

Demonstrating compliance

Being ISPS Code compliant is one thing – proving it another

Mark Langdon Technical Editor

Few people appear to have embraced the International Ship and Port Facilities Security (ISPS) Code with a positive attitude, says UK-based Datatrac Ltd. It suggests that the levels of frustration felt by the marine industry to comply with the code will be insignificant compared with problems enforcing the code.

It believes that enforcement will be a "Catch 22" situation. The company explains that as Ships' Security Plans are confidential, open only to the Flag State of the ship, the statement "I am in compliance with my plan" will have very little substance. Mainly because the plan cannot be shown to those who need to assess the ship compliance to it, this being, the port it is approaching.

Mark Robinson, manager of North Insurance Management Ltd also sees areas of concern. "It seems to me that ship owner's face two issues in demonstrating compliance with the ISPS Code," he says. "The relatively easy one is compliance with the basic elements of the code. A ship should have its International Ship Security Certificate issued by the RSO for its flag state. It will have on board the continuous synopsis record and other details, such as the last ten ports visited."

He continues: "The other issue, that causes the difficulties, is demonstrating compliance with the code in the sense of actually complying with the ship security plan that each ship is required to have. This is an issue that those that framed the Code do not seem to have thought about and I can see it giving rise to some difficult disputes."

Datatrac believes that this lack of definite rules of engagement between two operational units – the port and the ship – is fraught with potential for confusion. The levels of interpretation by the port and the ship could be so different – and both will be right. Add to this the considerable power available to the port, to which the ship is subject, and the scene is set for argument and delays, and at worst, refusal of entry.

There are two lurking traps; the paper trail to prove the management of compliance in the ten areas of recording required in Paragraph 10 of Part A, which is irrespective of the ship's plan. The second is being able to prove that actions have been carried out to go from one level of security to another – particularly a higher state of security.

Datatrac, which specialises in systems that provide evidence of compliance without any need to key data into a computer, says that its Securitrac system offers the solution.

The first version of module one of Securitrac - ISPS Code Document Management was created as a database solution and is being adapted to include digital pen data capture where on writing with a pen on paper – the words are brought into the computer.

The aim is to provide clear evidence that basic compliance is in place, all in one location, offering peace of mind to the master, ship's security officer (CSO) and company security officer (CSO).

The second Module - Proof of Presence for Security Rounds - uses contact memory tags. These are colour coded to security levels and placed at the points around the ship that are to

be included in security rounds at each level. These points are loaded into the reader and as the location is visited a quick tap on the tag gives proof of attendance with the time and date recorded against the name of the person completing the round. The data collected is transparently non-forgable and therefore reliable. It is electronic and easily exported for evidence.

Data generated by the contact memory tags, which can withstand temperatures from -120 degrees C to + 50 degrees C and can have paint scraped off them, is guaranteed for 100 years.

Datatrac says that the technology is robust and well tested and can easily be installed by the ships' company. The company adds that, at around £600 for the Management System and £2,750 for the Proof of Presence, including the reader and 50 tags, this is relatively inexpensive insurance against all the potential misunderstandings in the future of the ISPS Code. ■

With Securitrac colour coded contact memory tags placed at relevant points enables data from security rounds to be loaded into a reader

