

SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN ELEMENT,  
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING  
11th session  
Agenda item 6

HTW 11/6/21  
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## COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE 1978 STCW CONVENTION AND CODE

### Proposed amendments to table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code

Submitted by India

#### SUMMARY

*Executive summary:* This document presents proposed amendments to table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code, based on gaps identified in chapter VI of the STCW Convention and Code, which may help in addressing issues related to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault and gender diversity, and may help in enhancing mental health, psychological safety, gender sensitization and interpersonal skills.

*Strategic direction,  
if applicable:* 6

*Output:* 6.17

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 16

*Related documents:* HTW 11/6 and ISWG-STCW 1/2/40

1 The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, was adopted with the objective of promoting the safety of life and property at sea and the protection of the marine environment by establishing international standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers. Parties to the Convention and their Administrations, as defined in article II of the Convention, undertake to meet the obligations prescribed therein.

2 The 1978 STCW Convention entered into force on 28 April 1984. Amendments thereto were adopted in 1991, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020. Major amendments were adopted in 1995 and 2010.

3 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 105th session, agreed to include in the biennial agenda of the HTW Sub-Committee an output on "Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code" (MSC 105/20, paragraph 18.13.1).

4 HTW 9 agreed to draft aims and principles to guide the work of the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, which also constituted a preliminary assessment of the scope of the work to be conducted during the comprehensive review (HTW 9/15, paragraph 7.24). MSC 107 subsequently approved the draft aims and principles prepared at HTW 9.

5 HTW 10 had finalized a list of specific areas for the comprehensive review, including the articles of the Convention, prepared a draft methodology and finalized a road map for the comprehensive review (HTW 10/10, paragraphs 6.40 to 6.43, and annexes 4 to 6), which were subsequently approved at MSC 108, in conjunction with the approval of the establishment of an intersessional Working Group on the Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code to take place before HTW 11 to further progress the work of the comprehensive review, subject to endorsement by C 132.

6 ISWG-STCW 1/2/40 identified certain gaps in chapter VI of the STCW Convention and Code, particularly table A-VI/1-4, as referred to in HTW 11/6.

7 Considering the above, proposed modifications to table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code are set out in the annex.

## **Discussion**

8 Present-day seafarers come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Diversity in nationality, race, gender and sexual orientation in the workforce is becoming more common on board present-day ships. Whereas the inclusion of training relating to "violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault" is already being worked upon at IMO as a new competency, sensitization to gender and cultural diversity may further help in avoiding any undesired incidents. The Indian Maritime Administration has already implemented training with respect to gender sensitization.

9 Isolation and loneliness are due to:

- .1 Extended time at sea: Seafarers often spend months away from home, which can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- .2 Limited communication: While technology has improved, communication with family and friends may still be limited, exacerbating feelings of disconnection.
- .3 Long working hours: Many seafarers work long shifts, leading to fatigue and stress.
- .4 High-pressure environment: Navigating, maintaining safety and ensuring operational efficiency can be stressful.
- .5 Fear of job loss: Economic fluctuations and changes in the maritime industry can create job insecurity, contributing to anxiety.

10 Cultural and social challenges:

- .1 Cultural differences: Crew members from diverse backgrounds may face challenges in communication and social integration, affecting team dynamics and contributing to conflict.
- .2 Social support: Lack of social support onboard can impact mental health, making it important for crews to foster a supportive environment.

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11 Mental health issues:

- .1 Prevalence of depression and anxiety: Studies have shown that seafarers are at a higher risk of mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety compared to land-based workers.
- .2 Substance abuse: Some seafarers may turn to alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism for stress and mental health challenges.

12 Access to mental health resources:

- .1 Limited resources: Onboard medical facilities may lack mental health professionals, making it difficult for seafarers to access services.
- .2 Teletherapy options: Increasingly, teletherapy and other digital mental health.

13 Maintaining mental health and the emotional and psychological well-being of seafarers on board is also paramount. Seafarers may also be introduced to holistic health therapies/practices such as Yoga. Yoga, integrates the body, mind, spirit, and soul, offering a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is practised in various forms around the world and continues to grow. UN and WHO have also recognized the benefits of Yoga.

14 This revision focus aims at enhancing mental health, psychological safety and the well-being of seafarers on board, as well as helping facilitate a harmonious work environment through gender sensitization and interpersonal skills.

**Proposal**

15 It is proposed to amend table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code, as set out in the annex, to address identified gaps.

**Action requested of the Sub-Committee**

16 The Sub-Committee is invited to review the proposed amendments to table A-VI/1-4 set out in the annex, and consider incorporating the revised competencies.

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**ANNEX**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO COVER GAPS IDENTIFIED IN  
TABLE A-VI/1-4 OF STCW CODE**

**Table A-VI/1-4 Specification of minimum standard of competence in  
personal safety and social responsibilities**

<b>Competence</b>	<b>Knowledge, understanding and proficiency</b>	<b>Methods for demonstrating competence</b>	<b>Criteria for evaluating competence</b>
Comply with emergency procedures	<p>Types of emergency which may occur, such as collision, fire, foundering</p> <p>Knowledge of shipboard contingency plans for response to emergencies</p> <p>Emergency signals and specific duties allocated to crew members in the muster list; muster stations; correct use of personal safety equipment</p> <p>Action to take on discovering potential emergency, including fire, collision, foundering and ingress of water into the ship</p> <p>Action to take on hearing emergency alarm signals</p> <p>Value of training and drills</p> <p>Knowledge of escape routes and internal communication and alarm systems</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	<p>Initial action on becoming aware of an emergency conforms to established emergency response procedures</p> <p>Information given on raising alarm is prompt, accurate, complete and clear</p>
Take precautions to prevent pollution of the marine environment	<p>Basic knowledge of the impact of shipping on the marine environment and the effects of operational or accidental pollution on it</p> <p>Basic environmental protection procedures</p> <p>Basic knowledge of complexity and diversity of the marine environment</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Organizational procedures designed to safeguard the marine environment are observed at all times

<b>Competence</b>	<b>Knowledge, understanding and proficiency</b>	<b>Methods for demonstrating competence</b>	<b>Criteria for evaluating competence</b>
Observe safe working practices	<p>Importance of adhering to safe working practices at all times</p> <p>Safety and protective devices available to protect against potential hazards aboard ship</p> <p>Precautions to be taken prior to entering enclosed spaces</p> <p>Familiarization with international measures concerning accident prevention and occupational health</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Safe working practices are observed and appropriate safety and protective equipment is correctly used at all times
Contribute to effective communications on board ship	<p>Understand the principles of, and barriers to, effective communication between individuals and teams within the ship</p> <p>Ability to establish and maintain effective communications</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Communications are clear and effective at all times
Contribute to effective human relationships on board ship	<p>Importance of maintaining good human and working relationships aboard ship</p> <p>Due regard be given to the gender and cultural diversity that may prevail on board ships</p> <p>Basic teamworking principles and practice, including conflict resolution Social responsibilities; employment conditions; individual rights and obligations; dangers of drug and alcohol abuse</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Expected standards of work and behaviour are observed at all times

Competence	Knowledge, understanding and proficiency	Methods for demonstrating competence	Criteria for evaluating competence
Understand and take necessary actions to control fatigue	<p>Importance of obtaining the necessary rest</p> <p>Effects of sleep, schedules, and the circadian rhythm on fatigue</p> <p>Effects of physical stressors on seafarers</p> <p>Effects of environmental stressors in and outside the ship and their impact on seafarers</p> <p>Effects of schedule changes on seafarer fatigue</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Fatigue management practices are observed and appropriate actions are used at all times
Understand and take necessary actions to maintain mental health and emotional and psychological well-being	Introduction to holistic health enhancing therapies/practices, such as Yoga, to promote mental and physical health and emotional and psychological well-being	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Yoga practice is observed.

*Note: Changes have been made in grey shading*