



SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING
32nd session
Agenda item 10

STW 32/10/2
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IMO STANDARD MARINE COMMUNICATION PHRASES

Submitted by the International Shipping Federation (ISF)

SUMMARY

- Executive summary:** ISF wishes to suggest some minor changes to the STCW Code to take account of the draft SMCP when adopted.
- Action to be taken:** Paragraph 5
- Related documents:** STW 31/11/1, NAV 46/16 and NAV 46/16/Add.1

1 At NAV 46, which further developed the draft of the SMCP, it was agreed that STW 32 should be asked to clarify the way in which the SMCP should be used, when adopted, to meet the competence requirements in Table A-II/1 of the STCW Code.

2 In section 2 of the Introduction to the SMCP (Organization of the SMCP) the current draft states that Part A of the SMCP (External Communication Phrases) may be regarded as the replacement of SMNV. ISF believes that this addresses, in a satisfactory way, the concerns expressed at STW 31 about the ambiguity contained in Table A-II/1 (page 34 of the English edition of the STCW Code) as to whether or not ability to use the entire SMCP, including internal communications, is relevant to the specific competence that must be achieved by deck officers at the operational level. In other words, only Part A of the SMCP is directly relevant. We think, however, that this also needs to be clarified in the text of the STCW Code since this was drafted before the SMCP was fully developed.

3 For clarity, we therefore suggest that the words "Part A of" are inserted before the words "Standard Marine Communication Phrases" in the columns 1 and 2 of Table A-II/1 on page 34. Alternatively, this clarification might be achieved with a footnote : "Part A of the SMCP covers phrases to be applied in external communications and may thus be regarded as the replacement of the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary, 1985." (these words repeat the text in the introduction to the SMCP).

4 ISF believes that the SMCP will provide an invaluable reference tool for use by English language trainers of seafarers. However, it will be important to ensure that teachers of English are not encouraged to approach the teaching of English in terms of learning the individual phrases contained in the SMCP by rote, rather than the development of a syllabus that involves the practice of genuine communication using English. ISF is pleased that this issue has been addressed by section 3 of the Introduction to the draft SMCP. However, we suggest that it might be helpful to include similar text (reproduced for convenience below) in Section B-II/1 of the STCW Code, which might also include a footnote referring to the new IMO model course on “Maritime English”:

“Position of the SMCP in Maritime Education and Training

The Standard Marine Communication Phrases (referred to in Table A-II/1) should be taught and learnt selectively, according to the users’ specific needs rather than completely. The respective instruction should be based on practice in the maritime environment and be implemented through appropriate modern language methods.”

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

5 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the proposals made by ISF in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, and to decide as appropriate.
