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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Information concerning the development of uniform definitions of ship port operations in support of safe, efficient and sustainable transport logistics

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SUMMARY

Executive summary: Open electronic platforms and digital applications assisting ports and ship managers to improve the efficiency of operations are under development, but this development has been hampered by the absence of internationally agreed definitions of ship port operations. This document provides information about industry discussions to develop agreed descriptors of events during a ship's arrival, stay and departure in port.

Strategic direction: 8

High-level action: 8.0.3

Output: No related provisions

Action to be taken: Paragraph 16

Related documents: FAL Convention and FAL 38/5/2

Introduction

1 Shipping worldwide makes use of identical events in its log books, regardless of the type of ship. These events have never been defined, formalized or brought in line with the definitions of events that are used in ports. The intention is to harmonize understanding of events both on board and on shore related to the arrival, stay and departure of the ship in port and in the port approach. Computer software and digital applications using uniform events will result in more streamlined processes between ship and port.

2 A common understanding of ship port operations will enable electronic message formats to be developed that will be understood by all parties.

3 Representatives of ports and the shipping industry have worked together in an unprecedented effort to agree descriptions of events associated with ship port operations that take place both in port and in port approaches. These definitions will be tested in 2016 during real time ship calls and the results presented to FAL 41.

Background

4 In recent years IMO has developed and refined its e-navigation strategy that aims to bring about increased safety of navigation in commercial shipping through better organization of data on ships and on shore, and better data exchange and communication between ships and the ship and shore. As part of the improved provision of services to ships through e-navigation, Maritime Service Portfolios have been identified as the means of providing electronic information in a harmonized way as a part of IMO's e-navigation Strategy Implementation Plan. Internationally agreed definitions of events related to ship port operations will facilitate the efficient transfer of marine information and data between all appropriate users (ship-ship, ship-shore, shore-ship and shore-shore) in Maritime Service Portfolios.

5 Further, in 2013, IMO published "A Concept of a Sustainable Maritime Transportation System" (SMTS). As well as raising the profile of maritime transport, highlighting why maritime transport is a fundamental element in achieving a more sustainable world, the document also identifies various 'imperatives' or goals that must be met to implement an SMTS. Goal 2 of the *Energy Efficiency and Ship-Port Interface* states that an SMTS needs efficient port facilities to keep the operational efficiency of ships at the highest level and refers to the logistics infrastructure which should allow ships to navigate at optimal speeds for their charted trajectories, including cargo logistics and port planning, just-in-time berthing, and weather routing. This document recommends that innovation and best practices for efficient ship operation and ship-to-shore interfacing should be rigorously pursued. The development of agreed definitions of events related to ship port operations will contribute to achieving this goal.

The current situation

6 The FAL Convention contains the following definition of *Time of arrival*: "Time when a ship first comes to rest, whether at anchor or at a dock, in a port". However, this definition does not provide sufficient detail to meet the requirements of modern ship management and port logistics, which depend on more detailed information about the time, location and activities associated with a ship's arrival and departure.

7 There are many examples of how different understanding of ship port operation events can lead to delays and other inefficiencies, for example time of arrival at the berth. The ship might define this time as "First Line Ashore". The terminal might define this time as "All Fast", or "Safe Access to Shore". A further example is the understanding of "Last Move". The terminal might define this time as "Last move of the container" but the ship may not be ready for departure until containers have been secured by lashings. The master or ship agent might define "Last Move" as "Last move of a twist lock bin". These differences in understanding can result, for example, in a pilot arriving too early then having to wait to depart, with the potential for an incorrect (delayed) time of arrival at the pilot station for the next ship inbound that could result in the next ship inbound stemming the current or even having to drop anchor.

Implications for open electronic platforms and technology-driven ship operations

8 Open electronic platforms, such as Port Community Systems (PCSs), are currently being developed. PCSs enable the secure exchange of information between port service providers. FAL 38/5/2 explained how a PCS acts as a clearing centre for the efficient exchange of electronic information for maritime trade.

9 There is the potential for open electronic platforms and other innovative applications in ports and on ships to improve the safety and efficiency of ship operations. However, the absence of internationally agreed definitions of ship port operations will result in open electronic platforms and emerging applications not being used to their full potential.

Benefits of developing internationally understood definitions of ship port operations in ports and port approaches

10 Both ship and port can benefit from internationally agreed definitions of ship port operations. Definitions will contribute to improved data exchange related to ship arrival, stay and departure information as well as improving the reliability and delivery of the services required by the ship while in port, including planning to the next port. This may be considered an element of 'Port call optimization', the process of realizing reductions in environmental impact and improved safety and security management for shipping, terminals and service providers. The elements of port call optimization where internationally agreed definitions of ship port operations could improve the current situation are listed in the annex.

Industry standards under development

11 Observers to the Organization and industry representatives from 15 major shipping lines and four leading ports have been working together in a Port Call Optimization 'Taskforce' to develop a common understanding of the stages of ship port operations related to time, place and activity in line with the current practices on board ships, at terminals, and in commercial contracts.

Potential adverse impacts of not developing defined events associated with ship port operations

12 Failure to develop internationally agreed definitions of ship port operations may have the following adverse impacts:

- There will be localized responses and the lack of a coherent approach.
- The potential safety, security, economic and environmental benefits associated with a common understanding of ship port operations will take longer to achieve or may not be achieved.
- The introduction of e-navigation Maritime Service Portfolios in pursuit of the transfer of marine information and data between all appropriate users (ship-ship, ship-shore, shore-ship and shore-shore) will be less efficient in the absence of a common understanding of the stages of ship port operations and their inclusion in defined events.
- Local or regionally specific solutions may develop, bringing associated inefficiencies and the potential for confusion.

Industry further cooperation

13 The adoption of agreed definitions of ship port operations would mean that associated electronic messages for ports could be developed and incorporated, for example, in the UN/EDIFACT standard, in much the same way that the recent VERMA (Verified Weight) message has been submitted to assist with SOLAS container weighing requirements.

14 Interested industry groups include the PROTECT group (members are Port Authorities and Port Community Systems Operators), which focuses on the development of electronic messages for ports, and SMDG (Ship Management Design Group), made up of terminal operators and shipping lines, which devises the process flow and designs new messages for the industry.

Summary

15 Definitions of ship port operation events are being developed and will be tested in 2016 during real time ship calls. Based on the results, the co-sponsors will submit a proposal to the next session of this Committee.

Action requested of the Committee

16 The Committee is invited to note the information contained in this document.

ANNEX

An internationally agreed set of ship port operation events and their widespread use will benefit the following elements of a port call:

Port call optimization – Safety and security

1 The timing for the availability of the berth, pilot, tugs and linesmen, if understood by all interested parties in the port and on board the ship, can help avoid situations, for example, where a ship passes the planned 'point of no return' on its entry into port without the correct services being available for safe navigation, mooring, and ship services. Misunderstandings resulting from the absence of agreed definitions of ship port operation events can result in unsafe or insecure situations developing in ports.

Port call optimization – Fuel efficiency and emission reduction

2 About seventy to eighty per cent of the total operating costs of ships are related to bunker consumption. A small change in speed results in significant bunker savings. Agreed changes in schedule and location promulgated through clearly defined events can assist a master to make changes in the port approach, taking due consideration of the obligations and responsibilities under the Bill of Lading and Charter Party, and resulting in cost savings and a reduction in environmental impact.

Port call optimization – Efficient port and ship operations

3 Port call optimization depends on a reliable slot or queuing management system to be operational with associated internationally understood and agreed ship port operation events.
