# Safety Officer — study guide



The Ship Safety Officer (SSO) is the crew's day-to-day safety conscience on board. This guide covers the SSO's responsibilities, crew familiarisation and the rules behind the role.[1]

## Responsibilities of the Ship Safety Officer

The SSO's responsibilities include inspecting and maintaining safety equipment; acting as the safety advisor aboard ship and ensuring that all health and safety requirements are met; assisting the ship's safety committee in enhancing the safety of the ship; and showing strong knowledge of the shipping company's safety policies and the ship's operational procedures.

## Induction of new crew members

When new crew members join a ship, they should be trained on the location of lifesaving equipment, the equipment and operations aboard the ship, the machinery and systems, and the location of shipboard emergency alarms.

## Appointment

It is the **Master** who appoints the Ship Safety Officer: the Master is responsible for the safety of the crew and the ship but cannot take the SSO responsibility on personally because of their other duties.

## Regulatory basis and hazards

The regulations that provide details on crew safety are the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), and the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention. Areas on board that may present extra hazard include enclosed spaces, the engine and pump room, and around deck hatches and tank openings.

## Key facts to remember

- SSO: inspects/maintains safety equipment; is the safety advisor ensuring H&S requirements are met; assists the safety committee; knows company safety policies and ship procedures.
- New crew training: lifesaving equipment location, equipment and operations, machinery and systems, emergency alarm locations.
- The Master appoints the SSO.
- Regulatory basis: ISM Code, STCW, SOLAS.
- Extra-hazard areas: enclosed spaces, engine/pump room, deck hatches and tank openings.

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## Sources

1. ISM Code (SOLAS Chapter IX), SOLAS and STCW — crew safety, safety management and the ship safety officer role.