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TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING
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Agenda item 10

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DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCES FOR RATINGS

Report of the Correspondence Group

Submitted by the United Kingdom

SUMMARY

Executive summary: STW 36 initiated a Correspondence Group under the co-ordination of the United Kingdom to consider the development of competences for deck and engine room ratings for inclusion within the STCW Convention. This report documents the collective views of the correspondence group for consideration by the Sub-Committee (STW 37)

Action to be taken: Paragraph 24

Related documents: STW 36/17; STW 36/12/1; STW 36/12; STW 35/19, section 13; STW 35/13; and STW 35/13/1

Introduction

1 Following submission of a proposal by the United Kingdom (STW 36/12/1), the Sub-Committee agreed to establish a correspondence group, under the co-ordination of the United Kingdom, to consider how best to accommodate the requirements for ratings currently governed by the ILO Certification of Able Seamen Convention 1946 (C74) within the STCW Convention, and report back to STW 37 (STW 36/17, paragraphs 12.19 to 12.20 and annex 9).

2 In drafting this report, due regard was given to the remit of the correspondence group to provide a consensus view (where possible) and recommend a possible way forward for the deliberation of the Sub-Committee at STW 37.

3 This report considers the issues of conventional deck and engine room watchkeeping ratings and also the issue of non-watchkeeping and General Purpose (GP) Ratings.

4 It should be borne in mind that although the levels of ratings are being defined, this does not imply that all grades must be included in the Safe Manning Document. Such crewing levels are generally a matter for the flag State Administration.

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5 Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States along with International Labour Organization, International Transport Federation, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and International Shipping Federation participated within the correspondence group. As co-ordinator of the correspondence group, the United Kingdom would like to thank participants for their valuable contributions.

Methodology

6 In view of the time available, it was agreed that initial consideration would only be given to the structure, and education and training for conventional deck and engine room watchkeeping ratings. However, since it became apparent that the issue of General Purpose (GP) ratings and non-watchkeeping ratings is particularly relevant to some Administrations and this area also needed to be explored.

7 This report specifically addresses:

- .1 how the system may be structured and best integrated into the STCW Convention;
- .2 sea service requirements;
- .3 outline training requirements; and
- .4 transitional (grandfather) arrangements for existing seafarers.

Background

8 As detailed in the report to the Maritime Safety Committee (STW 35/19), consideration was given to information regarding the update by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the outcome of the preliminary second draft text of ILO's Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention and the comments provided by ISF (STW 35/13/1), notably:

- .1 that within the consolidated maritime Convention there are no mandatory international standards for certification as able seaman/seafarer, although there is a requirement that seafarers be trained or certified as competent or otherwise qualified for their duties on board ship;
- .2 that there should be national requirements regarding the competence of able seafarers, with guidance provided as to the implementation of this obligation; and
- .3 the need to retain the term able seaman or similar terminology since it continues to be used extensively throughout the world's merchant fleet.

9 For inclusion within the STCW Convention and in order that the qualifications are not adopted in isolation, consideration has been given to defining a rating grading structure that builds upon the requirements for a watch rating certificate and which may be expanded to allow for both watchkeeping and non-watchkeeping ratings, conventional (e.g. those specific to either the deck or engine room department) and General Purpose (GP) Ratings which are multifunctional.

Current ILO Guidelines

10 Presently, certification of able seamen (AB) is covered by the ILO Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946 (C74). Certification of engineer ratings is not currently defined.

11 Under this Convention “No person shall be engaged on any vessel as an able seaman unless he is a person who by national laws or regulations is deemed to be competent to perform any duty which may be required of a member of the crew serving in the deck department and unless he holds a certificate of qualification as an able seaman granted in accordance with the provisions of the following articles” (articles 2 to 11).

12 In summary the Convention requires that:

- .1 a competent authority shall make arrangements for holding examinations and for granting certificates;
- .2 the seafarer has reached a minimum age of 18 years;
- .3 the seafarer has served at sea in the deck department for a minimum period of not less than 36 months. This may be reduced to not less than 24 months if the seafarer has completed an approved course of training; and
- .4 the prescribed examination shall provide a practical test of the candidate’s knowledge of seamanship and of his ability to carry out effectively all the duties expected of an able seaman, including those of a lifeboatman.

Grading structure for ratings

13 It was generally agreed that a two-stage structure would be appropriate to build upon the existing requirements of regulations II/4 and III/4 (navigational and engine room watch rating certificates) with new regulations II/5 and III/5. The view of the correspondence group was that the existing requirements of regulations II/4 and III/4 are appropriate for the rating Grade 2 and should remain intact and, in doing so, there would be no need to address the issue of new entrants/trainees since regulations II/4 and III/4 already provide for trainee ratings on board ship.

14 In summary there was general consensus that the following structured system should be adopted:

- .1 entry point as trainee as defined by regulations II/4 and III/4;
- .2 deck and engine room watchkeeping rating Grade 2 as defined by regulations II/4 and III/4;
- .3 deck rating Grade 1 (AB) and engine room rating Grade 1 (Motorman) new regulations II/5 and III/5; and
- .4 provisions within the structure for General Purpose (GP) Ratings.

Service requirements

15 ILO Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946, provides that the seafarer has served at sea in the deck department for a minimum period of not less than 36 months. This may be reduced to not less than 24 months if the seafarer has completed an approved course of training. The correspondence group considered whether in the light of modern shipping practice and in order to be compatible with the STCW Convention whether this was an appropriate service period.

16 Although the actual service period for the [Rating Grade 1] was not agreed, there was general support for a service period of [18 months], reduced to [12 months] for ratings following a course of training approved by the Administration.

17 Given the differing approach of Administrations to their current rating training schemes, it was felt that a flexible approach to the sea service requirements would be appropriate by allowing various permutations such as sea service combined with shore-based training, sea service supplemented by a Training Record Book, or specialised training vessels [or for certain categories of ratings for specialised education and training programmes for persons with particular qualifications]. Further deliberation will also be required when considering service requirements for General Purpose (GP) Ratings and non-watchkeeping ratings once the requirements for conventional watchkeeping ratings has been agreed upon. The basic structure is set out at annex 1.

18 Consideration was also given to any additional education and training that may be needed to ensure that the rating Grade 1 is fully qualified as detailed in the ILO Certification of Able Seamen Convention, 1946 (C74) [by inclusion for example of deck work practices, mooring, rope/wire work, operating and maintenance of cargo gear, health and safety and safe working practices, etc.]. The minimum requirements should describe the competence needed to carry out certain functions on board, how to reach these competences, the method for demonstrating competence, and the evaluation of the system.

19 The ILO Certification of Able Seamen Convention 1946 requires that an AB should be able to effectively carry out the duties of a lifeboat man [proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats] and in this respect the appropriate training would be as detailed in STCW Code A-VI/2-1, Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats.

20 In document STW 36/12/1, the United Kingdom also aired the view that “given the constraints of reduced manning levels on modern day ships consideration may also be given to a requirement to have completed training in Advanced Fire Fighting (STCW A-VI/3) as a pre-requisite for issue of a rating Grade 1 certificate”. Whilst there was some support for this position no clear consensus was reached. This is an issue for further deliberation.

21 Within the group there was also some support for the view that any training should be sufficiently focused to allow for transferability of skills should a seafarer choose to seek shoreside or alternative employment. However, whilst there was sympathy for this approach, it was felt that the STCW Convention should detail the minimum competences required to fulfil the seafaring functions only. Additional training requirements leading to greater flexibility in future employment is a matter for individual Administrations.

Transitional arrangements

22 There was unanimous agreement in the correspondence group that transitional arrangements should be in place so as not to disadvantage existing seafarers.

23 A proposed text for inclusion in the new regulations II/5 and III/5 merits further discussion. This text is set out in annex 2.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

24 This is the first step in the development of competences for ratings. The members of the correspondence group propose that the issues raised in this paper should be referred to an appropriate working group at this session for further discussion.

ANNEX 1**SUMMARY OF STRUCTURE:****DECK RATING**

Grade*	Requirements	Reg
Trainee	No additional requirements	II/4, paragraph 1 (existing)
Grade 2	Rating forming part of a navigational watch Approved seagoing service including 6 months training and experience, or special training including at least 2 months seagoing service	II/4 (existing)
Grade 1 (AB)	CPSC&RB [Advance Fire-fighting] 12 months sea service or 6 months sea service + Approved course Qualifying examination (Assessment)	II/5

* All grades are subject to the requirements in VI/1 and section A-VI/1 (familiarization and basic safety training).

ENGINE RATING

Grade *	Requirements	Reg
Trainee	No additional requirements	III/4, paragraph 1 (existing)
Grade 2	Rating forming part of a watch in a manned engine-room Approved seagoing service including 6 months training and experience, or special training including at least 2 months seagoing service	III/4 (existing)
Grade 1 (Motorman)	CPSC&RB [Advance Fire-fighting] 12 months sea service 6 months sea service + Approved course Qualifying examination (Assessment)	III/5

* All grades are subject to the requirements in VI/1 and section A-VI/1 (familiarization and basic safety training).

ANNEX 2**PROPOSED TEXT FOR NEW REGULATIONS II/5 AND III/5**

- 1 Every Party shall compare the standards of competence which it required of [ratings] for certificates issued before [date] with those specified for the appropriate certificate in sections A-II/5 and A-III/5 of the STCW Code, and shall determine the [possible] need, if any, for requiring these personnel to update their qualifications;
 - 2 Until [date], a Party may continue to issue, recognize and endorse certificates in accordance with the provisions of the Convention which applied immediately prior to the entry into force of this regulation;
 - 3 [Until [date], a party may continue to renew and revalidate certificates and endorsements in accordance with the provisions of the Convention which applied immediately prior to entry into force of this regulation.]
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