

OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE: THE TANKER OWNERS' PERSPECTIVE

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THE INTERNATIONAL REGIME FOR TANKER SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION

International shipping is regulated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialized agency of the United Nations. IMO's main objective is to facilitate cooperation among governments on technical and legal matters affecting international shipping to achieve the highest level of international standards for maritime safety, maritime security and protection of the marine environment. This is accomplished through the development of international conventions, codes, and recommendations.

The main IMO conventions currently in place that address tanker safety and pollution prevention are the following:

- Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)
- Prevention of Pollution (MARPOL)
- Standards for Training and Watchkeeping (STCW)
- Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs)
- Loadlines
- Oil Pollution Response (OPRC)
- Ballast Water Management
- Recycling of Ships

More specifically, the SOLAS Convention imposes tanker safety requirements for design and construction, subdivision and stability, machinery and electrical systems, fire detection and prevention, lifesaving, radio communications, safety of navigation, safety management and security.

The MARPOL Convention contains six Annexes which regulate the discharges of oil, chemicals, packaged goods, sewage, garbage and air emissions. In particular, Annex 1 of the MARPOL Convention mandates tanker requirements for

double hulls, damage stability, tank size limitations, limitations on operational discharges from cargo tank areas and machinery spaces, oil discharge monitoring equipment and emergency response planning.

In addition to these conventions, IMO has adopted more than 25 Codes of Practice, many of which are made mandatory through its Conventions, and more than 700 Guidelines and Recommendations which supplement the requirements of these codes and conventions.

TANKER DESIGN

The IMO has mandated tankers built since 1990 to have a double hull structure providing protection against accidental oil pollution. This is an extra protective barrier between the oil cargo tanks and the sea water. The double hull structure is not a panacea to preventing all accidental spills, but factual experience over the last 20 years has demonstrated that double hulls provide better protection against accidental pollution in the majority of 'contact' accidents and groundings.

The introduction of double hulls in very large ships was a challenging exercise, but has also been a process with continuous improvements to safety standards such as better design and construction techniques and additional mitigation measures to overcome possible hazards identified through thorough risk assessments. Double hull oil tankers are now built to enhanced common structural standards developed by the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) and based upon the IMO adopted Goal Based New Ship Construction Standards. These vessels have high quality coatings to protect the steel structure from the effects of corrosion applied both in ballast water and in cargo oil tanks. All double hull oil tankers have hydrocarbon detection sensors so that any cargo migration, particularly as hydrocarbon vapour, to an empty tank can be detected and adequate preventive measures taken. Since the 1970s, oil tankers also have inert

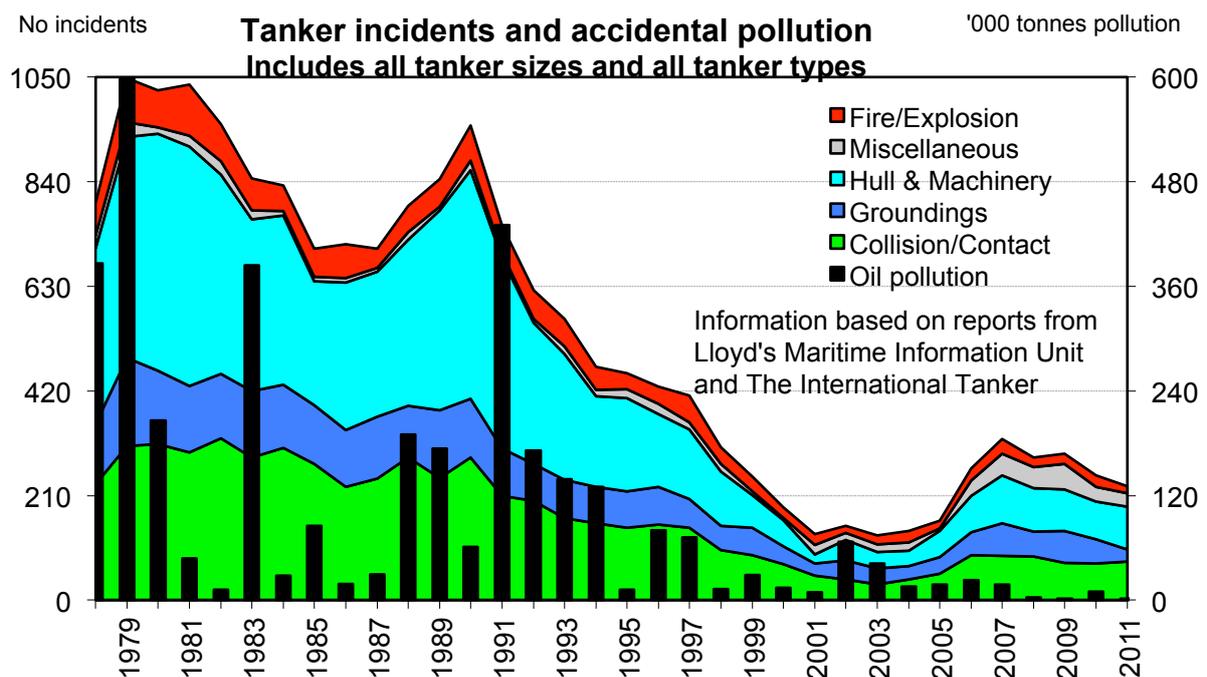
gas systems to mitigate the danger of fire and explosions. Cargo operations are stopped automatically if any of the operational conditions deviate from pre-set values.

Although the double hull structure was mandated as a means to reduce the risk of accidental pollution, it has also provided significant operational advantages. The oil cargo discharge is more efficient which means less operational pollution in accordance with requirements mandated by IMO.

All of this clearly demonstrates that there is an extremely robust set of international requirements in place to regulate tanker safety and pollution prevention worldwide.

TANKER STATISTICS

Incidents involving tanker have declined significantly over recent years despite continuous increases in fleet size and oil trade. While oil spills have been reduced in line with the number of incidents, the average quantities of oil spilled per incident have also decreased.



INDUSTRY STANDARDS

In addition to IMO, national and local regulations and requirements, the oil tanker industry has developed and strictly follows its own safety standards and guidelines. Some of the most important and relevant industry standards are:

- The International Safety Guide for Oil Tankers and Terminals -ISGOTT
- Mooring and Mooring Equipment Guidelines
- Jetty Maintenance and Inspection Guidelines
- Recommendations for Oil Tanker Manifolds and Associated Equipment
- Ship-to-Ship Transfer Guide
- Tanker Management and Self Assessment (TMSA) best practice guide

Compliance with these standards and procedures is verified through inspections and audits carried out by qualified specialists. An inspection regime is also enforced under the vetting systems used by the major oil companies and is known as the SIRE (Ship Inspection Report) Program. The inspections are performed in accordance with a standard Vessel Inspection Questionnaire and reports are logged in one database to which other oil companies and Port State Control authorities have access. In principle, each tanker gets a new inspection report at least every 6 months. The Vetting/SIRE program also includes audits onboard ships and at tanker companies offices and checks compliance with Management systems which need to meet the principles of the TMSA Guide.

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TANKER OWNERS

INTERTANKO is an international non-profit organization established in 1970 to serve as the voice of independent tanker owners. The Association currently has over 230 members with more than 3,200 tankers in 41 countries, representing over 75% of the world's independent tanker fleet. In addition, membership includes more than 330 Associate members who have a stake in the tanker industry.

INTERTANKO's mission is to provide leadership to the tanker Industry in serving the world with the safe, environmentally sound and efficient seaborne transportation of oil, gas and chemical products. Our primary goal is to lead the continuous improvement of the tanker industry's performance in striving to achieve the goals of Zero Fatalities, Zero Pollution and Zero Detentions.

INTERTANKO has clearly demonstrated its commitment to this goal by "walking the talk." It was INTERTANKO that proposed that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) require all ships to switch from residual fuels to distillate fuels to reduce air pollution from ships. This proposal was adopted by IMO in 2008. As another example, INTERTANKO also developed the Tanker Officer Training System (TOTS) which augments the existing international requirements for the training of seafarers which has been instrumental in reducing tanker accidents caused by human error.

It is this kind of leadership that makes INTERTANKO and its members one of the most respected international shipping organizations in the world.

CONCLUSIONS

1. INTERTANKO is a highly respected, responsible association with tanker safety and pollution prevention as its highest priority.
2. IMO regulates tanker safety and pollution prevention through a comprehensive regime of mandatory requirements.
3. Statistics clearly show a distinct reduction in tanker incidents and an improvement in tanker safety and pollution prevention.
4. Risk Management analysis is the best way forward to address local/regional issues or concerns with tanker safety and pollution prevention.
5. The tanker industry has developed numerous industry standards that augment existing international, national and local requirements.