

# Improving onboard security

BW Gas is among the first companies to implement the Ship Security Plan (SSP) electronically. This significantly enhances the process of continuously improving and updating the plan.

Following the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, the International Maritime Organization implemented a new security standard designed to reinforce the maritime industry against potential threats. Known as the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS), the new code came into effect in July 2004 and specifies security requirements for ship owners, ports and governments. BW Suez Boston was ISPS certified on 13 June 2003 as one of the world's very first vessels and today all BW vessels comply with the code.

ISPS requires vessels to have an SSP that outlines preventive security measures to be taken by the crew and what to do when a threat increases. The plan has to be up-to-date and continuously improved for vessels to pass class inspections. It is very challenging to keep papers up-to-date when each change requires a class stamp. Information like the name of company security officer (CSO), telephone numbers, security equipment and company name can change. Weaknesses in the plan, along with an increasing number of non-conformities, have been pointed out by class surveyors and port state inspectors. This has made it necessary to find a more dynamic way of updating SSPs.

## TECHNICAL SOLUTION

According to the ISPS code, the SSP may be kept in an electronic format provided



**VETTING VISITORS** As part of its security plan, BW Gas closely monitors who can access vessels.

it is protected from unauthorised access, deletion, destruction or amendments. BW Gas is now using a technical solution, established in its safety management system (TQM), to implement the electronic format. The electronic SSP is password protected, ensuring only authorised people can access it, and the vessels can only view information relating to them by using a unique password.

“By implementing the SSP in our TQM we ensure consistency and easy updates since changes will be done by e-mail replication. The electronic SSP consists of three parts; generic, ship specific and the ship security assessment. In addition, it contains the security circulars the company security officers use to

communicate security related information to the vessels,” says HSSEQ superintendent Pia Blom.

BW Lord was the first vessel to have an electronic version of the SSP onboard, approved by DNV on 24 September, and it will be gradually implemented across the rest of the fleet. In addition to the SSP, each vessel must also have a ship security file, which is continuously updated with information such as declaration of security and drills prior to each port entry. This file must be kept for three years and quickly becomes a substantial amount of paper. The file will now be replaced by an electronic version, and filed in DNV Navigator – a more environmentally-friendly and efficient solution. ●