

Orals Report

AP

Keep

3rd July 2015

30 minutes

Travelled down the night before and stayed in the nunnery, did a test run to the Coastguard Station, it's easy to find but for peace of mind wanted to know I could find it the next morning! Next morning left at 8.30 to ensure I was there in plenty of time and arrived about 8.40. I waited in the car until just gone 9 so as to keep to their 10 minute before rule. Went in, signed in, handed my phone in and sat down on the sofa trying to flick through the Telegraph that was their to calm nerves (could only actually focus on looking at the pictures at this stage!) and waited to be called. At 9.50 Keep asked me through to the exam room and introduced himself, he asked for my discharge book, passport, TRB and workbooks. A general chitchat about the ships I had been on and then said he would begin the exam. It seems like such a blur and went so quick but I'll try and remember as many questions as possible.

So you're on passenger ships so how do stewards and waitresses make their views known about safety issues or concerns on-board?

I talked about the ISM Code, SMS, the role of the Safety Officer, HESS (Health, Environment, Safety and Security Meetings), how we had designated members from each department, crew and officers, that attended, discussed near miss reporting etc

Have you been to a HESS meeting as cadet?

No, there were other designated members of the Deck department that went to these meetings.

How is the ship's SMS checked to ensure Officers and crew are complying with it?

Internal audits, shoreside come on and check you're following procedures and checklists, may watch a departure or arrival to look at bridge manning and bridge resource management.

Is it also checked externally, say by Flag State?

Yes because Flag State authorise your SMC saying your SMS is sufficient so they do audits, mentioned even though my ship was Bermudan flagged the MCA came on to do an ISM audit while I was on-board (thought he might dig a bit here but he didn't).

So using these checklists what would you expect to be on there for Bridge departure checks?

Started with passage plan being completed by First Officer on my ships, checked and signed by Captain and 2nd Officer countersigned, expect that to be inputted into the ECDIS and IBS with draft for safety contours, alarms and ETAs. Moved onto echo sounder saying select which transducer, set the alarm and adjust the gain. Talked about the GPS and the traffic light system in the green and checking to see if you're expecting DGPS or not. Moved onto the radar, check scanners are clear turn from standby or off to transmit, select which radar you want where and for collision avoidance or navigation, he stopped me before I had chance to finish this!

So if an ETO was carrying out work on the radar say, how would you expect this procedure to be carried out?

Risk assessment, permit to work, (explained a little about what each of these meant), bridge would be informed from the permit to work, and would put signs on radars informing not to be used, at the site of work safety harness and fall preventer, person overseeing with communications etc

Keep then got out a radar plotting sheet and drew a heading line on about 030 degrees, what orientation is this?

North up

So what if you saw this on your radar (as he is drawing 12 dots in a line?)

It would be a SART

What radar does a SART show up on?

X band

Who would you expect to co-ordinate a search and rescue?

Expect there to be an on-scene co-ordinator such as a cruise ship with extra manning, good communications and medical teams on-board as well as assistance shore-side from an MRCC

Who has to have a doctor on-board?

Didn't know so I said so, but reasoned that I would expect it to be passenger ships maybe over 12 people on long international voyages as I knew ferries didn't but cruise ships did. He informed me it was passenger ships with over 100 persons and at sea for 3 days or more.

How would you rescue people from the water?

On our ship lower the FRC and carry out a recovery manoeuvre and then use the rescue ladder to bring them back on board (again thought he might dig here for launching an FRC or MOB recovery in an FRC but he didn't).

How would you indicate distress on small cargo ship?

Started with VHF saying undesignated or designated and explained these a little, then moved on to saying DSC or RT. Moved onto flares because he seemed happy with GMDSS radio equipment so I said there would be rocket parachute flares, 12 near or on the Bridge and 4 in the survival craft.

What would a bulk carrier load?

Iron ore, coal or grain

What is stowage factor?

Confused myself a little here with density and stowage factor but arrived at the amount of space taken to occupy 1 tonne of weight (metres cube per tonne).

Would iron ore have a low or high stowage factor?

It would be very heavy, so you can only load a small amount meaning it has a low stowage factor.

Would you expect iron ore to take up more or less space than water?

Again got myself confused here but with a bit of pushing arrived at the fact that it was heavier so would be more dense than water so would occupy less space.

Gm on bulk carrier carrying iron ore, how would you expect it to roll?
Large GM so it would be a stiff ship meaning it rolls violently and is uncomfortable

Could you load a bulk carrier full of coal to the top of the tank? Why not?
No, you would reach the draft marks on the loadline before you get there.

What draft mark in particular?
Summer load line

Where is that on the loadline and where on the ship?
In line with the Plimsoll line and midships.

What do the letters either side of the Plimsoll line mean?
Our ship was LR, which is Lloyds Register the Classification Society.

How would you take over the 8-12 morning watch?
Arrive early, ensure I'm fit for duty and well rested, take time to familiarise myself with the Bridge, check the last position on the chart, DR for the watch to know what I'm expecting. Expect officer on watch to tell me what has happened on his watch and then begin the take over checklist. Engines, courses, traffic, weather, echo sounder alarm, VHF channels monitoring and he stopped me once again.

How would you set radar up and is there any guidance in SMS?
One for collision avoidance and one for navigating, so relative vectors and sea stabilised and then true vectors and ground stabilised and it is mainly the officers' discretion based on the situation but guidance in SMS.

If you were not manually plotting how else would you plot targets?
ARPA

What vector shows you targets course and speed?
True vectors

How are security procedures implemented on passenger ships?
Comply with ISPS, have Security Officer and team, all scanned on and off with photo comparison to person using the card, all baggage scanned either shore side or on ship, everyone goes through airport style detectors. He stopped me there and I think was genuinely more interested than questioning!

Port hand lateral region B, going into port what are your actions?
Alter course to starboard and leave on port side

Where is region B?
Americas including Caribbean, South Korea, Philippines and Japan

Safe water mark lights?
White isophase, occulting, Morse A and 1 long flash every 10 seconds

West cardinal steering 010 actions?
Alter course to port and leave on starboard side

Radar plot RV 2 vessels on port side ROC, one forward and one abaft beam?
www.officerofthewatch.co.uk

2 targets so would probably at least inform the Captain, bold alteration course to starboard and monitor until finally past and clear (paraphrased the bits of rule 19).

Smartie Board: PDV less than 50m towing less than 200m 2 points to port actions?

Series of compass bearings and reducing range assume ROC, maintain course and speed and monitor with caution under rule 15 and 17.

Adds RAM lights to the vessel above, how does that change it?

Rule 18 says keep out of her way, 2 short blasts bold alteration of course to port and monitor until finally past and clear.

Smartie Board: PDV over probably over 50m 2 points to stbd in TSS?

Rules still apply so assuming ROC 1 short blast and bold alter course to starboard and monitor until finally past and clear.

How would you maintain a safe lookout?

Quoted rule 5, just about to start explaining it in my own words and he moved on.

How would you know if risk of collision exists?

Paraphrased rule 7 and...

Before I had chance to say anything else he told me I had passed! It flew by so quickly and couldn't believe I was done when he had said I'd passed, so much he hadn't covered that I expected to be standard Orals questions but I wasn't going to complain!

Keep really relaxes you generally talking and its like you're chatting to a lecturer at college rather than an examiner. He kept throwing questions in about the company I sailed with, the ships I was on, the Masters etc throughout the exam which was a little off-putting but if you can get back on track after politely answering his intermediate non-exam question you do fine. I genuinely believe my workbooks helped keep the exam so short and sweet, with approximately 30 reports and 2 A4 notebooks of navigational bits and pieces he could see I had actually done some work at sea. So it might seem like a massive pain while you're there and you want to enjoy yourself, sleep or go ashore, if you can find time and motivation to create some decent evidence for the work you have done it really can pay off and make your Orals very pain free!

Thank you to all the lecturers at college and to the rest of my class for getting me through this, you can't do it on your own, put the work in, fire questions at each other, read as much as you can and try and start revision at sea if you get chance, it really does make it better in the long run! Good luck to all those left still, you'll all pass with flying colours!