without having to refer to any other source. The system contains information on the regulations relating to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Paris MOU, and also allows the PSCO to refine the regulations when other information such as length, tonnage or number of passengers is known. There are also other features of the system which will enable the PSCO to examine selected areas in much greater detail.

In addition to supplying this first version, the contract with KRS also covers system updates relating to new requirements, and it allows for amendments/improvements to be made as a result of observations by PSCOs when using the system. The maintenance contract will run for 4 years and will encompass the new water ballast management, anti-fouling systems and ILO conventions when they come into force.

Brian Hogan (chairman) and Richard Schiferli (general secretary) of the Paris MOU attended the launch, along with representatives of Germany and Portugal who, along with Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK, were members of the Paris User Group.

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