



Ref. T2/2.03

MSC/Circ.867  
27 May 1998

**OFFICER OF THE NAVIGATIONAL WATCH ACTING AS THE SOLE  
LOOK-OUT DURING PERIODS OF DARKNESS**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its sixty-ninth session (11-20 May 1998), recalled that a decision had been taken by a majority at its sixty-fifth session that trials conducted in accordance with MSC/Circ.566 (Provisional guidelines on the conduct of trials in which the officer of the navigational watch acts as the sole look-out in periods of darkness) should be discontinued. The Committee further recalled that this decision was implemented by means of a circular adopted at its sixty-sixth session (MSC/Circ.733) which called on Administrations authorizing trials to discontinue trials not later than 31 December 1997, and to submit the results of the trials to MSC 69 for its determination. At its sixty-ninth session, the Committee considered the results of trials which were submitted by a number of Administrations.

2 The Committee recognized that some Administrations were convinced by the trials that the solo watchkeeping arrangements provided at least the same degree of safety and pollution prevention as provided by traditional watchkeeping arrangements with a separate look-out forming part of the watch. Nevertheless, the majority of the Committee remained concerned that solo watchkeeping in periods of darkness would have a potentially adverse impact on safety of navigation and protection of the marine environment.

3 In view of this concern, the Committee, at its sixty-ninth session (MSC 69/22, paragraph 21.32):

- .1 determined, pursuant to paragraph 8.4 of regulation I/13 of the STCW Convention, that it was not necessary or appropriate to amend the watchkeeping provisions of the STCW Convention; and
- .2 called upon Administrations which have authorized ships to participate in trials, or which have authorized ships to continue the practice of solo watchkeeping in periods of darkness indefinitely, to cancel or discontinue such authorizations.