Course Syllabus

Course Title:	**Cruise Ship Safety Officer**

Course Duration:	43.5 Hours
Course Difficulty:	Advanced
Course Category:	Safety

Learning Outcomes

- Discharge the shipboard Safety Officer function competently and lawfully, within a clear understanding of the limits of its authority
- Distinguish mandatory requirements from recognized guidance, industry practice and company policy
- Operate the shipboard elements of a Safety Management System as an integrated, evidence-generating cycle
- Conduct, document and review risk assessments for shipboard tasks, areas and operations using the hierarchy of control
- Implement and verify safe systems of work, including permit-to-work arrangements for the highest-consequence shipboard tasks
- Verify fire safety, life-saving appliance and evacuation readiness against regulatory, class and company standards
- Develop and evaluate drill and onboard training programmes that produce demonstrable competence rather than attendance records
- Investigate incidents, analyse causal factors and drive corrective action through to verified closure
- Prepare the ship, its people and its records for surveys, audits, Port State Control and third-party inspection
- Influence safety behaviour and strengthen safety culture across a large multinational crew

References:	SOLAS 1974 (as amended) / ISM Code	MLC, 2006 (Title 4) / STCW Convention & Code
	LSA Code / FSS Code	

Course Subject	Time
Introduction • Course overview • Competences to be achieved	
Chapter 1: The Cruise Ship Operating Environment and Safety Context • The cruise sector and its vessel types • Why passenger ship safety is different • How the regulatory framework was shaped by casualty • Shipboard organisation and where the safety function sits • The external stakeholder map	2.0 Hours

Copyright 2018 – 2026 | Virtual Maritime Academy

Course Subject	Time
Chapter 2: The Regulatory and Legal Framework • How maritime regulation is made and structured • SOLAS for the Safety Officer • STCW and the training obligations the Safety Officer administers • MLC, 2006 and occupational safety law at sea • Adjacent instruments and their boundaries • National law: flag, coastal and port States • Company policy as the operative instrument • Maintaining regulatory currency	3.25 Hours
Chapter 3: The Safety Officer – Appointment, Authority and Accountability • What a Safety Officer is • Appointment and terms of reference • Authority and its limits • Core duties in the annual cycle • The safety committee • Role boundaries • Planning the work: the annual safety calendar • Professional conduct	2.75 Hours
Chapter 4: The Safety Management System in Practice • The ISM Code applied to a cruise ship • Documentation architecture • Non-conformities and corrective action • Internal audit • Measuring safety performance • Management of change • Records: what to keep, for how long, and why	3.25 Hours
Chapter 5: Risk Assessment and Hazard Control • Foundations • Methods and when to use each • Conducting an assessment • The cruise ship risk landscape • Communicating risk • Common failures in shipboard risk assessment	3.25 Hours
Chapter 6: Occupational Health, Safety and Safe Systems of Work • The occupational safety framework on board • Permit to work • Enclosed space entry and rescue • Hot work • Work at height and over the side • Electrical safety and isolation • Hotel-area occupational hazards • Chemical and biological hazards • Slips, trips and falls • Mooring, tender and gangway operations • Physical agents • Personal protective equipment • Health surveillance and the medical department interface	3.0 Hours

Copyright 2018 – 2026 | Virtual Maritime Academy

Course Subject	Time
Chapter 7: Fire Safety Management • Fire behaviour on ships • Structural fire protection • Detection and alarm • Fixed fire-extinguishing systems • Portable and semi-portable appliances and fire main • Fire patrols, plans and organisation • High-risk areas and activities • Hot work control • Inspection, testing and maintenance regimes • Fire drills and training • Fire casualty response concepts	3.5 Hours
Chapter 8: Life-Saving Appliances and Evacuation Readiness • The LSA outfit of a large passenger ship • Personal life-saving appliances • Launching appliances and release gear • Maintenance, servicing and inspection • Preventing lifeboat accidents • Evacuation concepts and analysis • Evacuation with untrained persons • Man overboard and rescue readiness • Distress and locating equipment • LSA records, defects and readiness reporting	3.75 Hours
Chapter 9: Muster Lists, Drills and the Onboard Training Programme • The muster list • The shipboard emergency organisation • Crew familiarisation and joining requirements • The passenger muster • The drill programme • Evaluating drills • The onboard training programme	3.0 Hours
Chapter 10: Passenger Safety and Crowd Management • Human behaviour in emergencies • Crowd management principles • Communicating with passengers • Passengers requiring additional assistance • Everyday passenger safety • Passenger conduct and overboard prevention • The port and shore excursion interface • Public health and its interaction with safety • Passenger safety information: design and delivery • The safety and security interface	3.0 Hours
Chapter 11: Emergency Response and Crisis Management • The emergency organisation in action • Plans, checklists and supporting documentation • Scenario response principles • Decision-making under pressure • Emergency communications • Mass rescue operations • Accounting for persons • Post-incident management • Exercising the crisis organisation	3.25 Hours

Copyright 2018 – 2026 | Virtual Maritime Academy

Course Subject	Time
Chapter 12: Incident Reporting, Investigation and Analysis • Definitions and thresholds • Reporting obligations • Immediate response to an incident • Gathering evidence • Analysis • Corrective and preventive action • Writing the investigation report • Learning at fleet level • Just culture and legal exposure	2.75 Hours
Chapter 13: Surveys, Audits, Inspections and Port State Control • Statutory certification and surveys • Classification society surveys and conditions of class • Management system audits • Port State Control and equivalent regimes • The self-inspection programme • Managing findings to closure • Third-party inspections	2.25 Hours
Chapter 14: Safety Culture, Human Factors and Safety Leadership • Safety culture • Human factors that degrade safety performance • The multinational, multi-department crew • Influencing behaviour • The Safety Officer as leader • Personal development plan	1.75 Hour
Module 15: Consolidation and Final Examination • Integrated review of the course • Practice examination with feedback • Final examination	2.25 Hours
Module 16: Course Conclusion • Applying the course on board: the first 90 days • Maintaining currency and continuing development • Course evaluation and feedback • Certification and record of training	0.5 Hour

Course Final Assessment	**2.25 Hours**

Copyright 2018 – 2026 | Virtual Maritime Academy