

## INTRODUCTION

It is a well known fact that on board commercial ships, communication between crew members is often a real problem.

Today, we live in a multicultural society and it is no exception that on board of the same ship, carrying a crew of 25, up to 10 different languages are spoken.

It is therefore of paramount importance that with respect to vital situations which can occur on board ships, clear and concise instructions are at hand which are well understood by all crew members.

Each head of department must be well aware of how he must manage his department and how to communicate clearly with his subordinates.

Each department on board is different with its own particularities. The way the department has to be ran, often depends on the circumstances in which the ship finds herself and must also be in conformity with the company's wishes and prescriptions.

Therefore, each company provides the Master of their ships with a booklet called "Company Regulations" or "Company Instructions".

These instructions or regulations are, of course, different from company to company and even from ship to ship. Some instructions which apply to oil tankers will consequently be different from instructions which apply to chemical tankers or to container ships.

Company Regulations or Instructions are therefore usually composed of two different parts. The first part contains the general instructions, which apply to all types of vessels. The second part contains the specific instructions which apply to a particular type of ship or to a particular trade.

**The instructions, which are given in this chapter of maritimeknowhow only serve as a model and should be adapted by any company to their specific needs.**

Besides the Company's Regulations or Instructions, the Master of the ship should also implement his personal instructions or orders, which can be read by all watch keeping officers on the bridge. The same apply to the Chief Engineer and even to the Chief Steward.

Those orders should comprise two main parts:

- the standing orders or instructions and,
- the variable orders or instructions.

The standing orders are usually printed and inserted into a copy book, also called Master's Order Book.

The variable orders are usually written by hand and vary from day to day and from situation to situation. They usually refer to the navigation such as landmarks or buoys to be sighted, a change of course, etc. In the harbour they mainly concern the mooring of the ship, the anchor watch, the loading and discharging of the ship, etc.

At the start of his watch (and in particular of the night watches) the officer should sign these orders to acknowledge that he read and understood them.