

## **Nautical Institute Cyprus Branch - Event report**

**Event Title: Oil Tanker Vetting – Latest trends and developments**

**Venue:** Intership Navigation, 32, Miltonos Street, Limassol

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017

The Nautical Institute Cyprus Branch organized an evening presentation on ‘Tanker Vetting – Latest trends’ and development by Captain Michael Quain, who shared his four decades of experience in the maritime industry, as Ship Master, Safety and Quality Manager, and as a SIRE Inspector.

The topic attracted a lot of interest from the marine community on the island, which was evident by the attendance of over 95 shipping professionals and students.

After introducing us to the current SIRE system, the qualifications for an inspector and the current layout of the Vessel Inspection Questionnaire (VIQ), Mike took us through a ‘successful’ vetting inspection, which would run as follows.

### **The Opening Meeting with the Inspector**

Laying down the ground rules such as;

- Anticipated critical points in the ship’s operations which might interrupt the inspection
- Rest periods.
- Availability of officers or crew members to escort the inspector.
- Is there anything else going on at the time which might affect the inspection such as bunkering, PSC, etc?
- Remember that the Master is in charge – not the Inspector!

### **The Inspection**

The inspection will include:-

Paperwork – Certification and Documentation.

Navigation, Communications and Bridge Procedures.

Tour of the Deck Areas, Safety Equipment, Structure, Mooring, Cargo Systems and Pumproom,

Cargo Control Room.

Machinery Spaces and Planned Maintenance Systems.

Accommodation, Public Rooms, Galley, Stores, etc.

### **The Closing Meeting with the inspector**

The Master might wish to have senior officers present. Observations must be based on Objective Evidence and not the personal opinion of the inspector. The Inspector must describe any observation as accurately as possible and not in general terms.

Observations should have been brought to the attention of escorting officers on site at the time they are noted by the inspector. Should any evidence surface during the inspection which can satisfy the VIQ requirements, the inspector should change a ‘NO’ to a ‘YES’

- All observations should be discussed and the Master given the opportunity to correct them before the inspector leaves.
- The inspector should then note any observations which have been corrected but will still include them on his list.
- The inspector should leave a hard copy of his list of observations with the Master. (Some oil majors do not do that).
- The Master should be given the opportunity to add comments to the observations list, which the inspector should then note on his report

The inspector may not make recommendations as to how to rectify any deficiency or observation.

- The inspector may not comment on the acceptability of the vessel or rate the vessel.
- The inspector may not comment on subjects unrelated to the VIQ.
- The inspector should also draw attention to any positive matters about the vessel such as “best practice” procedures, which should also be included in his report.

### **Tips on Responses to Vetting Departments**

Responses should clearly indicate the action taken to correct the “deficiency”, and in addition any action taken to prevent it recurring on this ship and all the others in the Operators Fleet.

Stick to the point. Don’t write a novel and be brief but with sufficient detail to reassure the Vetting Superintendent that it has been taken seriously.

For the oil company Vetting Superintendent, every marginal vessel he/she approves can be a career decision. He/she is not going to bet their career on a Ship Operator who sends second-rate replies to what are considered to be serious vessel deficiencies. Approval maybe delayed or denied.

### **The following responses are generally not well received**

- “Rectified.” ... (trust me) ....
- “when convenient” (spending money is never convenient)
- “at the earliest opportunity” (tomorrow? Next year?)
- “We have reminded the Master/Chief ...” (blame)
- “The parts have been delivered on board.” (incomplete)
- “He has been cautioned and instructed ...” (blame)

### **The following are top class responses and might include**

A convincing statement that the root cause has been sought and found.

A statement that managers possess “objective evidence” sufficient to prove that the observation is closed (or will be completed by a stated date).

A statement of action taken to avoid a repetition of the observation in the future (SMS change, etc.).

## **DO WHAT YOU SAY YOU DO**

### **Other factors which may impact on the inspection result**

- Port State Control records.
- Detention or “Before Leaving Port” (Code 17).

- Equasis
- Casualty Data – “Lloyds List Intelligence”.
- Terminal Feedback.
- Vessel Age – Structural Assurance. CAP.
- Management of Change;
  - Change of Technical Operator
  - Change of Flag
  - Change of Class

In concluding his presentation Mike also spoken about the Officer Matrix and the current version of the TMSA.

There was a lively Q&A session at the end and a social networking event followed. All attendees received a CPD certificate.

Contribution by Graham Cowling, Branch Chairman