**Shipping safety**

Shipping is perhaps the most international of all the world's great industries - and one of the most dangerous. It has always been recognized that the best way of improving safety at sea is by developing international regulations that are followed by all shipping nations.

IMO's first task when it came into being in 1959 was to adopt a new version of the [International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea](http://www.imo.org/Conventions/contents.asp?topic_id=257&doc_id=647) (SOLAS), the most important of all *treaties* dealing with maritime safety.

IMO has also developed and adopted international collision regulations and global standards for *seafarers*, as well as international conventions and codes relating to search and rescue, the facilitation of international maritime traffic, load lines, the carriage of dangerous goods and tonnage measurement.

The [Maritime Safety Committee](http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=110) is IMO's senior technical body on safety-related matters. It is aided in its work by a number of [Sub-Committees](http://www.imo.org/Newsroom/mainframe.asp?topic_id=101).

Port State Control (PSC) is the inspection of foreign ships in national ports to verify that the condition of the ship and its equipment comply with the requirements of international regulations and that the ship is manned and operated in compliance with these rules.

Many of IMO's most important technical conventions contain provisions for ships to be inspected when they visit foreign ports to ensure that they meet IMO requirements.

These inspections were originally intended to be a back up to *flag State* implementation, but experience has shown that they can be extremely effective, especially if organized on a regional basis. A ship going to a port in one country will normally visit other countries in the region before embarking on its return voyage and it is to everybody's advantage if inspections can be closely co-ordinated.

This ensures that as many ships as possible are inspected but at the same time prevents ships being delayed by unnecessary inspections. The primary responsibility for ships' standards rests with the flag State - but port State control provides a "safety net" to catch substandard ships.

IMO has encouraged the establishment of *region*al port State control organizations and agreements on port State control - Memoranda of Understanding or MoUs - have been signed covering all of the world's oceans

**Flag State** a country which exercises regulatory control over the [commercial vesse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commercial_vessel)ls

*Treaties: trattati*

*Seafarers: naviganti, gente di mare*

*Flag State: stato di bandiera*

**What does the acronym “IMO” stand for?**

**Which body is in charge of safety related tecnical matters ?**

**Where are safety inspections carried out?**

**Which State does the responsability for ship safety rest upon?**

**What is the advantage of co-ordinated inspections?**