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**GUIDANCE ON TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF SEAFARERS AFFECTED
BY THE SITUATION IN THE ARABIAN SEA, THE SEA OF OMAN
AND THE GULF REGION, PARTICULARLY IN AND AROUND
THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 111th session (13 to 22 May 2026), approved the *Guidance on training and certification of seafarers affected by the situation in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and the Gulf region, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz*, as set out in the annex.

2 This Guidance is intended to assist Administrations responsible for training and the issuance of seafarers' certificates, flag States and port States with the implementation of the training and certification provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code during the exceptional circumstances created by the situation in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and the Gulf region, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

3 The Committee agreed to keep this Guidance under review and to amend it as and when the circumstances so warrant.

4 Member States and international organizations are invited to use the annexed Guidance and to bring it to the attention of all Parties concerned, especially issuing Administrations, and port and coastal State authorities.

ANNEX

GUIDANCE ON TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF SEAFARERS AFFECTED BY THE SITUATION IN THE ARABIAN SEA, THE SEA OF OMAN AND THE GULF REGION, PARTICULARLY IN AND AROUND THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

General principles

1 This Guidance is intended to assist Administrations responsible for the training of seafarers and the issuance of seafarers' certificates, flag States and port States, with the implementation of the STCW Convention and Code during the situation in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and the Gulf region, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz, thereby helping affected seafarers and shipowners to deal with relevant requirements. In particular, the Guidance contains recommended practices with regard to exceptional measures adopted by Parties in response to the ongoing circumstances.

2 Exceptional measures are defined as temporary measures adopted and implemented by Parties to the 1978 STCW Convention, which are not expressly provided in the Convention, and are intended to address difficulties or the impossibility of fulfilling obligations stemming from the STCW Convention and Code.

3 It is recognized that, under the force majeure nature of the situation in the aforementioned area, it may be extremely difficult for affected seafarers and shipping companies to fully implement the obligations of the STCW Convention and Code, which has severely affected unhindered movement.

4 Parties to the 1978 STCW Convention and port States should adopt a practical and pragmatic approach when adopting and implementing measures deviating from relevant provisions of the STCW Convention and Code.

5 At the same time, it is important that in adopting a practical and pragmatic approach, the objectives of safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment are maintained in the area, following the provisions of the STCW Convention and Code to the maximum extent possible. It is recommended that Administrations consider the potential impacts of particular measures they adopt.

Issuing Administrations

Challenges

6 The situation in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and the Gulf region, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz has directly affected the ability of a number of issuing Administrations to strictly adhere to the provisions of STCW regulation I/9 and section A-I/9 of the Code concerning medical standards; as well as STCW regulation I/11 and section A-I/11 of the Code with regard to revalidation of certificates, including the provision of the required training, both practical and theoretical.

Guidance

7 Measures adopted by Parties, including the extension of the validity of certificates, should align to the extent possible with the intention of the relevant provisions. In this connection, Parties should continually review these measures with a view to eventually fully implementing the provisions of the STCW Convention and Code as soon as circumstances permit.

8 The exceptional measures that an issuing Administration deems necessary to implement should take into account its administrative capacities, as well as the needs of flag and port States. As regards extensions of validity, Administrations should consider relevant provisions in the STCW Convention, such as article VIII (Dispensations).

9 To facilitate the continued professional development of seafarers, remote training may be considered. This could take the form of online training or e-learning, as appropriate. It may, however, not be possible to provide training and demonstration of practical skills in this manner, which should be taken into account when considering the revalidation of certificates.

Communication of exceptional measures

10 Exceptional measures implemented by Parties should be communicated to the Secretary-General as soon as possible, and preferably before they come into effect. This should include amendments to previously adopted and/or implemented measures. Parties should also communicate to the Secretary-General as soon as possible the date when such measures will no longer be in effect. The Secretary-General should communicate the information received on such measures to the STCW Parties.

11 Administrations issuing certificates recognized by other Administrations should promptly notify those Administrations of the measures implemented, in accordance with paragraph 1.2 of STCW regulation I/10.

12 With regard to the revalidation requirements related to sea service, issuing Administrations should, as far as possible, comply with the requirements of section A-I/11 of the STCW Code.

13 Extensions of the validity of medical certificates beyond that permitted by the 1978 STCW Convention should be carefully considered, as this may also affect the State's implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006), if applicable.

Flag States

Challenges

14 Flag States are facing diverse challenges, in particular the diverse nature of measures adopted by issuing Administrations with regard to extensions of certificates.

Guidance

15 Flag States should continually verify that information on measures adopted is up to date and current to avoid adverse impact on their endorsements.

16 Flag States may consider providing their ships with relevant documentation and information with regard to any exceptional measures adopted, in order to, inter alia, assist the master in connection with port State control inspections, as appropriate. Flag States should make relevant information available to all stakeholders, including ROs, ship managers and manning agents, as appropriate. The flag State should consider the most appropriate way of disseminating this information.

Port States

Challenges

17 Port States may face challenges in obtaining an overview of the measures adopted by Administrations and, following from that, in identifying possible discrepancies in validities between endorsements and the underlying certificates. Furthermore, port State control regimes may consider taking a coordinated approach to decide to what extent the measures adopted are acceptable and do not pose a risk to persons, property or the environment.

Guidance

18 Port States should adopt a pragmatic and practical approach when carrying out their inspections in light of the ongoing situation and the difficulties faced by issuing Administrations and flag States, particularly with regard to the revalidation of certificates. They should be kept informed of the measures adopted by issuing Administrations and flag States. In cases of doubt, port States should consult the relevant flag State Administrations to resolve matters as quickly as possible.
