

Standards of training certification and watchkeeping



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I have been requested to explain the Convention covering Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for ship's crew 1973 to 2010. This will include the responsibilities of master and crew, crewing agencies, crew training and the role of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF).

The IMO (International Maritime Organization) was established in 1948 under the name IMCO (Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization). It was created to improve safety at sea, efficient navigation and prevention of marine pollution from ships.

The IMO does not create legislation, it creates conventions to vote the rules by member states.

IMO's first task was about new version of Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) in 1960. The purpose of the convention was facilitation of international maritime traffic, load lines and the carriage of dangerous goods while the system of measuring the tonnage of ships was revised.

In despite of safety was the most important title for IMO, pollution appeared. The oil trading was growing and thousands tons of giant ships were carrying them port by port. After the Torrey Canyon disaster in 1967, which is 120.000 tonnes of oil spilled to the west coast of England, the problem got the attention.

After the disaster of Torrey Canyon, the IMO spent their next few years to prevent accidents and to minimize their consequences. IMO considered also pollutions from routine operations on board, for instance avoid to throw oily

staffs and dirty oil in to the sea, cleaning of oil cargo tanks, spilled the dirty water after cleaning engine room etc.

In 1973-78 the International Convention came together to discuss not only prevention of pollution from ships, but also pollution by chemical, sewage, garbage, goods in packed form and air pollution.

IMO adopted 2 treaties in 1969 and 1971 . With those treaties, victims can have compensation much more easily than had been before . In 1992 and 2000 both treaties were amended again to increase the limits of compensation. IMSO (International Mobile Satellite Organization) also initiated in 1970s, which has huge beneficial of radio and other messages to ships. In 1988, GMDSS (the Global Maritime Distress and Safety at Sea) has adopted. In 1999, GMDSS became fully operational on sea.

In 1990s, two important attempts adopted by IMO which effect human element in shipping. International Safety Management Code adopted on 1 July 1998 for particular ships, on 1 July 2002 became applicable for all ships above 500 GT.

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1995 amendments entered into force on 1 February 1997. With this amendments IMO had the power to check the party country's government actions about their requests from them.

In the 2000s, conventions made 3 amendments about marine environment, which are;

- Anti Fouling Systems (AFS 2001)

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- Ballast Water Management (BWM 2004)
- Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.

And also in the 2000s, IMO made important amendments for maritime security, including the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. In 2005, Suppression of Unlawful Acts (SUA) has entered into force by IMO.

IMO's mission statement: Safe, Secure and Efficient Shipping on Clean Oceans.

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) was adopted first in 1978 at the IMO (International Maritime Organization) conference in London and entered into force in 1984. It was significantly amended by IMO in 1995.

The first STCW convention established in 1978. Before convention, governments were established individually their own standards of training, certification and watch keeping of officers and ratings and normally without any reference practice in other countries. The convention brought the minimum standards of watchkeeping , training and certification for seafarers. The countries attend mandatory to the conventions.

IMO did not deal with the manning levels in this convention, however it has covered regulation Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) in 1974. In 1981 SOLAS supported with A. 481(XII), than in 1999 it has replaced with A. 890(21) principles of safe manning.

One of the most important feature about this convention is; there will be no more favourable treatment against ships of non party state than ships of party state. The reason why the convention has such a wide acceptance is the difficulties when non states parties visit the ports of states parties. After 2000 the convention had 135 parties and this is almost 97. 53 percent of world shipping.

In 1992, after M/V Aegean Sea grounded outside of the Spanish port La Corunna IMO has decided to do revision on 1978 convention.

(After grounded, the ship spilled more than 70, 000 tons of oil into the ocean)

The U. S. suggested to IMO's International Safety Committee (MSC) that, the review needs to be specially on insuring fitness of watchstandards and the role of human element in maritime casualties. After some discussions, the committee has decided to consider about personnel training and practice implementations rather than improving ship equipments and standards. The MSC hired their subordinate committee, the Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW), to consider and resolve about how to train the personnel for minimum casualties in maritime caused people.

The IMO has started to consider about exhaustive revision of STCW in 1993. A small number of consultants prepared some documents about some attitude of the personnel could be improved to higher degree with some proper training and practices on shipboard. The consultants have finished their draft reports and some suggested amendments to offer STCW

convention including personnel training besides that a proposal to develop a new STCW code. Discussion and modifying the proposals took 2 years.

Some of the most important amendments are ;

1. Increasing the port state control's responsibility
2. Maximum work and minimum rest periods for watchkeeping personnel
3. Quality Standards Systems (QSS) qualification of training and certification procedures
4. More responsibilities for parties of states, whose issuing licences and flag countries who is employing foreign nationalities to make sure that the seafarers has sufficient qualification
5. Keep in touch for information with IMO to mutual oversight of standards

The Convention came together at IMO headquarters in London to adopt the amendments on 7th of July in 1995. On 1st of February in 1997, the amendments entered force. After 5 years, by February 1 2002, full implementation was required for all states. Between that period, Mariners had time to replace their qualification certificate till end of 1st February 2002. 1 August 1998 IMO required from mariners to enter the training programs to improve their qualification of standards.

After the last amendments, seafarers have to have enough competence of basic fire fighting, personal survival techniques, elementary first aid and personal safety and social responsibility. The purposes of this amendments are to make sure that the mariners have enough skill and knowledge when they have emergency situation, they can respond appropriately.

Also the new amendments will require; " watching and assessment of achievement seafarers", by instructors. Instructor and assessors will be qualified for the type and level of training assessment to ensure that they have enough competence to guide the personnel to achieve defined objectives. The coast guard has a guidance for use in qualifying and managing training and assessment personnel.

STCW Convention chapters

Chapter 1: General provisions

Chapter 2: Master and deck department

Chapter 3: Engine department

Chapter 4: Radiocommunication and radio personnel

Chapter 5: Special training requirements for personnel on certain types of ships

Chapter 6: Emergency, occupational safety, medical care and survival functions

Chapter 7: Alternative certification

Chapter 8: Watchkeeping

The convention discussed about STCW code as well. Some of requirements enlarged and described in the code. The list of minimum requirements for seafarers are given in detail.

Part A : Obligatory

Part B : This code comprises the guidance to help how to achieve the implements for Parties. Measures are not obligatory. Purposes of the examples are to show how the requirements are complied with each other, and how certain they are.

STCW Code Part A

The standards of competence are separated into 7 titles for abilities;

1. Navigation
2. Cargo handling and stowage
3. Controlling the operation of the ship and care for persons onboard
4. Marine Engineering
5. Electrical, electronic and control engineering
6. Maintenance and repair
7. Radiocommunications.

The levels of responsibilities are;

1. Management level
2. Operational level
3. Support level

The purpose of the standard of competence levels are for seafarers to achieve the objectives with proper performance on shipboard in accordance with the international criteria.

The 3 levels of responsibility on board are as follows :

Master, chief officer, chief engineer, second engineer ensure that functions are performed correctly; at operational level a direct control is maintained over delegate functions and support level perform assigned tasks.

The 3 functions of the master include;

1. To ensure safe navigation of the vessel including safety of crew, vessel and cargo.
2. Responsible for discipline and medical issues. The master will establish contact with professional help ashore when needed.
3. He is the responsible person on behalf of the owner against everybody on ship and shore.

The owner's responsibilities are as follows;

The owner is responsible that all crew has fully certificated, ship manned correctly, the ship equipped well and they are ready on shore for emergency situations.

Task 3 . Key Functions of ship management

1) Technical;

Managers will provide competent personnel to supervise maintenance of the ship. They will arrange dry dockings, repairs, alterations and maintenance of the ship. They will organise provision of stores, appointment of surveyors and implementation of the international safety management code.

2) Crewing;

The Managers will arrange suitable qualified crew that meet the requirements of STCW. They will arrange payroll, insurance and pension administration. All crew must be engaged in accordance with the laws of flag state. The managers will arrange to engage crew that have passed medical and can speak English to enable them to conduct their duties. They will arrange transport embarkation, repatriation, training, union negotiation and operate drug and alcohol policy.

3) Provisions;

The manager will arrange adequate provisions of the right type to meet the dietary needs of the crew. Provisions will be organised during cargo operations to prevent delay to the vessel.

4) Accounting;

The managers will arrange an accounting system which provides owners with budget est actual costs, expand time and income.

5) Sale and Purchase;

The managers will provide a sale and purchase facility for buying and selling ships.

6) Bunkering;

The managers will arrange delivery of the correct quantity and quality of fuel to the ship. Bunkers will be supplied at competitive prices.

7) Chartering;

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The managers will provide a chartering function including voyage estimating, market reports, market trends, fixing ships and production of fixture details.

8) Operation;

Managers will provide ships with voyage instructions, appoint agents, collect freight hire and despatch demurrage money. Managers will arrange the payment of freights, hires and other monies to owners arising from employment of their ships.

9) Insurance;

The managers will arrange adequate hull and machinery, P&I and war risk cover the vessel. They will also handle claims arising under the policies.

10) Administration;

Managers will arrange to monitor payment of fees by owners. They will discuss the terms of the management agreement with owners and include other ships from the fleet where their duties are required.

4) The responsibilities of master and crew

The explanation duties and responsibilities of master and crew on a commercial ship is as below ;

Deck Department;

- Master ; He/she is the responsible person who has to deliver the ship safely, ensure that all the crew member perform legally to the requirements

of the ship's owner. We may say, he can act on behalf of the ship's owner onboard . If there is not third officer on board, he/she stands 08-12 and 20-24 navigation watch (If there is not third officer on board).

- Chief Officer ; He/she is the responsible person of the deck department, cargo operations, stability of the ship, maintenance of the all deck and accommodation apart from engine room, discipline of the deck crew and welfare of the all crew on board. He/she stands 04-08 and 16-20 navigation watch.

- Second Officer ; He/she is the responsible of the navigational devices, updating charts and other books, route plan and training the crew. He/she stands 12-16 and 00-04 navigation watch.

- Third Officer ; He/she is the least experienced person on deck about navigation. He/she prepare all devices for navigation, check all safety equipments including lifeboats, inspecting gear lockers. Other duties are; helps second officer, cargo watch and he stands 8-12 and 20-00 navigation watch instead of Master.

- Bosun ; He/she is the most experienced and knowledgeable about deck duties. He/she is responsible from A/B and O/S. He takes the daily duties from chief officer and tell to what to do to A/B and O/S.

- A/B (Able Seaman) ; A/B works under the bosun's instructions . Also they stands navigation watch, works with ropes while manoeuvring , stands watch at the ports etc.

- O/S (Ordinary Seaman) ; O/S works under the bosun's instructions and they do the same duties as A/B do.

Engineering Department;

- Chief Engineer ; Chief engineer is the responsible the operation and maintenance of all machinery and equipments. He may paid the same with master, but he cannot take the responsible of commanding the ship. If there is not a fourth engineer in the ship than he stands 8-12 and 20-00 navigation watch.

- Second Engineer ; He/she is the responsible of daily maintenance and also responsible from discipline of all engine department. He/she stands 04-08 and 16-20 navigation watch.

- Third Engineer ; He/she is the responsible of recording some papers. He/she is responsible from electrical maintenance, sewage recording, lube oil, bilge, and oily water separation systems. He/she stands 00-04 and 12-16 navigation watch.

- Fourth Engineer ; He/she is the responsible same as everything the third engineer do. He/she stands navigational watch instead of Chief Engineer.

- Qualified Member-Engine Department/QMED ; He/she works under the chief engineer's instructions. The most experienced in the engine department.

- Oiler ; He/she works under the chief engineer's instructions. He/she is less experienced than Qualified Member-Engine Department/QMED, more experienced than Wiper.

- Wiper ; Wiper works under the chief engineer's instructions. Wiper is the least experienced in the engine department.

Electro technical Officer ; He/she is the responsible from maintenance of the all electrical systems on the ship. He/she takes his/her duties from chief engineer and he has to be ready to take command 24 hours on the ship.

Cook ; He/she is the responsible person from preparing food and kitchen stuff.

Steward ; He/she is the responsible person from cleaning all accommodation places and also kitchen stuffs and serving foods to crew.

5) 10 Functions of a Crewing Agency

1. Ship owners must ensure that crew members meet the standard of STCW and all the members has to speak English fluently and understand it. Also perform their duties safely.
2. For the enlistment of crew members, local crewing agencies and government authorities must come together to arrange mutual information.
3. The crewing agencies must be keep in touch with the local collages to ensure that the crew members train and promote advancement.
4. Crewing agencies must be able to pay the crew members salaries in local currency.
5. Crewing agencies must ensure that the payments of the crew members has to paid in accordance with the policies of the appropriate authority.

6. They are ready to agree with the ship owners or managers via contracts including Crewman A and Crewman B. They have to ensure that all the crew members have done successfully their medical examinations and they did deal well with the drug and alcohol policy.
7. The crew agencies have been exist for many years and they have been training and supervising crew members efficiency.
8. They have to be able to arrange a labour pool and able to do conducting union negotiations.
9. They have to be able to arrange crew members joining and leaving times without delay to the ocean ship.
10. Accordance the need of the ships, they have to be able to arrange appropriate engagement with ship owners and find the solutions.

6) Role Of the ITF

The aims of the ITF are ;

1. Promote respect for trade union and human rights worldwide
2. To work for peace based on social justice and economic progress
3. To help its affiliated unions defend the interests of their members
4. To provide research and information services to its affiliates
5. To provide general assistance to transport workers in difficulties

All the traditional seafaring nations have well-established maritime trade unions which have negotiated with the employers, usually on a national basis. However the ITF are concerned that some Owners may register their vessels with flags of convenience and may thereby reduce living standards

and salary levels onboard these ships. The ITF has grown in size representing more than 400 trade unions over about 100 countries with more than 4 million transport workers. In 1950 at their Stuttgart Conference, the ITF adopted an action plan which in principle required all Owners to adhere to certain defined minimum conditions. Failure to do this would result in boycott action which it was hoped would bring such Owners to the negotiating table. The ITF have retained much of this action plan and enforces this against offending Owners.

The ITF established at their conference in Vienna a standard agreement for use by ships whose crews were not covered by an agreement properly negotiated between union and employer. Such agreements include provision for contributions to an ITF fund set up to sustain the campaign and to provide, in addition, a charity to support seaman's missions and other forms of welfare in port and onboard ship. The ITF pursue those owners who fail to achieve minimum standards to ensure they comply with the terms of their standard agreement.

Conclusion

The company must ensure they engage crew which comply with the requirements of STCW. Crewing replacements are also needed with the ITF to avoid vessels being delayed as a result of crew wage disputes.

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