

Successful ISPS audit for Fiji Ports

THE Ports of Suva and Lautoka recently passed the International Ships and Ports Security (ISPS) code compliance audit conducted by the United States Coast Guard, which is essential if Fiji is to continue to be a hub for international trade.

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, America prevailed upon the United Nations International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and its 108 member countries to introduce an international security code for all ports of entry.

The ISPS Code came into being July 2004 with the express aim to safeguard and protect the maritime industry, which utilises ships and ports in the course of carrying out international trade.

With the US Coast Guard mandated by the IMO to be the licensing body, member countries were given time to make port security assessments, and then draw up and implement their security plans.



Maintaining the ISPS code is crucial for Fiji's international trade.

An ISPS audit is conducted every two years, and since 2005, the Port of Suva has been able to export direct to the United States of America, and Lautoka Port became fully compliant three years later. Prior to this, cargo from Fiji bound for America had to be sent to New Zealand first for clearance.

Reaching and maintaining the standards set in the ISPS

Code are crucial for Fiji to continue its direct trade links with America.

The audit process includes an assessment of security measures in place when a ship is alongside the wharf, as "the main point of concern is the ship/port interface," explained Senior Security Officer, Captain Jeke Vakkararawa.

"If port security is breached while a vessel is docked, the Ship's Master will report to the IMO, which could result in the port being placed on a watch list, as a 'contaminated port'. If this happens, ships may not be able to call at the port, as ISPS compliant ports will not receive them.

"Two of the biggest threats to ISPS compliance for any wharf, world-wide, are stowaways and pilfering. Since the installation of closed circuit television in 2006, these have been reduced to zero on the Kings Wharf," concluded Captain Vakkararawa.

Drills and documentation essential to ISPS

IN order for the Port of Suva to be ISPS compliant, drills and documentation are essential to reaching the standards required by the Code.

Part of the ISPS Code covers emergency response preparedness, whether an emergency be fire, a natural disaster such as a tsunami, or a bomb threat on the wharf or on board a ship.

Also a part of Fiji's national Occupational Health and Safety requirements, the Code requires fire wardens on every floor of the Ports' buildings, and safety officers undertaking training with the Fiji Fire Authority. Regular practice drills take place, with Ports staff assembling at the designated areas. Every department has an OHS representative to help coordinate drills and training.

The Senior Security Officer and the Harbour Master work together to conduct drills for natural disasters and bomb threats.

All meetings, planning, training, and practice drills have to be documented, showing when and where these took place, as well as who participated.

With millions of dollars invested in cruise vessels and passenger safety of paramount importance, special security procedures come into play each time a liner visits Kings Wharf.

Forty-eight hours before its arrival in Fiji, the vessel notifies Senior Port Facility Security Officer, Captain Jeke Vakkararawa, of the security status of the previous ten ports that it has visited. This is standard practice for all ships entering a Port of Entry.

As soon as the cruise liner has berthed, a Ports Security Officer boards the ship with a Declaration of Security

Special security for cruise vessels



Ports Captain Vakkararawa (centre) and Captain Nicolantonio Palombella of the cruise liner Costa Deliziosa sign the Security Declaration, while the ship's Chief Security Officer Mr Yogesh Mhatre looks on. Both visitors remarked favourably on Ports' professional standards.

document that states that the port is safe to visit, the duties of Ports and the Security Team, and those of the vessel and crew while in port.

Captain Vakkararawa explained that this procedure is a part of being compliant with the International Ships and Ports Security (ISPS) Code.



Timing and teamwork crucial

Teamwork helps to keep containers moving efficiently through the Port of Suva.

WITH only 12 bays available for all containers passing through the Port of Suva, the movement of trucks and forklifts carrying containers around the Kings Wharf is a carefully choreographed dance, as intricate as any meke or kathak.

“Along with pre-planning and communication, timing and teamwork are crucial to keeping containers moving on and off the cargo vessels that call at the Port of Suva,” said Mr Jokini Taoi, Ports’ Manager Operations.

Of the 12 bays, the four closest to the wharf side are for exports, and six are for imports. Two bays are set aside for refrigerated containers, There is also a bay set aside specifically for fumigation purposes. Each bay can hold up to 100 containers, which, if necessary, can be stacked four containers high.

Mr Taoi explained that when a vessel notifies the Port of its date and time of arrival, Ports notifies the Shipping Agents. In turn, the agents advise Ports of the cargo they have for export on that ship, as well as the number of containers and the weight of each.

Containers begin arriving anything up to 72 hours before the ship’s arrival, as Ports

gives free storage for that period of time.

These containers are then stacked in a pre-designated position, according to their weight and port of discharge, awaiting the ship’s arrival.

Before these can be loaded, the cargo on the incoming vessel destined for Fiji or for transshipment to another destination has to be unloaded. The off-loaded containers are stacked, again for 72 hours storage free-of-charge, in the container bays further away from the wharf.

From this point containers become the responsibility of the shipping agents, whose task it is to get the containers cleared by Customs and Bio-security, and trucked off the wharf.

“When the ship is unloaded, and there are only five containers left, the call goes out to the container and yard people to get ready to load. As soon as the final container is swung off the ship, the first for export is ready to be loaded,” said Mr Taoi.

“We have to work together. Communication between the vessels, the shipping agents, the Operations and Planning team, crane operators, stevedores, fork-lift drivers, truck drivers, and the yard controllers and their teams, is essential to keep the containers of

FSHIL commitment to standards

FSHIL (Fiji Ships & Heavy Industry Ltd) are proud of the quality of their work, and are extra vigilant when working on older vessel.

“In some parts of the world, vessels older than 10 years are called ‘aged’. In Fiji, we sometimes work on ships as old as 20 years,” explained Mr Lopeti Radravu, FSHIL Works Manager. “When you consider the stress a ship encounters at sea, the pounding of the waves, the hogging and the sagging, it is really important to be sure a ship is seaworthy when it leaves the FSHIL slipway, particularly if it is an aged vessel.”

Hogging is the stress a ship’s hull or keel experiences that causes them to bend upward, and sagging is the stress on a ship’s hull or keel when a wave is the same length as the ship and the ship is in the trough of two waves, causing the middle of the ship to bend down slightly.

Mr Radravu said that before a ship comes up on the slipway, the owner supplies FSHIL with a list of repairs prepared by the ship’s deck officers and engineers. Added to this will be a list prepared by a marine surveyor on behalf of the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (FMSA). In addition, FSHIL writes its own reports on all work pending, and again upon its completion.

“But the true scope of necessary work will only be revealed when the hull is exposed on the slipway, where FSHIL workers water blast the hull with water at a pressure of 1000 psi (pounds per square inch).

“In this way it is possible to identify the true thickness of the hull and to what extent, if any, there is corrosion, and if the internal structure of the ship is sound. This is especially relevant when working on an older vessel, and is all part of the FSHIL commitment to exceeding minimum quality standard and legal requirements,” said Mr Radravu.

Pilots prepare to progress

PORTS’ pilots not only pass examinations that allow them to guide progressively larger ships in and out of harbour, but they also must pass examinations at each of these ‘class’ levels for a specific port.

Two of the pilots stationed at the Port of Suva, Captain Jioji Takate and Captain Pene Yauvoli are licensed to guide Class Two ships in the Suva Harbour and Class Three ships in the Lautoka Harbour.

Both are now preparing for the

examination that will qualify them to pilot Class Two vessels in Lautoka Harbour.

Similarly, Captain Laisiasa Gonewai, who has a Class Three licence for Suva and Lautoka, is preparing to qualify as a Class Three pilot for the Port of Malau.

Class Three vessels are between 36 and 146 tonnes, Class Two ships between 146 and 183 tonnes, and Class One all vessels over 183 tonnes.



FSHIL ensures that all vessels are seaworthy before they leave the shipyard.

Divers integral to FSHIL operations

CONTRIBUTING an integral part to the operations at FSHIL (Fiji Ships and Heavy Industries Ltd) are the five PADI Open Water Certificated divers who are responsible for guiding ships on and off the slipway and for carrying out under-water inspections of ships' hulls.

With careers at FSHIL beginning in 2000, two of the divers come from a background in professional diving with other companies, while the other three were already employed at FSHIL before undertaking

the necessary training to be divers for the company.

FSHIL has provided a hot water shower system for the divers as their work is often carried out outside of normal working hours and in inclement weather because of the need to coordinate with high tides and to keep to the works schedule.

Screened each year in a rigorous medical test, the divers need to maintain peak physical fitness, as well as follow strict safety measures in carrying out their work.



FSHIL divers carry out their duties in all weathers. Here, Mr Tevita Lule (left) and Mr Norio Uluikatikati work in the rain.

Efficient maintenance a must



Well-maintained machinery supplies Ports' clients with the best service.

THE New Year saw Fiji Ports finding solutions to the mechanical problems faced by some of the company's forklifts.

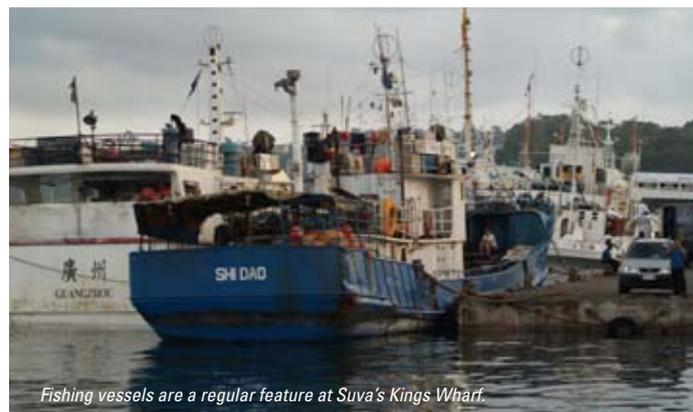
"In a very short time, we made considerable improvements in getting additional units up and running," said Mr Eminoni Kurusiga, General Manager, Port Operations. "These machines are big container forklifts, and absolutely essential to the operations functioning smoothly. We called on Northern Forklifts, a New Zealand company, for technical assistance to get things going."

As well as having the machinery

operational, Ports is in the process of revamping its workshop and Mechanical Department for greater efficiency, and updating its maintenance system in order to keep downtime to a minimum on these machines.

"As a service provider, it is essential that Fiji Ports maintain efficiency and supplies its clients with the best. To move cargo from the shipside to storage areas efficiently and avoid further congestion, we need all our machinery working properly. To this end, we have recently employed two experienced mechanics," said Mr Kurusiga.

Fishing fleet supplies export trade



Fishing vessels are a regular feature at Suva's Kings Wharf.

A regular feature of the Port of Suva seascape are fishing vessels moored along-side the Ports Terminal Ltd building at Kings Wharf, and at Muaiwalu One Wharf.

After offloading their main catch of tuna, either on to a mother ship at sea, or at the Port of Levuka, for the PAFCO frozen loin and canning operations, fishing vessels call in to Suva to re-provision, make any necessary repairs and to off load their "by-catch."

The by-catch includes fish of commercial value other than

tuna. This is transferred to local processing companies, of which there are several at the Rokobili Industrial Subdivision, Walu Bay.

These processing companies add value to the fish. Some of the catch may be packed into containers then exported overseas, turned into frozen fish loins for export, or become canned fish.

How long a fishing boat stays at the Wharf depends upon the owner, although many will visit the Port of Suva for a few days only, before returning to sea.



Tugboats manoeuvre vessels to tie up at the wharf.

Tugboats, tiny but tough

HUGE cargo vessels with containers stacked on deck, immense luxury cruise liners carrying passengers on world tours; such ships tower above the Kings Wharf, impressing the on-looker with their sheer size. But none of these massive vessels can enter the harbour unaided.

Tiny by comparison, tugboats meet, just inside the harbour mouth, all vessels weighing more than 3,000 GRT (gross register tonnage) as it is compulsory for

vessels of this size to be assisted by tugboats.

Expressed as 'register tons', the GRT is the enclosed, internal capacity of a vessel, with one register ton equal to a volume of 100 cubic feet, or 28.3 metres³.

The tugboats accompany the large ships to within approximately 30 metres of the portside. Here they physically manoeuvre the larger vessel, pushing against it, guiding it to berth alongside the

wharf, and proving that although small, they are strong enough to move vessels many times their size.

The number of tugboats engaged by a shipping company to carry out these manoeuvres will depend upon the size of the ship, and the weather conditions.

The Harbour Masters of the Suva and Lautoka Ports work closely with South Seas Towing, the company that provides tugboat services, upon request, at Ports of Entry.

Vuda, from canoe to tanker

THE Port of Vuda on the north-west coast of Viti Levu is located in the area where, according to legend, the first Fijian settlers led by chief Lutunasobasoba, made landfall in 1500BC after months of travel by canoe across the Pacific Ocean.

The modern-day port, with its array of holding tanks, caters specifically for oil and gas tankers. As well as berthing facilities for unloading petroleum cargoes dockside, there is provision for vessels to

moor to buoys in the harbour and discharge their cargo via a submarine pipe line installation.

Although the port is a privately owned facility, it comes under the jurisdiction of the Port of Lautoka. All berthing and unberthing must take place in daylight hours at the discretion of Lautoka's Port Master, in consultation with the vessel's Master.

Adjacent to the port, and only a 30 minute drive from Nadi township, is the Vuda Marina,



The Vuda Port facility extends into the distance, while the Marina can be seen in the foreground.

which caters for international and local yachtsmen and women, while a few kilometres north is the appropriately

named First Landing Resort, one of many tourist retreats to be found along the western coast-line.

Clean up in Levuka



Ports' social responsibility includes looking after the environment.

FIJI Ports started 2012 with a continued commitment to last year's Clean Up Campaign and keeping the environment clean by presenting eight rubbish bins to Levuka and its Town Council, for

use along the foreshore.

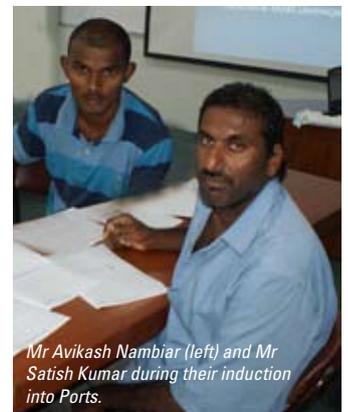
Here, Town Council representative Mr Sailosi Qalilawa accepts the bins on behalf of Levuka from Ports' representative, Mr Anare Leweniqila.

Experienced mechanics join PTL team

PORTS Terminal Ltd wishes to welcome two new members to the Mechanical Team.

Mr Avikash Nambiar comes with seven years' experience as a Heavy Plant Mechanic with Fletcher Construction, and Mr Satish Kumar has seven years' experience as a Senior Mechanic with Venu Haulage.

Their appointments are a part of Ports' ongoing drive to attain maximum efficiency in



Mr Avikash Nambiar (left) and Mr Satish Kumar during their induction into Ports.

the workshop and Mechanical Department.



A lively scene at Muaiwalu as the SOFI (centre left) is loaded with cargo and passengers.

Important island link

THE importance of Muaiwalu Wharf as a link to the outer islands can be seen as cargo

is loaded and people arrive to board the M.V.SOFI (Spirit of the Fiji Islands).



An unexpected benefit, spectacular views for crane drivers.

FIJI Ports' eleven trained and certified crane operators have a spectacular view of the harbour when on duty in one of the Company's three mobile cranes operating at the Suva Port.

A feature of Port's Operations since 2006, the

cranes are capable of lifting 100 tons at a time, and can load or off-load between 15 to 20 containers in an hour.

The cranes, manufactured by Gottwald in Germany, make it possible to turn a vessel around in 12 hours with about 200 moves.