Advanced Shipping and Port Agency Operations Management Training Course

02 - 06 Nov 2026

Lisbon

4500 € (Per Person)

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Course Introduction / Overview:

The global maritime industry is the backbone of international trade, a complex ecosystem where efficiency, accuracy, and compliance are paramount. This course provides a comprehensive exploration of advanced shipping and port agency operations, designed to equip professionals with the skills needed to navigate this dynamic environment. We delve into the critical functions that ensure smooth vessel turnaround, from pre-arrival planning to post-departure administration. The curriculum is informed by leading industry principles, such as those discussed by the renowned academic Dr. Martin Stopford in his seminal work, "Maritime Economics". Participants will move beyond theoretical knowledge to master the practical application of port call procedures, complex shipping documentation, and commercial negotiations. At BIG BEN Training Center, we have structured this program to cover every facet of the role, including ship husbandry, customs brokerage, and financial management of disbursement accounts. This training is an essential investment for anyone seeking to achieve operational excellence and strategic advantage in the competitive fields of shipping logistics and port management.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- Port Agents and Managers.
- Shipping Operations Coordinators and Executives.
- Vessel Operators and Schedulers.
- Chartering and Commercial Managers.
- Freight Forwarding Professionals.
- Logistics and Supply Chain Managers.
- Customs Clearance Brokers.
- Maritime Compliance Officers.
- Marine Superintendents.
- Personnel aspiring to a career in maritime operations.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Shipping Lines and Vessel Owners.
- Port Authorities and Terminal Operators.
- Ship Management Companies.
- Freight Forwarding and Logistics Companies.
- Commodity Trading Houses.
- Marine Insurance Firms.
- Maritime Legal and Consultancy Services.
- Oil and Gas Offshore Support Sector.
- Governmental bodies such as Maritime Administrations and Customs Authorities.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Operations Department.
- Logistics and Supply Chain Department.
- Commercial and Chartering Department.
- Marine and Technical Department.
- Finance and Accounting Department.
- Legal and Compliance Department.
- Procurement Department.
- Customer Service Department.

Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, the participants will have able to:

- Manage the entire port call process efficiently, from pre-arrival notifications to final departure clearance.
- Prepare and scrutinize all essential shipping documentation, including Bills of Lading and Statements of Fact.
- Interpret key clauses within charter party agreements to protect commercial interests.
- Calculate laytime, demurrage, and despatch with precision to avoid financial disputes.
- Handle complex port disbursement accounts and manage payments to vendors and authorities.
- Navigate intricate customs procedures and ensure full compliance with port state control inspections.
- Implement effective ship husbandry services to meet vessel and crew requirements.
- Develop strategies for port call optimization to reduce costs and improve turnaround times.
- Address and manage cargo claim and other operational challenges effectively.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be immersive, practical, and highly interactive, moving beyond traditional lecture formats. We believe in learning by doing. The course is built around a series of real-world case studies simulating complex port call scenarios, requiring participants to apply their knowledge to solve practical problems. Interactive workshops will focus on critical tasks such as calculating demurrage, preparing a disbursement account, and completing a Bill of Lading. Group discussions and collaborative exercises will encourage the sharing of experiences and perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of industry best practices. Our expert instructors facilitate sessions that blend foundational theories with hands-on application, ensuring that participants can immediately transfer their new skills to their workplace. Continuous feedback and Q&A sessions are integrated throughout the five days to clarify concepts and address specific challenges faced by the attendees in their professional roles, creating a dynamic and responsive learning environment.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Fundamentals of the Maritime Industry and Port Agency

- Introduction to the global shipping industry and its key players.
- The strategic role and responsibilities of a port agent.
- Understanding different types of vessels and cargoes.
- Key maritime terminology and abbreviations (e.g., LOA, Beam, Draft).
- Overview of international maritime conventions (SOLAS, MARPOL).
- The relationship between shipowners, charterers, and agents.
- Introduction to liner and tramp shipping services.

Unit Two: Mastering Port Call Operations and Documentation

- Pre-arrival planning and vessel nomination procedures.
- Preparing and issuing the Notice of Readiness (NOR).
- Coordination with port authorities, pilots, and tugs.
- Managing in-port vessel services and ship husbandry.
- The critical importance and structure of the Statement of Facts (SOF).
- Post-departure formalities and sailing clearance.
- Best practices in operational communication and reporting.

Unit Three: Commercial Aspects of Shipping and Cargo Management

- Types of charter parties (Voyage, Time, Bareboat).
- Analyzing key clauses in voyage charter agreements.
- The principles of laytime, demurrage, and despatch.
- Practical exercises in laytime calculation.
- Understanding and managing Bills of Lading (B/L).
- Freight calculations and payment procedures.
- Handling letters of indemnity and cargo claims.

Unit Four: Regulatory Compliance, Safety, and Financial Control

- Navigating national customs clearance procedures.
- The role of Port State Control (PSC) and preparing for inspections.
- Understanding the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code.
- Managing crew changes, repatriation, and welfare.
- Introduction to the port disbursement account (D/A).
- Controlling costs and verifying invoices from port service providers.
- Best practices for financial reporting to the principal.

Unit Five: Advanced Strategies and the Future of Port Operations

- Techniques for port call optimization and efficiency improvement.
- Managing challenging situations and emergency response.
- The impact of digitalization and smart ports on agency work.
- Introduction to sustainable shipping practices and environmental regulations.
- Advanced negotiation skills for port agents.
- Risk management in port agency operations.
- Final case study integrating all course concepts.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

As digitalization and automation create 'smart ports,' how must the traditional role of the port agent evolve to maintain relevance and add value in an increasingly data-driven maritime ecosystem?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This course distinguishes itself by focusing intensely on the practical, operational realities of port agency rather than purely theoretical knowledge. While many programs cover the basics, our curriculum delves into the complexities and nuances that define excellence in the field. Participants will not just learn what a disbursement account is; they will engage in exercises to build one, scrutinize invoices, and justify costs, mirroring the day-to-day financial responsibilities of an agent. The training moves beyond defining demurrage to conducting complex laytime calculations based on real-world scenarios with contractual ambiguities. We emphasize strategic problem-solving, from handling unexpected Port State Control inspections to managing last-minute crew change complications. The course structure is a comprehensive journey, seamlessly connecting foundational maritime principles in Unit One to advanced optimization strategies in Unit Five. This holistic approach ensures that graduates leave not just with knowledge, but with the confidence and competence to manage any port call with maximum efficiency and professionalism.