

News from International Maritime Organization

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Detail from the main hall in the IMO

INTRODUCTION

This first review of the current work of International Maritime Organization (IMO) bodies covers selected decisions and outcome of discussions of the *Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW)*, which met at the Organization's London Headquarters for its 43rd session from 30 April 4 May 2012, and of the *Maritime Safety Committee (MSC)*, which held its 90th session from 16 to 25 May 2012.

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43rd session of the Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW 43)

Guidance and model courses were agreed by STW 43 relating to the implementation of the Manila Amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, and the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Code, which were adopted in Manila, the Philippines, in June 2010 and entered into force on 1 January 2012.

The Sub-Committee also endorsed, for subsequent approval by MSC and the ILO Governing Body, the revised Guidelines

for Medical Examination of Seafarers, which were developed jointly by IMO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to implement the international standards for medical fitness for seafarers set out in the STCW Convention, as amended, and the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006, in order to promote and support their effective, uniform, global implementation.

The Sub-Committee approved a draft STCW.7 circular providing guidance on Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) Training. A number of guidance to STCW Parties was agreed, for submission to the MSC for approval, and four model courses have been updated to provide the necessary guidance to maritime Administrations and training institutions to develop their training programmes to meet the new standards set out in 2010 Manila Amendments to the STCW Convention and Code.

The Sub-Committee agreed draft amendments to the STCW Convention and Code, to make mandatory the draft IMO Instruments Implementation Code, which has been developed by the Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation (FSI) and is being forwarded for consideration and approval by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) and the Marine environment Protection Committee (MEPC), for submission to the Assembly at an appropriate session, for adoption. The proposed amendments would mean that the STCW Convention and Code would also be added to the list of mandatory IMO instruments intended to be covered by the mandatory audit scheme being developed to replace the current Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme. Areas expected to be covered under the mandatory audit scheme would include issues related to: confirming that a STCW Party had completed the process to be confirmed as giving full effect to the STCW provisions; issuance of dispensations; port State control and watchkeeping provisions; quality standards systems; and reporting of independent evaluations.

Other topics discussed by STW 43 include ISM Code efficiency and user friendliness, contingency planning guidelines, guidelines on safety when transferring persons at sea and gap analysis for training aspects of e-navigation.

90th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 90)

Piracy and armed robbery against ships

Piracy and armed robbery against ships off the coast of Somalia, in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean was high on the agenda of MSC 90. An intense debate on how the international community should deal with issues related to the deployment of privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) on board ships and the carriage of arms on board took place during a special high-level segment of the MSC.

MSC agreed an Interim Guidance for private maritime security companies (PMSCs), providing privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) aboard ships transiting the

high-risk area off the east coast of Africa.

Passenger ship safety

A resolution recommending operational measures aimed at enhancing the safety of large cruise passenger ships, as well as a work plan to address passenger ship safety matters, in the wake of the Costa Concordia incident in January has been adopted. The MSC agreed that a number of operational measures should be implemented immediately, on a voluntary basis, prior to the adoption of any measures following the analysis of the official marine investigation report into the loss of the Costa Concordia;

Amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS 1974)

Amendments have been adopted, inter alia, with expected entry into force on 1 January 2014, as follows:

- SOLAS regulation II-1/8-1, to introduce a mandatory requirement for new passenger ships for either onboard stability computers or shore-based support;
- SOLAS regulation III/20.11.2 regarding the testing of free-fall lifeboats, to require that the operational testing of free-fall lifeboat release systems shall be performed either by free-fall launch with only the operating crew on board or by a simulated launching;
- SOLAS regulation V/14 on ships' manning, to require Administrations, for every ship, to establish appropriate minimum safe manning levels following a transparent procedure, taking into account the guidance adopted by IMO (Assembly resolution A.1047(27) on Principles of minimum safe manning); and issue an appropriate minimum safe manning document or equivalent as evidence of the minimum safe manning considered necessary; and
- SOLAS chapter XI-1 regulation XI-1/2 on enhanced surveys, to make mandatory the International Code on the Enhanced Programme of Inspections during Surveys of Bulk Carriers and Oil Tankers, 2011 (2011 ESP Code, resolution A.1049(27)).

Adoption and approval of other guidelines, codes and circulars, submitted by the IMO Sub-Committees

The MSC adopted amendments to the following Codes, mandatory under the SOLAS Convention, with expected entry into force on 1 January 2014:

- International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft, 2000 (2000 HSC Code), relating to radiocommunication, on testing of satellite EPIRBs;
- International Code for Fire Safety Systems (FSS Code),

relating to fixed foam fire extinguishing systems; and automatic sprinkler, fire detection and fire alarm systems;

- International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code and supplements (amendment 36-12), including harmonization of the Code with the amendments to the UN Recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods, seventeenth revised edition.

LRIT status updated

The MSC was informed that the International LRIT Data Exchange (IDE) had been fully operational at the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) premises, in Lisbon (Portugal), since 18 October 2011. The offer of the EU States for the continued hosting, maintenance and operation of the IDE by EMSA, beyond 2013, at no cost either to the SOLAS Contracting Governments or to the Organization, was welcomed by the Committee. The MSC also welcomed the offer of the United States to continue hosting, maintaining and operating the disaster recovery site of the IDE, beyond 2013, at no cost either to the SOLAS Contracting Governments or to the Organization, with the possibility of reviewing such decision should the circumstances change in the future.

The Committee adopted updated and amended performance standards for LRIT and approved a number of updated and amended circulars relating to LRIT operations.

STCW Convention: independent evaluations considered

The MSC considered the Secretary-General's report on a number of countries whose independent evaluations have been completed since the previous MSC meeting and confirmed that 12 STCW Parties and five overseas territories of one STCW Party continued to give full and complete effect to the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended.

Amendments to IMO instruments that have entered into force on 1 July 2012

- *Amendments to SOLAS to make mandatory the International Code for the Application of Fire Test Procedures (2010 FTP Code);*
- *amendments to SOLAS regulation V/18 to require annual testing of automatic identification systems (AIS);*
- *amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 on pilot transfer arrangements;*
- *amendments to safety certificates in the SOLAS appendix and SOLAS Protocol of 1988, relating to references to alternative design and arrangements;*
- *amendments to the International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, to include addition of new paragraphs in Regulation 1 Safety Approval Plate, and the addition of a new Annex III Control and Verification; and*
- *a new chapter 9 of the International Code for Fire Safety Systems (FSS Code), related to fixed fire detection and fire alarm systems.*