

TECHNICAL REGULATORY NEWS No. 01/2021 – STATUTORY

# IMO SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN ELEMENT, TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING

Relevant for shipowners, managers, and flag states

February 2021

The 7th session of the IMO's Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) was held remotely from 15 to 19 February. The session addressed the human side of shipping, including challenges related to the issuance and maintenance of seafarer certificates during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, and of the facilitation of seafarers' electronic certificates and documents.



## Role of the human element – the Covid-19 pandemic

The human element is a key factor both for safety and environmental protection, and HTW 7 has recognized the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the human element. In particular, the pandemic has led to challenges related to the issuance and maintenance of seafarer certificates.

The STCW Code requires seafarers to meet the requirements of medical fitness to obtain a certificate of competency (CoC). Obtaining a medical certificate during the Covid-19 pandemic has been more cumbersome and time-consuming and has required pragmatic solutions by flag states. HTW 7 invited flag states to submit proposals that reconsider the process for the issuance of certificates.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created serious problems in renewal of various documents, such as CoP, health certificates etc, and the seafarers are having difficulties in maintaining their certificates because necessary courses are not available. The second problem is now becoming acute. HTW 7 agreed to establish a correspondence group to identify in detail certification and training issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic, with a view to develop guidance for harmonizing, to the

extent possible, measures and solutions, as well as consider the possible of adverse effects of these measures when normality returns.

## Implementation of the STCW Convention

The STCW Convention requires flag states to demonstrate that they have given full effect to the provisions of the STCW Convention and to send subsequent report to IMO for review. HTW 7 agreed to establish a correspondence group on the implementation of the STCW Convention to enhance the communication of information to the IMO as a basis for publishing the "white list" (MSC.1/Circ.1163).

## Review of the 1995 STCW-F Convention

With the global fishing industry still showing a poor safety record, HTW 7 continued with its comprehensive review of the STCW-F Convention to ensure that it is updated with relevant training, that it supports other relevant international instruments and facilitates practical implementation. It was also agreed to include sustainable fisheries training with special emphasis on marine plastic litter and reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The work will continue in a correspondence group until HTW 8 in 2022.

## Electronic certificates and documents for seafarers

Seafarers' certificates and documents are, to an increasing extent, available electronically.

HTW 7 considered amendments to the STCW Convention to accommodate the use of electronic certificates and documents for seafarers, in addition to the development of an accommodating guideline on the use of electronic certificates. Further consideration and work will be done in a correspondence group until HTW 8 in 2022.

## Any other business

### Non-SOLAS ships in polar waters

Incidents in polar waters pose risks to human life, to the polar environment and to search and rescue operations. Accordingly, the IMO has initiated a phase 2 of the Polar Code to also address safety measures for non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters.

HTW 7 reviewed and suggested minor modifications to the training provisions in the draft guidelines for fishing vessels of at least 24 metres in length and operating in polar waters.

### Recommendations

As HTW is a sub-committee, all decisions concerning rules, regulations and dates are subject to further consideration and approval by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). DNV GL recommends that our customers monitor the outcome of MSC 103 in June 2021.

DNV GL also recommends that our customers monitor the outcome of future HTW sessions for information on inter alia model training courses, the role of the human element and the development of training provisions for seafarers related to the BWM Convention, as the agenda of HTW 7 was reduced to accommodate a remote session.

### CONTACT

**For customers:**

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