



# IMO News Brief

## HTW 11



**The 11<sup>th</sup> session of Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (hereinafter referred to as HTW) was convened as a hybrid meeting from 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025.**

**This news flash briefs on the outcomes of HTW 11 for major issues to our customers.**

### 1. Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code [Agenda 6]

HTW Sub-Committee continued its discussions on the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention, which is being conducted in two phases:

- Phase 1: Review stage (2024 - 2025), which involves a gap-analysis to identify areas requiring further work
- Phase 2: Revision stage, which focuses on proposing and agreeing on amendments to address the identified gaps

At this session, review stage (Phase 1) was finalized, revealing a substantial number of gaps (over 500) that will require further consideration during the revision stage (Phase 2). Following ISWG-STCW 1, held in October 2024, additional gaps identified added to the list at this session, notably, these included:

- Consideration of Electro-Technical Officers (ETOs) at the management level, in recognition of the significant technological advancements in the maritime industry

Concerns were raised regarding the cumulative impact of additional training requirements, with several Member States cautioning that excessive training obligations could have unintended and undesirable consequences for both seafarers and maritime training institutions. Hence, it was agreed to have, at each step of the road map established, consideration of cumulative impact of new requirements will be revisited.

To facilitate progress on the comprehensive review it is envisaged that an Inter-Sessional Working Group (ISWG) will be held back-to-back with future HTW sessions biennially, starting at HTW 12 in 2026.

A Structured work plan has been developed to holistic revision of the Convention and Code. The process will commence with Chapters 2 (Master and deck department) and 3 (Engine department) of the Convention, along with the corresponding sections in the STCW Code, which serve as the back-bone of it.

It was agreed upon, with consideration following this order:

- Chapters 2, 3 in general and 1 (limited to provisions on STCW oversight);
- Chapters 4, 6 in general and 1 (the rest of chapter other than STCW oversight); and
- Chapters 5, 7 and 8 in general

The original roadmap, a living document that evolves based on the progress of the work, has been revised, now projects that amendments to the STCW Convention will be adopted in 2032. Serious concerns expressed by Several Member States and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) regarding the length of time required to complete the amendment.

## [Accessibility of Information on Seafarer Medical Certificates]

A draft MSC resolution on Accessibility of Information on Seafarer Medical Certificates and Recognized Medical Practitioners conducting seafarer medical examinations.

HTW has finalized a resolution, which is expected to be approved by MSC 110 in June 2025, encouraging Member States to provide information on their own official websites where the validity of seafarer medical certificates are able to be verified, and also provide access to their registers of recognized medical practitioners via the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) portal.

This initiative aims to enhance transparency and accessibility of seafarer medical certification information.

## 2. Development of a Safety Regulatory Framework To Support the Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships Using New Technologies and Alternative Fuels [Agenda 7]

HTW has initiated the development of interim guidelines for training seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and new technologies. It was agreed that these guidelines would adopt a hybrid approach, to be developed in parallel, both:

- Generic requirements applicable to fuel types and new technologies; and
- Fuel/technology-specific requirements that account for the particular characteristics of each fuel or technology

The scope of fuels covered by these guidelines will be determined based on the work of the Carriage of Cargoes and Containers (CCC) Sub-Committee. Priority will be given to fuels for which existing provisions have already been established.

A priority list of fuels requiring training guidelines for seafarers was agreed upon as follows:

- The use of methyl/ethyl alcohols as fuel;
- The use of ammonia as fuel;
- Hydrogen fuel cell powered ships;
- The use of LPG as fuel;
- The use of hydrogen as fuel; and
- Battery powered ships

During this session, the generic interim guidelines were finalized, using STCW.7/Circ.23 (Interim guidance on training for seafarers on ships using gases or other low-flashpoint fuels), as the basis. It was also agreed that fuel-specific guidelines would be developed individually for each fuel or technology, which each set includes a specific Knowledge, Understanding and Proficiency (KUP) table. These guidelines will be issued as an STCW.7 circular.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential training burden on seafarers resulting from multiple fuel/technology-specific guidelines. To mitigate this, it was agreed that common elements across guidelines should be consolidated wherever possible, particularly when considering future amendments to mandatory instruments.

## [Draft Circular on Interim Generic Guidelines on Training for Seafarers on Ships Using Alternative Fuels]

The draft generic guideline was finalized, outlining:

- Requirements for onboard familiarization of seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and new technologies;

- Requirements for basic training for seafarers with safety duties associated with the care, use or emergency response to the fuel and/or system onboard ships using alternative fuels and new technologies;
  - Requirements for advanced training for masters, engineer officers and all personnel with immediate responsibility for the care and use of fuels and/or systems on ships using alternative fuels and new technologies;
  - Standards of Competence for both basic and advanced training; and
  - Need to conduct emergency exercise on board ships using alternative fuels/new technologies at regular intervals
- This draft STCW.7 circular is envisaged to be approved at Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) 110 in June 2025.

#### **[Draft interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel]**

As methyl/ethyl alcohol is the highest-priority fuel for seafarer training, the development of interim training guidelines for its use commenced during this session. However, the work was not completed due to time constraints.

These guidelines will take account of MSC.1/Circ.1621 (Interim Guidelines for the Safety of Ships Using Methyl/Ethyl Alcohol as Fuel) and incorporate relevant sections from several papers submitted to HTW 11.

As draft interim guidelines were not finalized during this session, further consideration will be followed by Correspondence Group, intersessionally.

#### **[Draft interim guidelines for the training of seafarers using other fuels and technologies]**

The development of interim guidelines for other prioritized fuels and technologies is included in the Terms of Reference for the correspondence group, which will report to HTW 12 in early 2026. At this stage, the extent of progress expected to be achieved remains uncertain.

### **3. Validated Model Training Courses [Agenda 3]**

HTW finalized the draft revision of the Guidelines for the development, review and validation of model courses (MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.15/Rev.2), to be disseminated as MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.15/Rev.3, for concurrent approval by MEPC 83, as an urgent item, and MSC 110.

HTW approved the validation of five (5) model courses at this session, as follows:

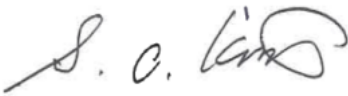
- Revised Model Course 3.20 on Company Security Officer (CSO)
- Revised Model Course 3.21 on Port Facility Security Officer (PFSO)
- Revised Model Course 3.22 on Actions to be Taken to Prevent Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery
- Revised Model Course 1.25 on General Operator's Certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System
- Revised Model Course 1.26 on Restricted Operator's Certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System

### **4. Reports on Unlawful Practices associated with Certificates of Competency [Agenda 5]**

Concerns were expressed by several delegations on unlawful practices associated with certificates during this session. HTW Sub-Committee also noted that these practices could be effectively deterred through enhanced cooperation, increased transparency by Member States regarding their procedures, contact points, and access to their registers, the implementation of digital tools, and, most importantly, the effective application of existing IMO

instruments. The Sub-Committee further noted the importance for Member States and companies of the conduct of verifications of seafarers' documentation before issuing endorsements attesting recognition or employing seafarers.

Should you have any inquiries, please contact P.I.C. Thank you.



**General Manager**  
**Statutory System Certification Team**

P.I.C: PAK Sihyeon (Mr.) / Senior surveyor  
Tel: +82 70 8799 8345  
E-mail: conaudit@krs.co.kr

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