



IMO HTW 10 Meeting Summary February 21, 2024

The 10th session of the IMO's Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW 10) was held 5-9 February 2024 at the IMO Headquarters in London, supplemented by hybrid (remote) arrangements.

In addition to the plenary sessions, LISCR participated in the working group on the Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code.

Opening

Attacks on ships in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea

At the opening of the meeting, many delegations expressed concerns for the safety of seafarers, freedom of navigation and stability of the global supply chain following the attacks by Houthi rebels on commercial ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and, in this respect, commended the Secretary-General's efforts in bringing this to the attention of the United Nations Security Council at its special session on 3 January 2024 and his dialogue with all relevant parties.

Model training course

HTW 10 validated the following model training courses:

- 1.32 on Operational use of integrated bridge systems including integrated navigational systems; and
- 1.35 on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator.

Fraudulent certificates

Following consideration, with great concern, of reports from Member States on the proliferation of fraudulent certificates of competency and endorsements, MSC 71 had approved the circular on *Fraudulent certificates of competency* (MSC/Circ.900), and A 21 adopted resolution A.892(21) on *Unlawful practices associated with certificates of competency and endorsements*.

A submission paper addresses concerns over:

- Upgrading by endorsement is not allowed under the STCW Convention;
- Fraudulent endorsement; and

- Inappropriate governance by the States concerned.

Following discussion, HTW 10 noted that all information on the existing two models on the IMO website, i.e.

- "Parties whose Certificates are recognized in compliance with regulation I/10" (<https://wwwapps.imo.org/RecognizedCertificates/default.asp>)
- "certificate verification facility" (<https://wwwapps.imo.org/CertificateVerification/countryRequest.asp>)

They are managed and updated by the IMO Secretariat, based on the requests from Member States. The HTW 10 also noted that the functions included in the new STCW GISIS module did not entail a transfer of obligations in the Convention from STCW Parties to the Secretariat.

HTW 10:

- 1 noted that the issue of fraudulent endorsements raised in the document was a serious problem that affected the safety of seafarers and ships;
- 2 reiterated the necessity to issue CoC endorsements in accordance with STCW regulation I/10;
- 3 recognized that invalid endorsements could be subject to disposition under the port State control (PSC) regimes, and urged STCW Parties to actively disclose and communicate information on seafarers' qualifications, such as publishing the list of undertakings, as provided in STCW regulation I/10, to the Parties concerned; and
- 4 encouraged STCW Parties to take a broader range of actions to tackle the issue of fraudulent endorsements.

Comprehensive revision the STCW Convention

HTW 9, held in February 2023, set up high-level aims and principles and tasked the correspondence group (CG) to

review specific areas of concern and to set up the roadmap. The agreed high-level principles included:

- to address new and obsolete competencies and proficiencies, outdated requirements and unnecessary duplications;
- to address the impact and possibilities of digitalization and emerging technologies on ships and ship operations;
- to address the impact and possibilities of the implementation and use of digitalization and emerging technologies in seafarers' education, training and certification;
- **not** to address minimum safe manning levels, which are regulated by the SOLAS Convention; and
- to ensure that the standards within the Convention and Code for the training and certification of seafarers, to the extent possible, facilitate mobility of seafarers across different ship types and trades.

Preliminary list of specific areas identified for the comprehensive review

HTW 10 identified the following specific areas for approval by MSC 108:

- 1 Emerging technologies on ships and ship operations;
- 2 Digitalization of documentation, including certificates issued under the STCW Convention;
- 3 Emerging technologies in education and training;
- 4 Facilitation, flexibility and quality of onboard, shore-based and workshop skills training, including use of simulators;
- 5 Flexibility and efficiency in implementation of new training requirements and reduction of administrative burdens;
- 6 Requirements for sea time or practical experience in relation to new and emerging technologies including the use of simulators;
- 7 Psychological safety, bullying and harassment, including SASH, gender diversity and gender sensitization;
- 8 Mental health;
- 9 Twenty-first century and interpersonal skills, such as digital skills, communications, information management and the ability to adapt to a changing work environment;
- 10 Addressing inconsistencies within the STCW Convention and the Code;
- 11 Addressing different interpretations of the STCW Convention and the Code, including those related to near-coastal voyages;
- 12 Addressing taxonomy and terminologies;

- 13 Flexibility in revalidation of certificates and endorsements;
- 14 Overview of the implementation of the Convention, in particular the need to update the STCW "White List";
- 15 Lessons learned, which include the review of implementing previous amendments, casualty investigations and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, inter alia, extension of the validity of the certificates;
- 16 Flexibility of the certification to consider facilitating to the possible extent the mobility of seafarers across different ship types and trades;
- 17 Alternative certification under Chapter VII;
- 18 Watchkeeping arrangements and principles to be observed (Chapter VIII);
- 19 Alignment of STCW with requirements placed on ships, seafarers, and shipowners by other IMO and relevant international instruments;
- 20 Cybersecurity;
- 21 Implementation and transitional provisions; and
- 22 Addressing outdated training requirements.

Methodology for the comprehensive review

The following two-stage methodology was agreed for approval by MSC 108:

Phase 1 - Review/Identification of gaps

In this phase, a review of the Convention, including articles and the Code, will take place. This addresses external factors (new technology, etc.) and experiences gained from implementing the current Convention and the Code.

Phase 2 – Revision

In this phase, the actual revisions to the Convention and the Code will be considered.

Road map for the comprehensive review

HTW 10 produced a roadmap of the work, which is understood as a living document and will be updated as needed. As of HTW 10, key milestones were:

- Feb 2025: Completion of Phase 1, and initiate Phase 2;
- Spring 2027: Approval of draft amendments; and
- Autumn 2027: Adoption of the amendments.

Development of interim guidance on training for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels

There were proposals for the training of seafarers for the safe use of alternative fuels.

HTW 10 agreed to separate the matter relating to seafarers training as a part of the existing output (work programme)

of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) on *Development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels* and agreed to create a separate agenda item for discussion at HTW 11.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact: imo@liscr.com

HTW 10 – Summary of Major Decisions

PROVISIONAL LIST OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS, CIRCULARS or other final outcome

- Model training course 1.32 on Operational use of integrated bridge systems including integrated navigational systems;
- Model training course 1.35 on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator;
- list of specific areas for the comprehensive review
- the draft methodology for the comprehensive review