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SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING
35th session
Agenda item 18

STW 35/18/2
17 November 2003
Original: ENGLISH

ANY OTHER BUSINESS**Requirement for navigating officers to hold GMDSS qualifications****Submitted by Australia****SUMMARY**

<i>Executive summary:</i>	The Sub-Committee is invited to clarify the requirements of the Convention with regard to navigating officers holding GMDSS qualifications
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 9
<i>Related documents:</i>	None

1 Regulation II/1 2.4 of the STCW Convention requires every candidate for certification as officer in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more to meet the applicable requirements of the regulations in chapter IV, as appropriate, for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the Radio Regulations.

2 Regulation IV/2 of the STCW Convention requires every person in charge of or performing radio duties on a ship required to participate in the GMDSS to hold an appropriate certificate related to the GMDSS.

3 In the large majority of ships the GMDSS equipment is situated on the navigating bridge deck and if not actually on the navigating bridge is in close proximity. This physical siting of the GMDSS equipment requires, at the very least, the navigating officer to monitor alarms and in most cases the navigating officer operates the GMDSS equipment.

4 Some Administrations are issuing Safe Manning Certificates requiring only one or two persons on board to hold GMDSS qualifications. This allows navigating watchkeepers with no GMDSS qualifications to stand a navigation watch at sea.

5 During a recent two-week period at an Australian port, 12 ships from 6 flag States were inspected. Of these, 5 flag States had issued Safe Manning Certificates requiring only 2 GMDSS qualified persons to be on board.

6 The Australian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) has received the following alerts:

1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 - Total 566 DSC alerts, of these there was 1 real distress alert, the remainder 565 were classified as either inadvertent or unknown.

1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001 - Total 375 DSC alerts, of these there were 2 real distress alerts, the remainder 373 were classified as either inadvertent or unknown.

1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002 - Total 289 DSC alerts, of these there were 6 real distress alerts, the remainder 283 were classified as either inadvertent or unknown.

1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 - Total 279 DSC alerts, of these there was 1 real distress alert, the remainder 278 were classified as either inadvertent or unknown.

1 July 2003 to 12 Nov 2003 - so far total 73 DSC alerts, all of which have been classified as either inadvertent or unknown.

7 In light of the foregoing figures Australia is of the opinion that false distress alerts on the GMDSS system continue to be a source of concern due, in part, to the large number of unqualified personnel permitted to stand GMDSS radio watches on board ship.

8 Australia is also of the opinion that the intent of the STCW Convention is for every navigation watchkeeper to be qualified in GMDSS as expressed in regulation II/1.

Action requested of Sub-Committee

9 The Sub-Committee is invited to confirm that the Convention requires all navigating watchkeepers to hold a GMDSS General Operators Certificate if they are keeping a navigation watch on a GMDSS equipped ship and monitoring the GMDSS equipment.
