



NEWS BRIEF

HTW 9



ABS



NEWS BRIEF: HTW 9

The IMO Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) held its 9th session from February 6 to 10, 2023. This Brief provides an overview of the more significant issues progressed at this session.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- New STCW Convention Provisions on Bullying and Harassment
- New Draft STCW-F Code
- Guidelines on Mitigation Measures for HFO in Arctic Waters
- Guidelines on Use of Electronic Seafarers' Certificates

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DEVELOPMENTS UNDER THE 1978 STCW CONVENTION AND CODE

New Provisions on Bullying and Harassment

The Sub-Committee finalized draft amendments to the STCW Code which introduce a new competence on prevention and response to bullying and harassment, including sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH). This training will be included as a part of the basic training requirements. The training will require individuals to demonstrate competence in prevention of bullying and harassment.

Additionally, the Sub-Committee noted that provisions on bullying and harassment already existed in the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006, Guideline B4.3.1 and it was agreed to add a reference to these MLC provisions when next updating Model Course 1.21, *Personal Safety and Social Responsibility*.

Next Steps: These amendments to the STCW Code will be presented to MSC 107 (Jun. 2023) for approval and subsequent adoption at MSC 108 (May 2024).

Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group (JTWG) to Identify and Address Seafarers' Issues and the Human Element

As previously agreed at the 125th session of the IMO Council and the 343rd session of the ILO Governing Body, a Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group (JTWG) has been established to coordinate efforts on improving the state of working conditions and seafarer wellness issues across the maritime sector.

The Sub-Committee noted that the first meeting of JTWG took place from 13 to 15 December 2022, and developed guidelines on seafarer abandonment, and that the outcome of the meeting would be reported to the ILO Governing Body and IMO Legal Committee in 2023. The second meeting of JTWG is scheduled to take place at the end of 2023 and is expected to consider the issue of bullying and harassment in the maritime sector, including sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH).

Next Steps: A cooperative development of policy recommendations and ILO/IMO guidelines on addressing bullying and harassment is expected to be developed at the next JTWG meeting, likely in December 2023.

Comprehensive Review of the STCW Convention and Code

In preparation for future work, the Sub-Committee agreed on aims and principles to guide the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code. The goal of this review will be to identify both new and outdated seafarer competencies and proficiency requirements to provide a standard that is better adapted to technological, regulatory, operational and other related industry developments while also looking for opportunities to improve the clarity and consistent application of the STCW Convention and Code.

At this stage, several items for development have been agreed to include in the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code:

- 1) Development of a relevant competence in psychological safety
- 2) Further consideration on requirements for maintenance of the standard of competence for preventing bullying and harassment (i.e., refresher training)
- 3) Introduce cultural and generational gap awareness in the existing competence of "Contribute to effective human relationships onboard ships" in table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code

Next Steps: A target completion year of 2026 has been assigned for the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code. A correspondence group will be established to work intersessionally and finalize the scope of work for this comprehensive review.



DEVELOPMENTS UNDER THE 1995 STCW-F CONVENTION

New Draft STCW-F Code

Concluding the work of several sessions for a comprehensive review of the 1995 STCW-F Convention, the Sub-Committee finalized amendments to the Convention as well as a new STCW-F Code to support the implementation of the Convention for seafarers employed on fishing vessels. Numerous revisions to the STCW-F Convention have been made to parallel the scope of the STCW Convention, and to provide a standard better adapted to technological, regulatory, operational and other related industry developments. Similarly, the new STCW-F Code is structured similarly to the STCW Code and is intended to establish clear standards for training, certification and watchkeeping for fishing vessel personnel.

The Sub-Committee took on this work to review and update seafarer training standards for fishing vessels in support of recent efforts at the IMO to see the 2012 Cape Town Agreement enter into force and establish international standards for the safe operation of fishing vessels. For entry into force, the Agreement needs to be ratified by 22 States with an aggregate number of 3,600 fishing vessels operating on the high seas. The current number of ratifications stands at 17 States, with a total of around 1,925 eligible fishing vessels. The IMO is currently campaigning for Member States to ratify the Agreement and have it enter into force in the near future.

Next Steps: The new draft STCW-F Code will be progressed to MSC 107 (Jun. 2023) for approval and subsequent adoption at MSC 108 (May 2024) in conjunction with related revisions to the 1995 STCW-F Convention.

Consequential Revisions Due to Modernization of the GMDSS

As part of the comprehensive review of the 1995 STCW-F Convention and the consequential amendments to the Convention, several amendments were made to reflect the multiple radiocommunication standards, which have been recently revised as part of the modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). In the process of incorporating current GMDSS standards and requirements into the 1995 STCW-F Convention and Code, it was noted that the term “GMDSS” had not been previously defined in either the 2012 Cape Town Agreement or the 1995 STCW-F Convention. Defining this term would include a reference to SOLAS Chapter IV, which currently does not apply to fishing vessels, and thus might create a source of confusion. Nevertheless, it was agreed to add the new term “GMDSS” within the STCW-F Convention and Code and request guidance on this from the Maritime Safety Committee.

Next Steps: The IMO Secretariat will review and provide advice to MSC 107 (Jun. 2023) on the legal aspects of using the term “GMDSS” in the context of the 1995 STCW-F Convention and Code and MSC 107 will decide how these radiocommunication standards should be applied to fishing vessels.

Guidelines on Medical Examination of Fishing Vessel Personnel

The Sub-Committee finalized the new draft *Guidelines on the Medical Examination of Fishing Vessel Personnel*, which were developed based on the existing *Guidelines on the Medical Examination of Seafarers* (STCW.7/Circ.19/Rev.1). These guidelines have been developed to aid in ensuring that the standards of medical fitness for fishing vessel personnel are effectively implemented under the 1995 STCW-F Convention and Code.



The Sub-Committee also acknowledged that the ILO and IMO had previously agreed on the establishment of a joint ILO/IMO Working Group to develop joint ILO/IMO guidelines on the medical examination of fishing vessel personnel, and this group was scheduled to meet in the first quarter of 2024. After discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed that several sections of the draft guidelines would be left in square brackets to be addressed by the ILO/IMO Working Group on this subject.

Next Steps: The Sub-Committee has authorized the Joint ILO/IMO Working Group on the Medical Examination of Fishing Vessel Personnel to review and finalize these draft guidelines and submit them to MSC 108 (May 2024) for approval.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STCW CONVENTION

Review of the Draft Guidelines on Mitigation Measures to Reduce Risk of Use and Carriage for Use of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) as Fuel by Ships in Arctic Waters

The 8th session of the Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) sub-committee meeting (Mar. 2021) developed draft guidelines related to the amendments to MARPOL Annex I, which prohibit the use and carriage for the use of HFO in Arctic waters (Resolution MEPC.329(76)). The guidelines will be considered by Administrations of Arctic coastal states when considering issuance of waivers from the ban on use/carriage for use of HFO in Arctic waters, as permitted under the new MARPOL Annex I / Regulation 43A. In addition, the guidelines contain a set of practical recommendations regarding what mitigation measures should be taken to minimize the risk of an HFO spill, organized in two sections – Section I for operators planning voyages in the Arctic using HFO and Section II for Administrations of the Arctic coastal States.

To support the finalization of these guidelines, the HTW Sub-Committee was requested to review the provisions for familiarization, training and drills in Sections I and II of the draft guidelines. Among the various training aspects, seafarers whose duties involve handling HFO on board ships operating in Arctic waters should receive training on safety, bunkering and fuel transfer procedures, spill prevention and response, fire-fighting system limitations related to HFO and overall familiarization with the ship-specific Polar Water Operations Manual.

Next Steps: The revisions to the draft guidelines developed by the Sub-Committee will be progressed to PPR 10 (Apr. 2023) for finalization and subsequent submission of the complete draft guidelines to a future MEPC session for approval.

Draft Guidelines on the Use of Electronic Certificates of Seafarers

At the previous session, the Sub-Committee finalized amendments to the STCW Convention and Code to introduce language recognizing and permitting the use of seafarers' certificates and endorsements produced in electronic form. These amendments were approved at MSC 106 (Nov. 2022) and are pending formal adoption.

To support these amendments, the Sub-Committee finalized the associated draft *Guidelines on the Use of Electronic Certificates of Seafarers* to clarify the responsibilities of parties involved in cases of recognition of certificates. Administrations issuing electronic certificates or endorsements should also provide for the verification of such credentials for all parties involved. It is further specified that verification of the authenticity of an electronic certificate should be undertaken via an Internet connection that should be available on the ship. The seafarer should hold the minimum required data on board, which should be defined by the Administration and would be necessary in order to initiate a verification procedure. Verification may be obtained through an application, approved stored data, approved unique tracking number, approved seafarer identification number, Quick



Response (QR) code, any combination of the above items, or whatever is deemed suitable for this purpose and approved by the Administration.

Next Steps: The above-noted amendments to the STCW Convention and Code will be adopted at MSC 107 (Jun. 2023) and the draft *Guidelines on the Use of Electronic Certificates of Seafarers* will be presented to MSC 107 to be approved in conjunction with the Convention and Code amendments. Prior to this, the 47th session of the Facilitation Committee (Mar. 2023) will review these guidelines for consistency with the existing *Guidelines on the Use of Electronic Certificates* (FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2)

DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL TRAINING COURSES

Since the adoption of the 1978 STCW Convention, the IMO has maintained a catalog of Model Training Courses to help Member States implement the Convention and facilitate access to the knowledge required by seafarers operating modern vessels. The model courses each include a course framework and outline, a detailed teaching syllabus identifying learning objectives and competencies and guidance notes for instructors.

At this session, the Sub-Committee made progress on new and updated IMO Model Training Courses as follows:

New Model Courses Receiving Validation at HTW 9

The Sub-Committee validated the following two new model training courses at this session:

Course No.	Description
NEW	Passenger Safety, Cargo Safety and Hull Integrity Training <ul style="list-style-type: none">Based on section A-V/2, paragraph 5 of the STCW Code, as set out in resolutions MSC.416(97) and MSC.417(97)
NEW	Engine Room Resource Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">Based on watchkeeping functions in table A-III/1 and chapter VIII of the STCW Code

Next Steps: Having been validated, these courses will be available for Member States to develop detailed training programs, to effectively implement the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention.

Existing Model Course Updates Receiving Validation at HTW 9

The Sub-Committee validated the following eight updated model training courses at this session:

Course No.	Description
1.20	Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting
1.22	Bridge Resource Management
1.23	Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats Other Than Fast Rescue Boats
1.24	Proficiency in Fast Rescue Boats
2.03	Advanced Training in Fire Fighting
3.25	Security Awareness Training for All Port Facility Personnel
3.26	Security Training for Seafarers with Designated Security Duties
3.27	Security Awareness Training for All Seafarers



Next Steps: Having been validated, these courses will be available for Member States to develop detailed training programs, to effectively implement the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention.

Future Model Course Validation Planned for HTW 10 and 11

The Sub-Committee agreed to revise the following five model training courses, for validation at HTW 10 (Feb.2024) and HTW 11 (Feb. 2025):

Course No.	Description	Planned for Validation at
1.32	Operational Use of Integrated Bridge Systems Including Integrated Navigation Systems	HTW 10
1.35	Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator	HTW 10
3.20	Company Security Officer	HTW 11
3.21	Port Facility Security Officer	HTW 11
3.23	Actions to be Taken to Prevent Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery	HTW 11

Next Steps: Correspondence groups have been established to progress these course updates intersessionally for subsequent validation at HTW 10 and 11.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Availability of Onboard Training Opportunity

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Correspondence Group on Maritime Training and discussed difficulties faced by Member States in implementing mandatory seagoing service provisions under the STCW Convention due to a lack of opportunities for seagoing service (i.e., “training berths”) to trainee seafarers in need of this onboard experience. Acknowledging difficulties encountered by trainees at varying levels in finding available berths to complete training requirements, several proposals were discussed to address the lack of opportunities in the market for such training:

- 1) A proposal for ships to provide a minimum number of trainee berths was discussed, as well as a proposal for ship management companies to provide trainee berths as a percentage of their total fleet berths. However, these were not supported due to vessel manning implications which should not be addressed in the context of the STCW Convention.
- 2) A proposal for allowing simulator training to fulfill part of the required onboard training obligations was discussed but was cautioned against due to the importance of the experience on board a ship, including familiarization with systems, equipment, watchkeeping, real environment, severe weather and other conditions.

Next Steps: Because this matter of facilitating mandatory seagoing service for trainees is central to the overall functioning of the STCW Convention, the Sub-Committee will request the Committee that this be added to the scope of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and removed as an individual work item of the sub-committee. Discussion on this subject will continue at HTW 10 (Feb. 2024).

Compulsory Wearing of Personal Flotation Devices on Fishing Vessels

The Sub-Committee received an analysis referred by the III 8 sub-committee meeting that highlighted a correlation between a low incidence of fishing vessel personnel wearing personal flotation devices (PFDs) on upper decks



while at sea, and a low survivability rate in man overboard incidents on fishing vessels. The analysis suggested that a higher participation rate in fishing vessel personnel wearing PFDs would result in a higher survival rate in man-overboard incidents.

Next Steps: The Sub-Committee noted the recommendation to rapidly introduce compulsory wearing of PFDs on the upper decks of all fishing vessels while at sea. However, this was ultimately considered to be a procedural matter to be addressed by companies and skippers of fishing vessels. The Sub-Committee made clear its position that it encourages fishing vessel companies and skippers to ensure that fishing vessel personnel wear PFDs on the upper decks of all fishing vessels while at sea.



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