
This new Guide builds on previous recommendations and also recognizes the experience gained within the industry of STS transfer operations, including the transfer of chemical (MARPOL Annex II) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes. The Guide is intended to be applicable to transfers involving all bulk liquid cargoes, but where specific recommendations relate to a particular cargo type these are included in dedicated appendices. For transfers involving Annex I cargoes, the guidance supports the requirements and recommendations developed by the IMO.

The most important changes of the 2013 Ship to Ship Transfer Guide compared to the 2005 Edition are highlighted below:

**Risk Assessment**

Two risk assessments are now recommended to be undertaken in the Guide as opposed to one being recommended in the 2005 Edition. A risk assessment should be undertaken when considering the suitability of an STS transfer location and a further risk assessment should be made for the STS operation.

**In-Port STS Transfer Operations**

The scope of the Guide has been significantly expanded to take account of in-port transfers (compared with that of the 2005 Edition). These may involve transfers to or from a vessel at anchor, moored to buoys or alongside, and may involve multiple vessels some of which, particularly in the chemical trade, may be of small size and include manned and unmanned barges and estuarial craft. Two additional checklists are included in the Guide’s appendices addressing in-port STS transfer operations.

**Structure**

The structure of this Guide has been developed such that all general references to STS operations that are applicable irrespective of the cargo being transferred are included in the main section of the document. Recommendations that relate to a particular cargo are included in separate appendices for crude oil and petroleum products, chemicals, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG). The Guide’s basic Sections though have been kept the same as in the 2005 Edition.
Safety Checklists

Although the Guide's Safety Checklists still number five in total (having the same chronological order and title as per the 2005 Edition), all of them have been wholly revised and updated and now include additional checks depending on the type of cargo to be transferred (i.e. petroleum / chemical & LNG / LPG cargoes).

Training

The Guide also includes additional guidance on Training and Familiarization of ship's personnel.

Other

- The Guide includes additional guidance for personnel transfers using a personnel transfer basket (PTB), for both at sea and in port STS transfer operations.
- Recommendations contained in the Guide also take into consideration the use of barges in cargo transfers and of vessels, both at sea and in port.
- Additional guidance for the security of the ships being involved in STS transfer operations, whether at sea or in port, has also been included in the Guide.
- Guidance on preparing a Joint Plan of Operations (JPO) has also been added in the Guide.

MARPOL Requirements

MARPOL Annex I Reg. 41 requires all oil tankers of 150 GT and above engaged in STS operations to be provided with a ship-specific STS Operations Plan approved by the Flag Administration or the Classification Society on its behalf. The STS Operations Plan is to be developed taking into account the information contained in the best practice guidelines for STS operations identified by IMO, i.e. IMO's Manual on Oil Pollution, Section I, Prevention and ICS / OCIMF's “Ship to Ship Transfer Guide, Petroleum”, 4th Edition, 2005.

Advice from Classification Societies

AMC has already contacted IACS Member Classification Societies to inquire whether STS Operations Plans can / should be developed based on the updated Guide; all of them have confirmed that STS Operations Plans developed in accordance with the “Ship to Ship Transfer Guide for Petroleum, Chemicals and Liquefied Gases”, First Edition, 2013 may indeed be approved in the usual manner, and would expect the updated version of the Guidelines to appear within MARPOL in due course. According to most Classification Societies, compliance with the new Guide is strongly recommended.

Recommendations

Owners of oil tankers above 150 GT engaged in STS transfer operations are urged to update their STS Operations Plan in accordance with the latest Guide as soon as possible. This applies especially to tankers chartered under Oil Majors.

AMC has in the past prepared hundreds of STS Operations Plans (for oil / chemical tankers as well as LNG Carriers) and can assist in updating relevant manuals in accordance with the new Guide.

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