

SIRE Inspections

Making Oil Transportation Safer

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Who am I?

- Born and raised in Southern California; 1984 graduate of the California Maritime Academy.
- Went to sea as a licensed officer on oil and chemical tankers from 1984 through 2008. Completed my career as Master aboard American flag Suezmax vessels in the Alaska North Slope trade.
- SIRE Inspector fall of 2008 until present.
- SIRE Auditor as of March 2013.
- Typically inspect 80-90 ships each year.

What is the SIRE program?

- **SIRE stands for: Ship Inspection REport**

- The SIRE program is a comprehensive, worldwide inspection regime utilizing inspectors with common training and oversight, to inspect oil tankers, chemical tankers and gas carriers, based on a standardized set of questions and requirements known as the SIRE Vessel Inspection Questionnaire (VIQ).
- A SIRE Inspection is complete after the VIQ has been uploaded to the OCIMF database. It becomes available to interested parties, including oil companies, oil terminal operators and port state control entities, after the vessel's operators have been given the opportunity to provide answers and explanations for the observations raised during the inspection.

SIRE Inspections

- The sire database currently receives About 1750 new inspection reports per month
- There are nearly 10,000 requests to purchase SIRE reports each month
- OCIMF requires a minimum of 30 days between SIRE inspections.
- The average number of inspections per ship each year is 2.62

Who are SIRE Inspectors?

- All SIRE Inspectors are either licensed Masters or Chief Engineers, with a minimum of two full years of sea time as a senior officer aboard oil tankers, gas carriers or chemical tankers.
- SIRE Inspectors are nominated by an OCIMF member company that participates in the SIRE program, and are then trained by OCIMF to make the inspections.
 - SIRE Inspector's courses are held in London, Singapore, Japan etc.
 - Multiple accompanied inspections prior to the initial audit. Not everyone passes.
 - Refresher course every three years.
 - Audited inspection every three years.

So you want to play in our sandbox

- The SIRE program is first and foremost based on the desire of the OCIMF members to insure that vessels that they do business with are operated in a safe manner.
- All vessels are REQUIRED to follow:
 - SOLAS
 - MARPOL
 - Flag state requirements
 - Local regulations (USCG Regulations when in U.S. waters - CFR's)
 - STCW and MLC

So you want to play in our sandbox

- But SIRE often has stricter requirements.
 - Many of the questions within the VIQ have written guidance noting the SIRE requirement. In some instances, that means I make an observation about something I found on the vessel that was perfectly legal, but not exactly what SIRE required.
 - A good example of this is the SIRE requirement for very high resistance to ground within a shipboard electrical system. Class typically allows 1-2 megohms. We require a minimum of 5 megohms.
- **So how do we get the vessel operators to do that?**
- It works sort of like this:

Hot Dogs



SIRE is the “Higher Authority”

- The ship’s owner/operator doesn’t have to follow the SIRE requirements. *But the oil companies don’t have to hire the ship either.*
- In effect, the companies participating in SIRE are saying, “If you want to play on our sandbox, you have to play by our rules.”
- In other words, OCIMF, through the SIRE program. has made safety an economic priority.

What exactly do we do for eight hours on board?

- The SIRE inspections is a comprehensive safety inspection of the whole vessel, and typically takes eight to ten hours to complete.
- There are four basic parts of the inspection:
 - Documentation
 - Navigation, bridge procedures, equipment and communications
 - Cargo operations and the main deck
 - Engine room operations

The Open Book Test

- The SIRE VIQ is freely available to all stakeholders. The vessel should already have a copy, but that doesn't mean they'll always get it right.
- Sometimes, the ship itself just doesn't conform. Examples include the mooring arrangement for a Single Point Mooring, or the arrangements for checking the Forepeak tank's ballast water for oil prior to discharging it.
- The VIQ is long, and a vessel's officers have a lot of duties. They can't all know everything.
- We all ask different questions. A SIRE inspection is essentially a spot check. Each SIRE inspector is likely to key in on different issues, and to find different things. That's why we try not to inspect the same ship over and over again.

Examples of SIRE Observations

5.76 Are accommodation ladders, gangways, pilot ladders and pilot hoists, where fitted, in good order?

Inspector Observations: The ship's portable gangway was constructed from two sections that were bolted together in the middle of the gangway. The treads had horizontal ribs on one side to provide grip during use. The manufacturers had fitted the treads on the upper section with the ribbed side on what would be the lower side of the tread when the gang was in use, i.e. the wrong way round.

Initial Operator Comments: This was a very well spotted observation that had escaped the attention of the ship's staff, office personnel and previous inspectors alike. The gangway, which was not in use for this calling, has since been separated and the lower section turned over and connected up again. The gangway is now correctly rigged as intended.

8.56 Can double hull spaces be inerted?

Inspector Observations: The vessel was not provided with a means to vent the double hull spaces a minimum of 2 meters above the deck whilst inerting, nor was there evidence that the hose provided for inerting the double hull spaces was electrically continuous. (ISGOTT 11.7.2)

Initial Operator Comments: We are grateful to the inspector for the observation. All vessels in the fleet will be provided the required hardware at the earliest to comply with the same.

2.43: If applicable, is a Damage Stability Plan on board?

Inspector Observations: The vessel was not following the requirements of the USCG issued Stability Letter. The stability letter required only one centerline or pair of fuel oil tanks to be slack at any one time, and for fuel tanks to be discharged in the following order: 1C, 2C, 2 P/S and 1 P/S. Per the vessel's log, Fuel was transferred to the day tank as follows: 11, 18 & 19 July 1C, 19 & 20 July 2P/S, 21 July 1C thus indicating that the required order was not followed, and multiple tanks were left slack. Vessel personnel indicated that they were aware of the stability letter's requirements, but were unable to follow it as required, due to the necessity of adding lubricity additives to the fuel after it had been loaded and analyzed ashore.

Initial Operator Comments: 2.43 refers to damage stability plan which is not required to be carried on board a tug boat. Evidence of our 3rd party Damage Stability Agreement with Elliott Bay Design Group was provided.

We do and must rely on the good judgment of the captain to see his vessel is operated in a safe manner. On a vessel with 18 different tanks there are any number of safe operational scenarios he might use.

If the vessel is equipped with an Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS), are the Master and deck officers able to produce documentation that generic and type-specific ECDIS familiarisation has been undertaken?

Inspector Observations: The master and deck officers had received ECDIS training through the on board CBT training system. There was no evidence produced to show completion of the IMO required course and type specific familiarization as required.

Initial Operator Comments: We disagree that this is a negative finding. This requirement is set to enter into force on January 1, 2012. All Deck Officers are presently required to complete ECDIS training on a 5 year interval which covers the theoretical part of the IMO Model Course 1.27. Our change management plan includes the introduction of approved type specific training for our officers within a sufficient timeframe to meet the new requirements when they actually take effect and we consider this matter to be closed.

We want this:



We don't want this:



Questions?