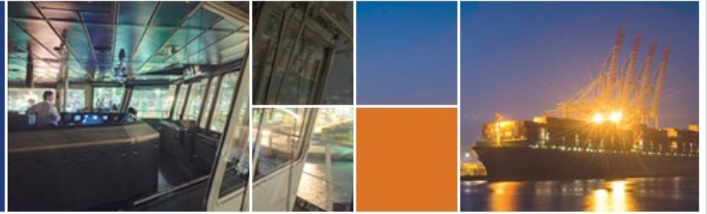




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Amendments to STCW Convention and Code Adopted

July 2010

Revised STCW Convention and Code adopted at the Manila Conference

Major revisions to the *International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (the STCW Convention)*, and its associated Code have been adopted at a Diplomatic Conference in Manila, the Philippines, thereby ensuring that the necessary global standards will be in place to train and certify seafarers to operate technologically advanced ships for some time to come.

The Conference was held in Manila from 21 to 25 June under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution from ships.

The amendments, to be known as "*The Manila amendments to the STCW Convention and Code*" are set to enter into force on 1 January 2012 under the tacit acceptance procedure and are aimed at bringing the Convention and Code up to date with developments since they were initially adopted in 1978 and further revised in 1995; and to enable them to address issues that are anticipated to emerge in the foreseeable future.

Amongst the amendments adopted, there are a number of important changes to each chapter of the Convention and Code, including:

- » Improved measures to prevent fraudulent practices associated with certificates of competency and strengthen the evaluation process (monitoring of Parties' compliance with the Convention);
- » Revised requirements on hours of work and rest (see below) and new requirements for the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, as well as updated standards relating to medical fitness standards for seafarers;
- » New certification requirements for able seafarers;
- » New requirements relating to training in modern technology such as electronic charts and information systems (ECDIS);
- » New requirements for marine environment awareness training and training in leadership and teamwork;
- » New training and certification requirements for electro-technical officers;
- » Updating of competence requirements for personnel serving on board all types of tankers, including new requirements for personnel serving on liquefied gas tankers;
- » New requirements for security training, as well as provisions to ensure that seafarers are properly trained to cope if their ship comes under attack by pirates;
- » Introduction of modern training methodology including distance learning and web-based learning;
- » New training guidance for personnel serving on board ships operating in polar waters; and
- » New training guidance for personnel operating Dynamic Positioning Systems.

Conference agrees new provisions on hours of rest for watchkeepers

New provisions on the issue of "*fitness for duty – hours of rest*" were agreed by the Manila conference in order to provide watchkeeping officers aboard ships with sufficient rest periods. Under the Manila Amendments to the STCW Convention, all persons who are assigned duty as officer in charge of a watch or as a rating forming part of a watch and those whose duties involve designated safety, prevention of pollution and security duties shall be provided with a rest period of not less than:

1. a minimum of 10 hours of rest in any 24-hour period; and
2. 77 hours in any 7-day period.

The hours of rest may be divided into no more than two periods, one of which shall be at least 6 hours in length, and the intervals between consecutive periods of rest shall not exceed 14 hours.

At the same time, in order to ensure a continued safe operation of ships in exceptional conditions, the Conference unanimously agreed to allow certain exceptions from the above requirements for the rest periods.

Under the exception clause, parties may allow exceptions from the required hours of rest provided that the rest period is not less than 70 hours in any 7-day period and on certain conditions, namely:

1. such exceptional arrangements shall not be extended for more than two consecutive weeks;
2. the intervals between two periods of exceptions shall not be less than twice the duration of the exception;
3. the hours of rest may be divided into no more than three periods, one of which shall be at least 6 hours and none of the other two periods shall be less than one hour in length;
4. the intervals between consecutive periods of rest shall not exceed 14 hours; and
5. exceptions shall not extend beyond two 24-hour periods in any 7-day period.

Exceptions shall, as far as possible, take into account the guidance regarding prevention of fatigue in section B-VIII/1.

These provisions were the result of intensive negotiations between regulators and the shipping industry and represent a well balanced solution of the issue in the well known IMO spirit of compromise.

Speaking at the close of the successful Conference, IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos said that the adoption of the revised STCW

had brought to a successful conclusion the concerted effort undertaken by so many -Government and industry alike, dedicated seafarer representative bodies, maritime training institutions, and the many other interested organizations - over a four-year period.

The Conference has been a key highlight in the IMO-designated "Year of the Seafarer", which aims to provide the maritime community with an opportunity to pay tribute to seafarers from all over the world for their unique contribution to society and in recognition of the vital part they play in the facilitation of global trade in a hazardous environment.

Based on IMO Briefings 32 and 33/2010 of June 2010

Further information is available on the IMO webpage dedicated to the STCW Convention and Code: www.imo.org.