INTRODUCTION

The goals of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, and the goals of Safety Management Systems (SMS) are the attainment of peak safety performance (i.e. no operational incidents, no personal injuries, and no harm to the environment). The maritime industry is still some way from achieving this goal since while these tools aid compliance with regulation, they do not necessarily embed the mature safety culture needed to improve safety performance.

While many organizations recognize the need to move beyond compliance (e.g. to be more proactive in striving for peak safety performance) this is a challenge at a time when recruitment, retention, and costs issues afflict the industry. The pressure to move beyond compliance stems from:

- Tougher requirements and more scrutiny on safety
- Increased emphasis on the value of reputation
- More demanding stakeholders (insurers etc.)

There is a general recognition in the industry that more rules, regulations, and procedures are unlikely to improve safety performance. Instead, the industry needs a better understanding of the social and organizational factors that foster

professionalism in the seafarer in routine and emergency situations. The impact of safety culture on the outcome of safety performance is well documented and notes that operational incidents are not a result of human error, technical failures, or environmental factors alone, but a combination of those and others such as failure of management, employees not performing their duties, and a breakdown in documented systems.

A mature safety culture ensures that the working environment cultivates safe attitudes and behaviors benefitting safety performance. There should be a close relationship between an organization's safety culture and a SMS. An effective SMS has to take account of all factors that have an impact on safety including the human and organizational; and conversely the safety culture influences the way in which the SMS is implemented. Consequently, the assessment of safety culture and the SMS should be complementary.

TERMS/DEFINITIONS

Accidents: Accidents are undesired events that result in personal injury.

Incident: An unplanned sequence of events and/or conditions that results in, or could have reasonably resulted in a loss event.

International Safety Management (ISM) Code: A code established to provide an international standard for the safe management and operation of ships and for pollution prevention.

Safety Culture: (1) That assembly of characteristics and attitudes in organizations and individuals which establishes that, as an overriding priority, [nuclear] plant safety issues receives the attention warranted by their significance (the original definition).

(2) The safety culture of an organization is the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies and patterns of behavior that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organization's health and safety management (ACSNI, 1991).

Safety Climate: (1) Safety climate sometimes refers to local (group) subculture. (2) A snapshot of the organization taken at a certain point in time, usually obtained by a safety culture survey.