



International Chamber of Shipping

PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN IN EVENT OF A SERIOUS MARITIME CASUALTY

Following the loss of the 'Prestige', and the political backlash that followed, ICS has been considering how the industry can better respond to press enquiries in the event of a serious maritime casualty.

It is intended that www.shippingfacts.com will form part of the industry's general response to any future serious casualties, with the website address being sent to journalists as a sign of the industry's willingness to be helpful, and to encourage more balanced reporting by the non-maritime press.

IDENTIFICATION OF A SERIOUS CASUALTY

In the hours immediately following an incident it is often difficult to determine the true significance of a casualty. In general terms, however, a casualty might be regarded as potentially serious enough to trigger an international industry response when it becomes a **leading** news story in the **non-maritime** media **outside** of the country in which the incident occurred.

National associations should establish procedures whereby member shipping companies are encouraged to alert them of any casualties that seem likely to be serious. National associations should be responsible for agreeing with their member companies the extent to which, if any, they may speak on their behalf to the media.

ICS will be dependent on advice from national associations as to whether a local incident requires an international industry response. **In the event of a serious maritime incident becoming an issue in local mainstream media, national associations should liaise with ICS as soon as possible.** Likewise, in response to casualty reports ICS will approach national associations promptly.

Determination of whether an incident merits a special response will be decided in consultation, if applicable, with both the national association in the coastal state where the incident occurred and the national association in the flag state.

RESPONSE BY ICS

In the event of a major incident being determined to merit a special response, a press statement will be issued by ICS containing:

- basic information about the incident that may be known
- an expression of concern on behalf of the industry about any pollution (and if appropriate, loss of life) that may result
- a reference to the need for accident investigations so that any lessons can be learned
- a referral to any information about the ship that may be available on the Equasis database (except in cases where there may be reason to believe this is inaccurate)
- referrals to any press releases issued by IMO, the shipping company, the flag state, coastal state or others such as classification societies
- a brief explanation of oil spill compensation arrangements (following consultation with the respective P&I Club)
- reference to the industry's commitment to safety and its environmental record including a referral to the 'shipping facts' web site
- contacts within ICS

ICS will also co-ordinate with the other members of the Round Table of international shipping associations and, if possible, a statement including the points listed above will be issued on behalf of the Round Table.

In discussion with the other Round Table organisations, a press release will be posted on shippingfacts.com, the home page of which will be adapted to serve as a response to the specific casualty (as will the homepage of the ICS website www.marisec.org).

The press release will be copied to: IMO, the shipping company, the flag state, coastal state and other relevant parties such as the ship's classification society, with a request, as appropriate, that a reference be made to the industry statement and the shippingfacts website on their own press statements and websites (this will be done by pre-agreement with bodies such as IMO).

RESPONSE BY NATIONAL SHIPOWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS

On rare occasions when ICS (or the Round Table) issues a statement about a specific incident, the statement will be forwarded to all national shipowners' associations, including not least the member in the state where the incident has occurred.

Members should then be immediately expected to:

Either

Forward the ICS/RT press statement to **non-maritime** (as well as maritime) press contacts, with a covering message providing:

1. a contact person in the national association who will be willing to comment to local media in general terms about the operation of the industry, and
2. a reference to the inter-industry shippingfacts website and any other relevant national resources

Or

Adapt the statement for **issue in their own name** to **non-maritime** (as well as maritime) press contacts, with a covering message providing a contact and, a referral to www.shippingfacts.com.

National associations should also:

- Post up any press statement (international or adapted) on their own web site.
- Forward any press statement to their **administration** and **relevant national political contacts**, with an explanation that this information may be helpful in the interests of better understanding and transparency.

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