



SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF  
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING  
33rd session  
Agenda item 5

STW 33/5/3  
16 November 2001  
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## **FOLLOW-UP ACTION TO THE 1995 STCW CONFERENCE**

### **Maritime GOC & ROC certificates**

### **How to maintain GMDSS competence**

### **Submitted by Norway**

#### **SUMMARY**

- Executive summary:** This document discusses the need to evaluate the GMDSS knowledge of seafarers, either by exam only, or together with a refresher course, before re-issuing GOC or ROC certificates after 5 years of service.
- Action to be taken:** See paragraph 8
- Related documents:** STW 31/3, annex item 3.12

1 The 1999 STW Conference of Parties to the International Convention of Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), adopted resolution 13 "Revision of model courses published by the International Maritime Organization" in which the Organization is invited to take steps to revise and update those model courses which provide guidance in implementation of the training and assessment provisions of the STCW Convention, as amended.

2 In order to maintain the required standard of professional competency, Norway is determined to introduce mandatory refresher training programmes for holders of GOC/ROC certificates in which Distress, Urgency, Safety and SAR communication procedures are highlighted.

3 By raising this issue, Norway refers to a number of distress situations all over the world in the later years where Distress communication procedures were not in compliance to ITU Radio Regulations. Improper communication procedures may result in misunderstandings and delays of vital assistance. These shortcomings may be observed for Urgency, Safety, and SAR communications, as well.

4 It is well known that new hardware and software technology is introduced to the GMDSS more or less continuously. Secondly, lack of practice and minimum regular handling of the radio equipment is a reason for the lack of competence. It is obvious that refreshing/updating is needed, especially for personnel that seldom operate the equipment, even if such knowledge is a formal requirement for most navigators on board.

5 Through a number of radio surveys (2700 per year) on board Norwegian and foreign flag vessels, Norway has revealed serious lack of competence in operation and knowledge regarding the use of GMDSS on VHF, MF/HF and radiotelex communication, as well as insufficient maintenance of the various sources of energy used to run the radio installation on board.

6 All of the above mentioned are possible results of lack of practice, and maybe negative attitudes. The Norwegian Administration is therefore considering a mandatory examination, with or without a refresher course, when GOC or ROC certificates are renewed or endorsed after 5 years.

7 As suitable refresher programmes already have been developed, Norway intends to establish the mandatory training programmes as referred to above before the end of 2002.

#### **Action requested of the Sub-Committee**

8 The Sub-Committee is invited to discuss the matter and decide as appropriate.

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