

CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON
STANDARDS OF TRAINING,
CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING
FOR SEAFARERS, 1978
Agenda item 7

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**CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE SEAFARERS'
TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING (STCW) CODE**

Review of table [A-I/9-2] of the STCW Code

Medical Standards for Seafarers

Submitted by the United States

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document contains a proposal to transfer table A-I/9-2 (Assessment of minimum entry level and in-service physical abilities for seafarers) to part B of the STCW Code and to amend sections A-I/9 and B-I/9 accordingly
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	5
<i>High-level action:</i>	5.2
<i>Planned output:</i>	5.2.2.1
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 5
<i>Related document:</i>	STCW/CONF.2/4

Background

1 The Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW), at its forty-first session (11 to 15 January 2010), finalized the draft text of amendments to the STCW Convention and the Code with the view to adoption by the Conference of STCW Parties in June 2010.

2 At STW 41, when considering the table for assessment of minimum entry level and in-service physical abilities for seafarers, delegations raised concerns with the transfer of the table from its previous location in part B to part A, since the content of the Guidance did not easily transpose into a mandatory provision. STW 41 was unable to agree on the placement of this table and, therefore, placed the table in square brackets for consideration by the Conference.

Proposals

3 The United States believes that the current text in section A-I/9 and the placement of the table of assessment of minimum entry level and in-service physical abilities for seafarers in part A does not provide the necessary discretion that medical practitioners should be afforded

when conducting seafarer evaluations. Furthermore, we are of the opinion that retaining the current text and table section A-I/9 may inhibit the work of the joint working group relating to the revised guidelines on the medical examinations of seafarers.

4 Therefore, the United States proposes to transfer table A-I/9-2 to part B and to further amend the text in sections A-I/9 and B-I/9 and the notes associated with the table in support of the transfer as set out in annexes 1 and 2.

Action requested of the Conference

5 The Conference is invited to consider the proposal and decide as appropriate.

ANNEX 1

**DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO PART A OF THE SEAFARERS' TRAINING,
CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING (STCW) CODE**

Note: The draft amended text of the STCW Code (STCW/CONF.2/4) has been used as the base text. The proposed new text is shown **shaded** and proposed deleted text is shown as ~~strikethrough~~.

Section A-I/9*Medical standards*

1 Parties, when establishing standards of medical fitness for seafarers as required by regulation I/9, shall take into account the minimum in-service eyesight standards set out in table A-I/9-1, ~~the minimum physical abilities set out in table [A-I/9-2]~~ and the guidance given in section B-I/9 of this Code, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers. These standards may differentiate between those persons seeking to start a career at sea and those seafarers already serving at sea. In the former case, for example, it might be appropriate to designate higher standards in certain areas, while for seafarers already serving at sea some reduction may be made. These standards shall also take into account the need to screen for any impairment or disease that will limit the ability of the seafarer to effectively perform his/her duties during the validity period of the medical certificate.

2 Medical fitness examinations of seafarers shall be conducted by appropriately qualified and experienced medical practitioners recognized by the Party.

3 Each Party shall establish provisions for recognizing medical practitioners. A register of recognized medical practitioners shall be maintained by the Party and made available to other Parties, companies and seafarers on request.

4 Each Party shall provide guidance for the conduct of medical fitness examinations and issuing of medical certificates, taking into account provisions set out in section B-I/9 of this Code. Each Party shall determine the amount of discretion given to recognized medical practitioners on the application of the medical standards, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers, except that there shall not be discretion with respect to the minimum eyesight standards for distance vision aided, near/immediate vision and colour vision in table A-I/9-1.

5 Each Party shall establish processes and procedures to enable seafarers who, after examination, do not meet the medical fitness standards or have had a limitation imposed on their ability to work, in particular with respect to time, field of work or trading area, to have their case reviewed in line with that Party's provisions for appeal.

6 The medical certificate provided for in regulation I/9, paragraph 3 shall include the following information as a minimum:

- .1 Authorizing authority** and the requirements under which the document is issued

.2 Seafarer information

- .2.1 Name: *(Last, first, middle)*
- .2.2 Date of birth: *(day/month/year)*
- .2.3 Gender: *(Male/Female)*
- .2.4 Nationality

.3 Declaration of the recognized medical practitioner

- .3.1 Confirmation that identification documents were checked at the point of examination: *Y/N*
- .3.2 Hearing meets the standards in STCW A-I/9: *Y/N*
- .3.3 Unaided hearing satisfactory? *Y/N*
- .3.4 Visual acuity meets standards in STCW A-I/9? *Y/N*
- .3.5 Colour vision¹ meets standards in STCW A-I/9? *Y/N*
 - .3.5.1 Date of last colour vision test
- .3.6 Fit for look-out duties? *Y/N*
- .3.7 No limitations or restrictions on fitness? *Y/N*
If “N”, specify limitations or restrictions
- .3.8 Is the seafarer free from any medical condition likely to be aggravated by service at sea or to render the seafarer unfit for such service or to endanger the health of other persons on board?: *Y/N*
- .3.9 Date of examination: *(day/month/year)*
- .3.10 Expiry date of certificate: *(day/month/year)*

.4 Details of the issuing authority

- .4.1 Official stamp (including name) of the issuing authority
- .4.2 Signature of the authorized person

.5 Seafarer’s signature – *confirming that the seafarer has been informed of the content of the certificate and of the right to a review in accordance with paragraph 5 of section A-I/9*

7 Medical certificates shall be in the official language of the issuing country. If the language used is not English, the text shall include a translation into that language.

¹ Note: Colour vision assessment only needs to be conducted every six years.

Table A-I/9-4 – Minimum in-service eyesight standards for seafarers

STCW Convention regulation	Category of seafarer	Distance vision Aided ¹		Near/immediate vision	Colour vision ³	Visual fields ⁴	Night blindness ⁴	Diplopia (double vision) ⁴
		One eye	Other eye	Both eyes together, aided or unaided				
I/11 II/1 II/2 II/3 II/4 II/5 VII/2	Masters, deck officers and ratings required to undertake look-out duties	0.5 ²	0.5	Vision required for ship's navigation (e.g., chart and nautical publication reference, use of bridge instrumentation and equipment, and identification of aids to navigation)	See Note 5	Normal Visual fields	Vision required to perform all necessary functions in darkness without compromise	No significant condition evident
I/11 III/1 III/2 III/3 III/4 III/5 III/6 III/7 VII/2	All engineer officers, electro-technical officers, electro-technical ratings and ratings forming part of an engine-room watch	0.4	0.4	Vision required to read instruments in close proximity, to operate equipment, and to identify systems/ components as necessary	See Note 6	Sufficient visual fields	Vision required to perform all necessary functions in darkness without compromise	No significant condition evident
I/11 IV/2	GMDSS Radio operators	0.4	0.4	Vision required to read instruments in close proximity, to operate equipment, and to identify systems/ components as necessary	See Note 6	Sufficient visual fields	Vision required to perform all necessary functions in darkness without compromise	No significant condition evident

Notes:

- ¹ Values given in Snellen decimal notation.
- ² A value of at least 0.7 in one eye is recommended to reduce the risk of undetected underlying eye disease.
- ³ As defined in the *International Recommendations for Colour Vision Requirements for Transport* by the Commission Internationale de l'Eclairage (CIE-143-2001).
- ⁴ Subject to assessment by a clinical vision specialist where indicated by initial examination findings.
- ⁵ CIE colour vision standard 1 or 2.
- ⁶ CIE colour vision standard 1, 2 or 3.

**[Table A-1/9-2
Assessment of minimum entry level and in-service physical abilities for seafarers³**

Shipboard task, function event or condition³	Related physical ability	A medical examiner should be satisfied that the candidate⁴
Routine movement around vessel: — on moving deck — between levels — between compartments <i>Note 1 applies to this row</i>	Maintain balance and move with agility Climb up and down vertical ladders and stairways Step over coamings (e.g., 600 mm high) Open and close watertight doors	Has no disturbance in sense of balance. Does not have any impairment or disease that prevents relevant movements and physical activities. Is, without assistance ⁵ , able to: — climb vertical ladders and stairways — step over high sills — manipulate door closing systems
Routine tasks on board: — Use of hand tools — Movement of ship's stores — Overhead work — Valve operation — Standing a four hour watch — Working in confined spaces — Responding to alarms, warnings and instructions — Verbal communication <i>Note 1 applies to this row</i>	Strength, dexterity and stamina to manipulate mechanical devices Lift, pull and carry a load (e.g., 18 kg) Reach upwards Stand, walk and remain alert for an extended period Work in constricted spaces and move through restricted openings (e.g., 600 mm × 600 mm) Visually distinguish objects, shapes and signals Hear warnings and instructions Give a clear spoken description	Does not have a defined impairment or diagnosed medical condition that reduces ability to perform routine duties essential to the safe operation of the vessel. Has ability to: — work with arms raised — stand and walk for an extended period — enter confined space — fulfil eyesight standards (A-1/9-1) — fulfil hearing standards set by competent authority or take account of international guidelines — hold normal conversation
Emergency duties ⁶ on board: — Escape — Fire fighting — Evacuation <i>Note 2 applies to this row</i>	Don a lifejacket or immersion suit Escape from smoke filled spaces Take part in fire fighting duties, including use of breathing apparatus Take part in vessel evacuation procedures	Does not have a defined impairment or diagnosed medical condition that reduces ability to perform emergency duties essential to the safe operation of the vessel. Has ability to: — don lifejacket or immersion suit — crawl — feel for differences in temperature — handle fire fighting equipment — wear breathing apparatus (where required as part of duties)

Notes:

1—— Rows 1 and 2 of the above table describe (a) ordinary shipboard tasks, functions, events and conditions, (b) the corresponding physical abilities which may be considered necessary for the safety of a seafarer, other crew members and the ship, and (c) high level criteria for use by medical practitioners assessing medical fitness, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers and the nature of shipboard work for which they will be employed.

2—— Row 3 of the above table describes (a) ordinary shipboard tasks, functions, events and conditions, (b) the corresponding physical abilities which shall be considered necessary for the safety of a seafarer, other crew members and the ship, and (c) high level criteria for use by medical practitioners assessing medical fitness, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers in the nature of shipboard work for which they will be employed.

3—— This table is not intended to address all possible shipboard conditions or potentially disqualifying medical conditions. Parties shall specify physical abilities applicable to the category of seafarers (such as “Deck officer” and “Engine rating”). The special circumstances of individuals and for those who have specialized or limited duties should receive due consideration.

4—— If in doubt, the medical practitioner should quantify the degree or severity of any relevant impairment by means of objective tests, whenever appropriate tests are available, or by referring the candidate for further assessment.

5—— The term “assistance” means the use of another person to accomplish the task.

6—— The term “emergency duties” is used to cover all standard emergency response situations such as abandon ship or fire fighting as well as the procedures to be followed by each seafarer to secure personal survival.]

ANNEX 2

**DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO PART B OF THE SEAFARERS' TRAINING,
CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING (STCW) CODE**

Note: The draft amended text of the STCW Code (STCW/CONF .2/5) has been used as the base text. The proposed new text is shown **shaded** and proposed deleted text is shown as ~~strikethrough~~.

Section B-I/9

Guidance regarding medical standards

MEDICAL EXAMINATION AND CERTIFICATION

1 Parties, in establishing seafarer medical fitness standards and provisions, should take into account the minimum physical abilities set out in table B-I/9 and the guidance given within this section, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers.

~~12 The Party~~ Parties, in establishing seafarer medical fitness standards and provisions, should follow the guidance contained in the ILO/WHO publication *Guidelines for Conducting Pre-sea and Periodic Medical Fitness Examinations for Seafarers*, including any subsequent versions, and any other applicable international guidelines published by the International Labour Organization, the International Maritime Organization or the World Health Organization.

23 Appropriate qualifications and experience for medical practitioners conducting medical fitness examinations of seafarers may include occupational health or maritime health qualifications, experience of working as a ship's doctor or a shipping company doctor or working under the supervision of someone with the aforementioned qualifications or experience.

34 The premises where medical fitness examinations are carried out should have the facilities and equipment required to carry out medical fitness examination of seafarers.

465 Administrations should ensure that recognized medical practitioners enjoy full professional independence in exercising their medical judgement when undertaking medical examination procedures.

576 Persons applying for a medical certificate should present to the recognized medical practitioner appropriate identity documentation to establish their identity. They should also surrender their previous medical certificate.

7 Each Administration has the discretionary authority to grant a variance or waiver of any of the standards set out in table B-I/9 hereunder, based on an assessment of a medical evaluation and any other relevant information concerning an individual's adjustment to the condition and proven ability to satisfactorily perform assigned shipboard functions.

68 The medical fitness standards should, so far as possible, define objective criteria with regard to fitness for sea service, taking into account access to medical facilities and medical expertise on board ship. They should, in particular, specify the conditions under which seafarers suffering from potentially life-threatening medical conditions that are controlled by medication may be allowed to continue to serve at sea.

~~79~~ The medical standards should also identify particular medical conditions, such as colour blindness, which might preclude seafarers holding particular positions on board ship.

~~8~~¹⁰ The minimum in-service eyesight standards in each eye for unaided distance vision should be at least 0.1².

~~9~~¹¹ Persons requiring the use of spectacles or contact lenses to perform duties should have a spare pair or pairs, as required, conveniently available on board the ship. Any need to wear visual aids to meet the required standards should be recorded on the medical fitness certificate issued.

~~10~~¹² Colour vision testing should be in accordance with the *International Recommendation for Colour Vision Requirements for Transport*, published by the Commission Internationale de l'Eclairage (CIE 143-2001) including any subsequent versions or comparable test methods.

² Value given in Snellen decimal notation.

Table B-I/9**Assessment of minimum entry level and in-service physical abilities for seafarers³**

Shipboard task, function event or condition^{2 and 3}	Related physical ability	A medical examiner should be satisfied that the candidate⁴
Routine movement around vessel: - on moving deck - between levels - between compartments <i>Note 1 applies to this row</i>	Maintain balance and move with agility Climb up and down vertical ladders and stairways Step over coamings (e.g., 600 mm high) Open and close watertight doors	Has no disturbance in sense of balance. Does not have any impairment or disease that prevents relevant movements and physical activities. Is, without assistance ⁵ , able to: - climb vertical ladders and stairways - step over high sills - manipulate door closing systems
Routine tasks on board: - Use of hand tools - Movement of ship's stores - Overhead work - Valve operation - Standing a four hour watch - Working in confined spaces - Responding to alarms, warnings and instructions - Verbal communication <i>Note 1 applies to this row</i>	Strength, dexterity and stamina to manipulate mechanical devices Lift, pull and carry a load (e.g., 18 kg) Reach upwards Stand, walk and remain alert for an extended period Work in constricted spaces and move through restricted openings (e.g., 600 mm × 600 mm) Visually distinguish objects, shapes and signals Hear warnings and instructions Give a clear spoken description	Does not have a defined impairment or diagnosed medical condition that reduces ability to perform routine duties essential to the safe operation of the vessel Has ability to: - work with arms raised - stand and walk for an extended period - enter confined space - fulfil eyesight standards (A-I/9) - fulfil hearing standards set by competent authority or take account of international guidelines - hold normal conversation
Emergency duties ⁵ on board: - Escape - Fire-fighting - Evacuation	Don a lifejacket or immersion suit Escape from smoke-filled spaces Take part in fire-fighting duties, including use of breathing apparatus Take part in vessel evacuation procedures	Does not have a defined impairment or diagnosed medical condition that reduces ability to perform emergency duties essential to the safe operation of the vessel Has ability to: - don lifejacket or immersion suit - crawl - feel for differences in temperature - handle fire-fighting equipment - wear breathing apparatus (where required as part of duties)

Notes:

- 1 Rows 1, 2 and 3 of the above table describe (a) ordinary shipboard tasks, functions, events and conditions, (b) the corresponding physical abilities which may be considered necessary for the safety of a seafarer, other crew members and the ship, and (c) high-level criteria for use by medical practitioners assessing medical fitness, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers and the nature of shipboard work for which they will be employed.
 - 2 This table is not intended to address all possible shipboard conditions or potentially disqualifying medical conditions. Parties should specify physical abilities applicable to the category of seafarers (such as “Deck officer” and “Engine rating”). The special circumstances of individuals and for those who have specialized or limited duties should receive due consideration.
 - 3 If in doubt, the medical practitioner should quantify the degree or severity of any relevant impairment by means of objective tests, whenever appropriate tests are available, or by referring the candidate for further assessment.
 - 4 The term “assistance” means the use of another person to accomplish the task.
 - 5 The term “emergency duties” is used to cover all standard emergency response situations such as abandon ship or fire-fighting as well as the procedures to be followed by each seafarer to secure personal survival.
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