

Report of HTW 7

Sub-committee on Human element, Training and Watchkeeping
 15th – 19th February 2021
 International Maritime Organization (IMO), London headquarters

ITF delegation

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Sub-Committee on Human element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) deals with issues regarding humans in maritime, in particular education and training and certification of seafarers and personnel on fishing vessels. HTW is essential for the ITF as its decisions have a great effect on professional maritime workers' career paths, skills development, as well as on social aspects.

Significant outcomes at this session

1. Recognition of the pivotal importance of human element

The Sub-committee agreed the role of human element had emerged as one of the most profound issues throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, it was widely endorsed that "Human element" needs to be adopted as one of IMO's Strategic Directions for the next term – 2024-2029. This proposition will be presented and decided at the end of 2021.

2. Rescheduled workplan of the validation of IMO model courses

Owing to the formidable impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the workplan for validating model courses was reviewed. Those that are to be validated by the next session of the HTW (2022) are:



- new model course on Passenger safety, cargo safety and hull integrity training;
- Advanced training in fire fighting (2.03);
- Bridge resource management (1.22);
- new model course on Engine-room resource management;
- Security awareness training for all port facility personnel (3.25);
- Security training for seafarers with designated security duties (3.26); and
- Security awareness training for all seafarers (3.27).

At HTW 9, presumably in 2023, the following are going to commence validation:

- Fire prevention and fire fighting (1.20);
- Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats (1.23); and
- Proficiency in fast rescue boats (1.24).

3. Role of human element and issues relating to the Covid-19 pandemic

3.1 The permanent separation of issue of medical certificates and CoC/CoP

Considering the current STCW Regulations 1/2, 1/9 and the standards of section A-1/9 of the Code, seafarers who were unable to obtain a medical certificate would be denied a CoC or CoP even if they have met all other requirements. The amount of time required for this could cause delays in the processing of their applications and may prevent a seafarer from securing seagoing employment.

It was decided that the Maritime Safety Committee, the parent committee of HTW, needs to approve this as a new consideration. A comprehensive review of the Convention and consequential amendments to other IMO instruments need to be taken into account.

3.2 Issues emanating from seafarers training amid the pandemic

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 public health crisis, below issues are identified:

- Imprudent extension of seafarers' certificates;
- No training at all or transition to e-learning and the limits of e-learning;
- Cadet training difficulties which require to be done in person;
- Application of new cleaning measures to training facilities;
- Promoting more telemedical service onboard, including the emergency in high sea and relative training; and
- Roll-out of E-trainings-certificates and the limitations.

A Correspondence group on *COVID-19 Training and Certification Matters* was established in order to embark on this urgent issue. The Group will:

- Develop Guidance on training availability issues during certain circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic;
- The scope is to only consider relating to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Identify main challenges of issuance and validation of certificates - extension, renewal, revalidation, refresher training;
- Harmonise national interim measures implemented onwards from the outbreak;
- Adverse effect of port/flag States when the virus is not considered a threat any longer; and



- Report directly to MSC 104 (4-8 October 2021) including the workplan for the future sessions of HTW.

4. The use of electronic certificates and documents of seafarers

The use of e-certificates for seafarers is not new in the maritime industry and the benefits of paperless documents are now more recognised. On that account, it is inevitable to set up international standards on regulating the use of them without further ado. The Correspondence group on *the Use of Electronic Certificates for Seafarers* developed draft amendments and further work will be undertaken by a Group on *STCW matters*, liaising with the Facilitation Committee to keep the consistency in development of the introduction of digitalisation across IMO instruments.

The Group will consider:

- Entry into force of amendments of the Convention and Code;
- Definition of electronic certificate;
- Clarification on issuing organisation - Administration or/and authorised organisation-; and
- Consistency in language with FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 *Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Certificates*.

5. Safety trainings in case of medical emergency for crew on IP vessels

The International Code of Safety for Ships Carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code) does not mandate that crew on IP vessels have proper safety trainings in case of medical emergency for the industrial personnel onboard. The parent committee, MSC 103 (May 2021), will be asked to consider this matter and relevant improvements to the ongoing development to the Code will be carried out.

6. Training matters *The Draft Guidelines for Safety Measures for Fishing Vessels of 24M in Length and over Operating in Polar Waters*

Section 11.5 of the Guidelines is under development in order to ensure that fishing vessel personnel operate the vessel safely in conditions specific to polar waters in addition to 1995 STCW-F, as amended. Personnel with watchkeeping duty will be required to be properly trained and experienced in accordance with the provisions in the Guidelines, once adopted.

Current Polar Code does not cover Engine officers in charge of watch officers. Further work should be consistent to the development of these Guidelines.

7. Working Group on the Comprehensive Review of the 1995 STCW-F Convention

The STCW-F, 1995 entered into force in 2012. In order to enhance the safety of fishing vessels, fishing vessels personnel' competences and the feasibility to provide appropriate education and training are fundamental and were in need of updating. Due to the unforeseen impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the completion of the revision is expected to MSC 106, in 2022.

The ITF is in the position that in addition to the relevant IMO bodies, such as MSC or Council, discussion should begin on practical arrangements for adoption of the revised STCW-F with no delay, including the organisation of an expanded MSC 106 and/or special diplomatic conference if appropriate.

7.1 Outcomes of the Group

The followings were considered and agreed:

- Definition of *Limited waters*



“means those waters in the vicinity of a Party as defined by its Administration within which a degree of safety is considered to exist which enables the standards of qualification and certification for all fishing vessel personnel to be set at a lower level than for service outside the defined limits. In determining the extent of limited waters, the Administration shall take into consideration the guidelines developed by the Organization”;

- Postponed decision on equivalent length 12m to tonnage, as a single value by HTW8;
- consideration on regulation I/12 *Medical standards*:
 - ✓ The same or similar medical standards as required in the STCW to be included
 - ✓ New Regulation I/12.4.2
 - ✓ “be not less than 15 years of age provided that the candidate is authorized by the competent authority in accordance with national laws and practice.” and
 - ✓ footnote on relevant ILO Work in Fishing Convention provisions
- 2nd engineer officer stays in the management level (regulation II/5-1 of the Convention);
- Further inclusion of Familiarisation training to part B of the Code (Section A-III/1 *Mandatory minimum requirements for basic training and onboard safety familiarization for all fishing vessel personnel*);
- Provisions on Sustainable fisheries, in particular Marine Plastic Litter, should be:
 - ✓ In line with, Resolution MEPC.310(73) *Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships*
 - ✓ Be applicable to officers as well as all personnel onboard as appropriate
 - ✓ Be mandatory or recommendatory, to be finalised by the HTW8 , and to be in A-II, B-II and A-III/2 and as well in a new section or/and A-III/1-4 *Personal and social responsibility*

7.2 Correspondence group and further work

The re-established Group will consider:

- Definition of 2nd engineer officer; and
- Exemption provisions in association with the definition of “Limited waters” and its application exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and those areas with multiple jurisdictions.

The adoption of Guidelines for medical examination of fishing vessels personnel by a joint IMO/ILO meeting was postponed to late 2022 or 2023.

Development of Resolution and Guidance on Training on How to Prepare and Respond Against Pirates and Armed Robbers was referred for further consideration and finalisation at HTW 8.

8. Working Group on Implementation of the STCW Convention

According to the STCW 78, as amended, regulation I/7 *Communication of information* and I/8 *Quality standards* as well as corresponding Standards in Section A of the Code, it is obligatory for the parties to have regular information updates about any progress regarding the implementation of the instruments to assure the quality of enforcement. Throughout the years, the following three issues have kept emerging:

- Transparency of the process;
- The reliability of white list; and
- Competencies of persons certified by the Convention to be genuine.

A Correspondence group on the Implementation of the STCW Convention was established to develop appropriate guidance. The views expressed are in line with ITF’s, that global implementation is a must. The group saw the new GISIS module as the best way to monitor this in a timely fashion.



Action point

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the maritime industry has once again recognised the paramount importance of the role of human element.

The rapid introduction of seafarers' e-certificates led to the amendments of the STCW.

Note the progress on the comprehensive review of the STCW-F which will change the significant training requirements for personnel on fishing vessels in the coming future.

Development of measures to ensure quality of onboard training as part of the mandatory seagoing service required by the STCW Convention and Development of measures to facilitate mandatory seagoing service required under the STCW Convention were forwarded to the next session.

In order to facilitate the ITF delegation's participation to various working and correspondence groups, take a note of the discussions above and liaise with the ITF Secretariat on issues experienced, such as medical certificates and CoC/CoP as well as emergency medical training for industrial personnel.

*Aforementioned IMO documents can be provided if requested.