

PVA Flagship Program Manual

Rev. 1.1

Flagship is a Safety Management System (SMS) based program created by the Passenger Vessel Association (PVA) specifically for their members. A safety management system is a structured and documented system enabling both shoreside and vessel personnel to effectively manage safety through a proactive system of continual improvement. Flagship Program Requirements and Flagship SMS Requirements meet the objectives and functional requirements of Title 33 US Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 96.

This manual captures Flagship Program Requirements and participating member Safety Management System (SMS) Requirements. Flagship Program Requirements are to be administered and managed by the PVA, while Flagship SMS Requirements are to be implemented and managed by participating members. Guidance, templates and forms to assist PVA, its members and associate members implement Flagship are produced separately.

While many PVA members have implemented elements of a SMS and in some cases already have a certificated and externally audited SMS, there has long been a need for an industry-wide program tailored to the needs of domestic (especially small) passenger vessel operators. Having a managed SMS-based program established and operating before US Coast Guard regulatory action for domestic passenger vessels enables the PVA and its members to get a head start on successful implementation of SMS, and places them in better position to contribute authoritatively on SMS rulemaking provisions and equivalencies.

This manual was built upon and leverages previous work of the US Coast Guard-PVA Quality Partnership, and on US Coast Guard development and implementation of the Towing Safety Management System (TSMS) for domestic towing vessels. It is recognized that creating and publishing Flagship Program Requirements and Flagship SMS Requirements is an important step, but like safety itself, there's always improvement to be made. Implementation of the Flagship Program by PVA, and well as assurance that Flagship is effective in meeting intended objectives, is properly resourced, and serves the needs of PVA and its members, will be the object of continual improvement.

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Revision Table

	Version	Revision Date	Revision Description	Notes
1	Rev. -	22 Sep 2024	Initial version	
2	Rev. 1	20 Jan 2025	Initial published version	Incorporated comments from Flagship WG
3	Rev. 1.1	17 Mar 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added missing paragraph (new 10.5) in Flagship SMS Requirements. • Removed “SMS” from Flagship Program Requirement 4.1 and 4.2 so that auditors assess compliance with all Flagship Requirements. • Changed “procedures” to “area” in Flagship Program Requirements 4.3. • Inserted “protection” in several places after “environmental” 	Revisions made while creating Flagship SMS Manual Template

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Flagship Program Requirements

1 Company Implementation

1.1 A Company intending to implement the Flagship Safety Management System (SMS) for their organization and vessels must submit a Notice of Intent to PVA to receive a Flagship Certificate Of Eligibility.

1.2 A Company must be a PVA member in good standing to receive a Flagship Certificate of Eligibility.

1.3 A Company that has implemented the Flagship SMS must submit the following to the cognizant US Coast Guard Officer in Charge Marine Inspection and PVA:

(a) an Attestation of Compliance with Flagship;

(b) a Flagship Audit Report for management audits and vessel audits completed within the previous year;

(c) a list of vessels covered by their Flagship Safety Management System (SMS);

(d) a request for the US Coast Guard to endorse covered vessel Certificates of Inspections (COIs) with a statement that they are operating under the PVA Flagship Safety Management System; and

(e) a list of the company's Flagship Internal Auditors and who meet Flagship Program Requirements. This list must include the experience, background, and qualifications for each internal auditor and internal examiner.

1.4 Each Company must use the PVA Flagship SMS Manual Template or company specific equivalent that meets Flagship SMS Requirements.

2 Vessel Compliance

2.1 A Company attesting to compliance with Flagship SMS but found by the US Coast Guard to not have effectively implemented its requirements must employ a Recognized Flagship Organization (RFO) to complete a Flagship External Audit that is submitted to the US Coast Guard Officer in Charge Marine Inspection and PVA.

2.2 The US Coast Guard will not bear any of the costs for the RFO's attendance when complying with 2.1.

3 Recognized Flagship Organizations

3.1 PVA will approve Recognized Flagship Organizations (RFOs) to carry out functions related to ensuring that Companies and Vessels comply with provisions of the Flagship SMS. These functions include:

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- (a) conducting Flagship Audits; and
- (b) issuing Flagship Audit reports.

3.2 An organization seeking approval from PVA to be a RFO must:

- (a) be independent of the Company and vessels it audits;
- (b) be an associate member of PVA;
- (c) operate within a quality management system acceptable to the US Coast Guard;
- (d) ensure its auditors are qualified and maintain continued competence;
- (e) demonstrate the ability to carry out the responsibilities of approval; and
- (f) meet all other requirements of the Flagship Program.

3.3 An organization desiring to be approved as a RFO must submit a written request to PVA including the following information:

- (a) a description of the organization, including the ownership, structure, and organizational components;
- (b) a general description of the clients being served or intended to be served;
- (c) a description of the types of work performed by the organization in the past, noting the amount and extent of such work performed within the previous 3 years;
- (d) objective evidence of an internal quality system based on ANSI/ISO/ASQ Q9001 or an equivalent quality standard;
- (e) organization procedures and supporting documentation that describe processes used to perform an audit and records to show system effectiveness;
- (f) copies of checklists, forms, or other tools to be used as guides or for recording the results of audits;
- (g) organization procedures for appeals and grievances;
- (h) the organization's code of ethics applicable to the organization and its auditors;
- (i) a list of the organization's auditors who meet Flagship Program Requirement 4.1. This list must include the experience, background, and qualifications for each auditor;
- (j) a description of the organization's means of assuring continued competence of its personnel;
- (k) the organization's procedures for terminating or removing auditors;
- (l) disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest;

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(m) a statement that the organization, its managers, and employees engaged in audits are not, and will not be involved in any activities which could result in a conflict of interest or otherwise limit the independent judgment of the auditor or organization; and

(n) any additional information that the applicant deems pertinent.

3.4 PVA's approval for a RFO will expire:

(a) five years after the last day of the month in which it is granted;

(b) when the RFO gives notice to PVA that it will no longer offer Flagship audit services;

(c) on the date of a change in ownership of the RFO for which approval was granted; or

(d) when PVA determines the RFO is incapable of meeting requirements of the Flagship Program.

3.5 To renew an approval, RFOs must submit a written request to PVA. For the request to be approved, PVA must be satisfied that the applicant continues to fully meet approval criteria.

4 Flagship Auditors

4.1 Prospective external auditors must be employed by a RFO and have the skills and experience necessary to assess compliance with all Flagship Requirements. Flagship External Auditors must meet the following qualifications:

(a) high school diploma or equivalent;

(b) four years of working on US Coast Guard certificated vessels or other relevant marine experience such as US Coast Guard marine inspector, licensed mariner, military personnel with relevant maritime experience, or marine surveyor;

(c) audit experience, as demonstrated by:

(i) documented experience in auditing to the ISM Code, TSMS regulations or Flagship SMS consisting of at least two management audits and six vessel audits within the past 5 years; or

(ii) successful completion of an auditor apprenticeship, consisting of at least one management audit and three vessel audits under the direction of a lead auditor; and

(d) successful completion of training:

(i) ANSI/ISO/ASQ Q9001 lead auditor/assessor course and Flagship Familiarity Training; or

(ii) US Coast Guard recognized equivalent to ANSI/ISO/ASQ Q9001 lead auditor/assessor course, and Flagship Familiarity Training.

4.2 Prospective internal auditors must be employed by the Company and have the skills and experience necessary to assess compliance with all Flagship Requirements. Flagship internal auditors must meet the following qualifications:

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- (a) high school diploma or equivalent;
- (b) four years of working on US Coast Guard certificated vessels or other relevant marine experience such as US Coast Guard marine inspector, licensed mariner, military personnel with relevant maritime experience, or marine surveyor;
- (c) audit experience, as demonstrated by:
 - (i) documented experience in auditing to the ISM Code, TSMS regulations or Flagship SMS consisting of at least two management audits and six vessel audits within the past 5 years; or
 - (ii) successful demonstration of skills and knowledge during completion of at least one management and vessel audit under the instruction of a lead auditor as part of the Flagship Internal Auditor Course; and
- (d) successful completion of training:
 - (i) ANSI/ISO/ASQ Q9001 lead auditor/assessor course and Flagship Familiarity Training;
 - (ii) US Coast Guard recognized equivalent to ANSI/ISO/ASQ Q9001 lead auditor/assessor course and Flagship Familiarity Training; or
 - (iii) Flagship Internal Auditor Course.

4.3 Internal Auditors should not be the designated person, or any other person, within the organization that is responsible for development or implementation of the SMS; and must be independent of the procedures being audited, unless this is impracticable due to the size and the nature of the organization.

4.4 A list of current auditors must be maintained by the Company (internal) or RFO (external). This list must include the experience, background, and qualifications for each auditor.

5 Flagship Audits

5.1 Companies that have implemented Flagship are subject to management audits and vessel audits to assess compliance with Flagship SMS and Flagship Program Requirements.

5.2 Flagship Audits, which include management audits and vessel audits, may be internal or external.

5.3 Flagship External Audits must be completed by a Recognized Flagship Organization (RFO).

5.4 Flagship management audits must be conducted annually to ensure the Company is effectively implementing Flagship SMS.

5.5 Flagship vessel audits must be completed at least between the 27th and 33rd month of the Certificate of Inspection's period of validity and before each vessel Certificate of Inspection issuance or renewal.

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5.6 Flagship management audits must ensure that management has implemented the Flagship SMS throughout all levels of the organization, including on Company vessels covered by the Flagship SMS.

5.7 Flagship Audits must be of sufficient depth and breadth to ensure the Company established adequate procedures and documentation to comply with the SMS requirements of this part, that the SMS was implemented throughout all levels of the organization, and that the Company's covered vessels comply with the SMS.

5.8 Flagship Internal Audits are not necessarily conducted as a singular event; they may be completed over time.

5.9 Flagship Auditors must have the authority to examine documentation, question personnel, examine vessel equipment, witness system testing, and observe personnel training, including drills, as necessary to verify SMS effectiveness.

5.10 Flagship Auditors may verify compliance with SMS requirements through a review of objective evidence such as checklists, invoices, and reports, and may conduct a visual sampling onboard the vessels to determine whether or not the conditions onboard the vessel are consistent with the records reviewed.

5.11 If a Flagship Auditor identifies a major non-conformity during the course of the audit, the Company must:

- (a) notify the local Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) and PVA within 24 hours; and
- (b) arrange for an external Flagship Audit if the audit was internal.

5.12 The notification to the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) and PVA in 5.11 must include the identification of an RFO that will conduct an external audit.

5.13 Flagship Audit reports shall be retained by the Company (and the RFO if applicable) for 5 years. Flagship Audit reports shall include:

- (a) the names of the auditor(s) conducting the audit;
- (b) the results of the audit conducted; and
- (c) documentation showing continuing actions relative to each audit, such as resolution of non-conformities.

6 Flagship Training & Flagship Training Service Providers (FTSPs)

6.1 PVA will approve Flagship Training Service Providers (FTSPs) to carry out training functions related to ensuring that Companies, vessels and personnel are competent to perform the responsibilities of a Flagship SMS.

6.2 FTSPs may also be Recognized Flagship Organizations.

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6.3 A FTSP seeking approval from PVA to perform Flagship training must:

- (a) be an associate member of PVA;
- (b) operate within a quality management system acceptable to the US Coast Guard;
- (c) ensure trainers are suitably qualified and maintain continued competence; and
- (d) demonstrate the ability to carry out the responsibilities of approval.

6.4 FTSPs desiring to be approved must submit a written request to PVA including the following information:

- (a) a description of the organization, including the ownership, structure, and organizational components;
- (c) a description of the types of training performed by the organization in the past, noting the amount and extent of such work performed within the previous 3 years;
- (d) objective evidence of an internal quality system based on ANSI/ISO/ASQ Q9001 or an equivalent quality standard;
- (e) organization procedures and supporting documentation that describe processes used to perform training;
- (f) a list of the organization's trainers. This list must include the experience, background, and qualifications for each trainer;
- (g) a description of the organization's means of assuring continued competence of its trainers;
- (h) disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest;
- (i) a statement that the organization, its managers, and employees engaged in training are not, and will not be involved in any activities which could result in a conflict of interest or otherwise limit the objective delivery of training;
- (j) any additional information that the applicant deems pertinent.

6.5 PVA's approval for a FTSP will expire:

- (a) five years after the last day of the month in which it is granted;
- (b) when the FTSP gives notice to PVA that it will no longer offer Flagship training;
- (c) on the date of a change in ownership of the FTSP for which approval was granted; or
- (d) when PVA determines the FTSP is incapable of meeting Flagship Program Requirements.

6.6 To renew an approval, FTSPs must submit a written request to PVA. For the request to be approved, PVA must be satisfied that the applicant continues to fully meet approval criteria.

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6.7 FTSPs must be approved to deliver the following courses:

- (a) Flagship Internal Auditor; and
- (b) Designated Person.

6.8 The Flagship Internal Auditor Course shall provide attending persons with the following knowledge and skills:

- (a) system management principles;
- (b) process and system auditing using the process-based approach;
- (c) planning and preparation;
- (d) knowledge and understanding of Flagship SMS Requirements;
- (e) performing the audit;
- (f) reporting the audit;
- (g) corrective action and follow-up;
- (h) process analysis for identifying resources and critical control points;
- (i) audit scheduling;
- (j) process review and checklist preparation;
- (k) audit investigating (obtaining and evaluating evidence); and
- (l) writing non-conformity statements.

6.9 FTSPs will issue certificates of course completion to personnel demonstrating adequate knowledge of concepts presented during training.

6.10 FTSPs must maintain records of all persons that have attended Flagship training courses.

6.11 Flagship Familiarity Training shall provide attending persons with familiarity of the following:

- (a) principles and benefits of safety management systems;
- (b) continual improvement of safety management systems;
- (c) Flagship Program Requirements including roles and responsibilities; and
- (d) Flagship SMS Requirements.

7 Administration

7.1 PVA will issue Flagship Certificates of Eligibility to eligible Companies that submit a Notice of Intent to participate in Flagship.

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7.2 PVA will maintain Flagship Program and SMS Requirements, a list of RFO and FTSP approvals, the Flagship SMS Guide, and Flagship tools including manuals, templates, and best practices on the PVA website.

7.3 PVA will maintain a list of issues, lessons learned, and recommendations for improvement of the Flagship Program submitted from members and associate members, as well as their disposition.

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7.5 Marine environments vary greatly. The SMS material is provided on a general advisory basis only. Use of the material is voluntary and is provided without warranty or representation that the materials satisfy any specific local, state or Federal legal requirements applicable to any vessel or marine operation.

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Flagship Safety Management System (SMS) Requirements

1 Purpose, Objectives & Functional Requirements

1.1 The purpose of a Flagship SMS is to ensure safe operations, prevent injury or loss of life, protect the environment and property, and enable PVA members to manage and Continually Improve these proactively in advance of the implementation of mandatory regulations.

1.2 Flagship Objectives. A Flagship SMS, through policies, procedures, and documentation, must:

(a) Demonstrate management responsibility. Management must demonstrate that they have implemented Flagship SMS Requirements and the entire organization is adhering to their safety management system.

(b) Document management procedures. A Flagship SMS must describe and document the owner or managing operator's organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, and resources which ensure quality monitoring.

(c) Ensure document and data control. There must be clear identification of what types of documents and data are to be controlled, and who is responsible for controlling activities, including approval, issue, distribution, modification, removal of obsolete materials, and other related administrative functions.

(d) Establish a system of recordkeeping. Records must be maintained to demonstrate effective implementation of Flagship SMS Requirements. This must include safety management audit records, non-conformity reports, corrective actions, designations, qualifications, training, and other records as considered necessary.

(e) Identify and meet training needs. The owner or operator must establish and maintain documented procedures for identifying training needs and providing training.

(f) Ensure adequate resources. Identify adequate resources and procedures necessary to comply with Flagship SMS Requirements.

1.3 Functional elements of a Flagship SMS include:

(a) Company safety and environmental protection policy;

(b) defined Company organizational structure including levels of authority and lines of communication between and among shoreside and vessel personnel;

(c) defined scope of the master's responsibility and authority;

(d) Designated Person(s) role and responsibilities;

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- (e) Policies and procedures to provide direction for safe vessel operation and protection of the marine environment in compliance with applicable US law and regulations, and international conventions.
- (f) policies and procedures for reporting accidents, equipment failures, hazardous conditions, near-misses and non-conformities;
- (g) procedures for key vessel operations concerning safety and environmental compliance;
- (h) procedures to prepare for and respond to emergency situations by shoreside and vessel personnel;
- (i) procedures for Flagship Audits;
- (j) policy and procedures for internal examinations to verify vessel compliance with applicable US law and regulations, and international conventions;
- (k) maintenance procedures;
- (l) procedures for Company review of Flagship Audits, internal examinations, regulatory safety inspections, including correction of non-conformities.

2 Safety & Environmental Protection Policy

- 2.1 The Company's Safety & Environmental Protection Policy shall be a concise and clear statement, easily understood by all personnel.
- 2.2 The Company's safety and environmental protection objectives and standards shall be set at the highest level that is reasonable for the Company to enforce. At the very least, the Company shall comply with all mandatory rules and regulations.
- 2.3 The Company's Safety & Environmental Protection Policy shall describe the goal and commitment of the Company to the SMS, and the strategy to achieve and maintain the goal.
- 2.4 The Company's Safety & Environmental Protection Policy shall include the interrelation with other Company policies and procedures.
- 2.5 The Company's Safety & Environmental Protection Policy shall be signed by the owner or comparable decision-maker, communicated, and posted throughout the Company.
- 2.6 The Company's Safety & Environmental Protection Policy shall be reviewed at least annually to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.
- 2.7 The Company's Safety & Environmental Protection Policy shall be posted prominently aboard vessels and shore facilities.
- 2.8 The Company's Safety & Environmental Protection Policy shall be implemented such that all employees understand its contents and are committed to its objectives.

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3 Company Responsibility & Authority

3.1 The Company shall clearly define and document the responsibilities, authority and interrelation of all personnel who manage or perform work affecting safety and environmental protection.

3.2 Job descriptions of personnel who manage or perform work affecting safety and environmental protection shall include the following:

- (a) position (job title);
- (b) vessel or office location;
- (c) immediate supervisor;
- (d) qualifications required;
- (e) general responsibilities for safety and environmental protection;
- (f) specific responsibilities; and
- (g) emergency responsibilities.

3.3 The Company shall ensure resources, like shore-based support, are provided to enable Designated Person(s) to carry out their responsibilities, and all vessels are maintained in safe operating condition.

4 Designated Person

4.1 Each Company must designate in writing the shoreside person(s) responsible for ensuring Flagship is implemented and continuously functions throughout management and the fleet. Within this designation, the Company should state that the Designated Person has access to the highest level of management ashore and aboard the company's vessel(s).

4.2 Each Company must designate the shoreside person(s) responsible for ensuring that the vessels are properly maintained and in operable condition, including those responsible for emergency assistance to each vessel.

4.3 The Company shall make all employees aware of who the Designated Person(s) is/are.

4.4 The Company shall define and document the Designated Person's responsibilities regarding:

- (a) implementing the safety and environmental protection policies of the company;
- (b) ensuring compliance with all applicable safety and environmental regulations;
- (c) ensuring adequate support and shore-based resources for vessel operations;
- (d) motivating employees in the execution of the PVA Flagship SMS;

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- (e) organizing and scheduling Flagship Audits;
- (f) reporting non-conformities to management; and
- (g) tracking non-conformity resolution.

4.5 Each person designated in 4.1 shall have successfully completed a Designated Person Course covering the following topics:

- (a) knowledge and understanding of Flagship SMS Requirements;
- (b) mandatory rules and regulations;
- (c) applicable codes, guidelines, and standards as appropriate;
- (d) assessment techniques of examining, questioning, evaluating and reporting;
- (e) technical or operational aspects of safety management;
- (f) appropriate knowledge of vessel and vessel operations;
- (g) participation in at least one marine-related management system audit; and
- (h) effective communications with vessel staff and senior management.

5 Master's Responsibility & Authority

5.1 The Company shall define the scope of the master's responsibility and authority. The master's authority must provide for the ability to make final determinations on safe operations of the vessel. Specifically, it must provide the authority for the master to cease operation if an unsafe condition exists.

6 Resources & Personnel

6.1 The Company shall establish policies that cover the Company's approach to managing personnel, including, but not limited to, employment, training, and health and safety of personnel.

6.2 The Company must establish procedures related to the employment of individuals. Procedures must be in place to ensure adequate qualifications of personnel, to include background checks, compliance with drug and alcohol standards, and that personnel are able to perform required tasks.

6.3 The Company shall establish policies related to the training of personnel, including:

- (a) new-hire orientation;
- (b) duties associated with the execution of the Company's SMS;
- (c) execution of operational duties;

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- (d) execution of emergency procedures;
- (e) occupational health;
- (f) crew safety;
- (g) Flagship SMS Familiarity; and
- (h) any other training required by law or regulation.

6.4 All Company personnel shall be familiar with Flagship SMS Requirements, its purpose, and how it relates to their duties and responsibilities.

6.5 The Company shall maintain records of the training and qualification of their personnel demonstrating compliance with their training & qualification policies.

7 Vessel Operating Procedures

7.1 The Company shall establish necessary procedures, plans and instructions to provide direction for the safe operation of its vessels and protection of the marine environment in compliance with applicable U.S. law, including the Code of Federal Regulations, and, if on an international voyage, applicable international conventions to which the United States is a party.

8 Emergency Preparedness

8.1 The Company shall identify potential emergency situations, and establish procedures to respond to them.

8.2 The Company shall ensure employees are trained and proficient in carrying out the emergency procedures.

9 Reports & Analysis

9.1 The Company shall establish policies, procedures and responsibilities for reporting, documenting and tracking unwanted occurrences, equipment failures, accidents, hazardous conditions and nonconformities.

9.2 The Company shall ensure unwanted occurrences, equipment failures, accidents, hazardous situations and nonconformities are reported in accordance with the Company's reporting procedures, evaluated by the Designated Person, root cause analysis performed, and corrective actions assigned as appropriate.

9.3 The Company shall ensure that corrective actions are implemented, verified, and communicated to employees.

9.4 The Company should establish a process to submit issues, lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for improvement of the Flagship Program to the PVA.

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10 Maintenance & Internal Examinations

10.1 The Company shall establish maintenance and internal examination policy and procedures to ensure the vessel is maintained in compliance with applicable rules and regulations, and any additional requirements which may be established by the Company.

10.2 The Company shall establish maintenance and internal examination policy and procedures for Critical Equipment the sudden operational failure of which would cause a hazardous condition.

10.3 The Company shall ensure that maintenance and internal examinations are held at appropriate intervals, non-conformities are reported, appropriate corrective action is taken, and records are maintained.

10.4 The Company shall establish policies and procedures for the training and designation of Internal Examiners including how the Company will ensure their proficiency in carrying out internal examinations on specific systems.

10.5 The Company shall establish policies and procedures for maintenance including (a) the training and designation of Company personnel for maintenance on specific systems; and (b) the use of external third parties.

10.6 The Company shall maintain records of maintenance and internal examinations for a period of 5 years.

11 Documentation

11.1 The Company's Flagship Certificate of Eligibility shall be kept on file at the shoreside office.

11.2 A copy of the Flagship Certificate of Eligibility must be kept on each vessel that is covered by the Flagship SMS.

11.3 The Company shall ensure that valid Flagship Program and SMS documents are kept and are available to all employees involved in the Flagship SMS to facilitate their use and implementation.

11.4 The Company shall ensure that changes to Flagship SMS documents are reviewed and approved by authorized personnel and that outdated or obsolete documents are promptly removed and/or destroyed.

11.5 Flagship SMS document revisions shall be readily identifiable and relevant employees shall be notified of all changes.

12 Company Verification & Review

12.1 The Company shall carry out Flagship Audits as required by Section 5 of Flagship Program Requirements to verify safety and environmental protection activities comply with the Flagship Program and Flagship SMS Requirements.

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12.2 The Company shall review and evaluate audits, internal examinations, reports and analysis in 9.1 and 9.2 above, as well as regulatory safety inspections and correction of nonconformities every 12 months to determine the effectiveness of the Flagship SMS.

12.3 Results of audits, internal examinations and regulatory safety inspections shall be brought to the attention of all personnel having responsibility in the area involved.

12.4 The Company should ensure personnel responsible for the area involved take timely corrective action to resolve non-conformities.

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Glossary

Accident: An unintended event that results in injury, fatality, vessel damage or loss, environmental damage, or other property damage or loss.

Audit: An objective assessment of the SMS to determine how well the management system is understood, implemented, and effective at achieving its stated objectives as communicated by Management. Audits are intended to promote continual improvement of the management system. Management audits are aimed at quality and effectiveness of managing the SMS, whereas vessel audits are concerned with the safety and effectiveness of vessel operations.

Auditor: An individual who accumulates and evaluates evidence to report on the degree a company's assertions and actions comply with an established set of procedures or standards (criteria). This person may be an internal auditor or external. He or she often conducts periodic audits that may encompass several areas on a rotating basis.

Company: An owner of the vessel, organization or person such as the manager, or bareboat charterer, who has assumed responsibility for operation of the vessel.

Corrective Action: Action that is taken in response to non-conformity and seeks to address "root" causes.

Critical Equipment: Any equipment, machinery and/or systems which, in the case of sudden operational failure, could result in hazardous situations to personnel, the vessel or the environment; and any equipment, machinery, and systems providing stand-by arrangements that are not in continuous use are also considered critical equipment.

External Audit: A Recognized Flagship Organization (RFO) review or assessment to verify whether safety management activities comply with the requirements of the Flagship SMS.

Flagship Audit: An SMS audit meeting Flagship Program Requirements.

Flagship SMS: A Safety Management System defined by PVA requirements for participating members.

Flagship Training Service Provider (FTSP): An Associate PVA member approved to carry out training functions related to ensuring that Companies, vessels and personnel are competent to perform the responsibilities of a Flagship SMS.

Hazardous Condition: Any condition that could adversely affect the safety of any vessel, bridge, structure, or shore area or the environmental quality of any port, harbor, or navigable water of the United States. This condition could include, but is not limited to, fire, explosion, grounding, leaking, damage, illness of a person on board, or a manning shortage.

Internal Audit: A Company-lead review or assessment to verify whether safety management activities comply with the requirements of the Flagship SMS.

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Major Non-conformity: A non-conformity that poses a serious threat to the safety of personnel or the vessel or a serious risk to the environment that requires immediate corrective action, or the lack of effective and systematic implementation of a requirement of the SMS.

Near Miss: A potential hazard or incident in which no property was damaged and no personal injury was sustained, but where, given a slight shift in time or position, damage or injury easily could have occurred.

Non-conformity: An observed situation where evidence indicates the non-fulfillment of a specified requirement or policy under the SMS.

Notice of Intent: A notice documenting the intent of a PVA member company to implement Flagship SMS.

Recognized Flagship Organization (RFO): An Associate PVA member approved to carry out functions related to ensuring that Flagship enrolled vessels comply with provisions of the Flagship SMS.

Safety Management Manual: Documents used to describe and implement the SMS kept in a form that the Company considers most effective.

Safety Management System (SMS): A structured and documented system enabling company and vessel personnel to effectively implement the Company's safety and environmental protection policies.

Unwanted Occurrence: An undesirable or negative event that happens, often unexpectedly, and can have negative consequences.

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