

High Speed Craft Consultative Committee (HSCCC)

**Proposed Arrangement for River Trade Seafarers with respect to
the 5-Yearly Refresher Course on Safety Trainings under the STCW Convention**

Introduction

1. The STCW (2010) Amendments A-VI/1, A-VI/2 and A-VI/3 require that seafarers holding training certificates on emergency, occupational safety, and survival functions, at intervals of every five years, to provide evidence of having maintained the required standard of competence, to undertake the following tasks, duties and responsibilities:

1.1 Basic Training

- Survive at sea in the event of ship abandonment;
- Minimize the risk of fire and maintain a state of readiness to respond to emergency situations involving fire; and
- Fight and extinguish fires.

1.2 Survival craft

- Take charge of a survival craft during and after launch;
- Manage survivors and survival craft after abandoning ship;
- Use locating devices, including communication and signalling apparatus and pyrotechnics; and
- Apply first aid to survivors.

1.3 Advanced fire fighting

- Prevention and extinction of fire;
- Control fire-fighting operations aboard ships; and
- Organize and train fire parties.

2. The Maritime Services Training Institute (MSTI) is preparing a new training course for seagoing seafarers to comply with the STCW requirements. The course outline as agreed by the Marine Department (MD) will cover all aspects for refreshing of seagoing seafarers' knowledge and skill. The duration of the refresher course is 5 days but, there is no refresher course designated for the River Trade seafarers.

3. For seagoing officers including Masters and engineers when applying for the revalidation of seagoing Certificate of Competency (CoC) to a date beyond 1 January 2017, an applicant needs to provide attainment certificate of the refresher course as one of the supporting documents if the applicant's most recent valid safety training was carried out more than 5 years ago. For seagoing ratings not holding any CoC, the same principle applies when these ratings join a Hong Kong ship after 1 January 2017.

The Proposal for River Trade Seafarers

4. River trade (RT) seafarers primarily work on high speed passenger craft (HSC) plying between Hong Kong, China mainland and Macau. In view of the short voyage time and the immediate availability of Search and Rescue services throughout the passage, some of the international instruments such as the STCW Convention might not be applicable to the RT sector in its entirety and should therefore be assessed on a case by case basis.

5. In addition, there are existing requirements for HSC officers to possess Type Rating Certificate (TRC) and TRC holders are subjected to revalidation examination at intervals of not exceeding 4 years. During the TRC revalidation examination, candidates' ability in dealing with emergency situations pursuant to the above sub-paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3 will be examined.

6. Furthermore, all HSCs are required to comply with the International Safety Management (ISM) Code and each is issued with a Safety Management Certificate, which requires the vessel to be manned with qualified, certificated and medically fit seafarers. Section 6.5 of the Code requires a company to establish and maintain procedures for identifying training (including refresher training) and ensure that such training is provided. The HSCs are subject to periodic verification by the Administration at intervals of 2 to 3 years.

7. In view of the above and in balancing the paramount importance of the safety of crew and passengers on board, the ship and the protection of the marine environment, it is proposed that the STCW 5-yearly refresher course requirements for seagoing seafarers be waived for the RT seafarers, provided that the following conditions are met with:

- 7.1 For any river trade rating: has HSC shipboard service record for at least an accumulative period of 12 months during every 5-year period counting from the issuance date of the rating's most recent valid safety training record.
- 7.2 For any officer holding RT CoC: holds a valid TRC (Master, C/O, NVO, or Engineer).

8. RT seafarers who fail to provide evidence of meeting sub-paragraphs 7.1 or 7.2 need to complete a refresher course in accordance with paragraph 3.

Consultation

9. Members are requested to provide comments/views, if any, on the proposal. If there is no objection to the proposal, the Determinations for deck and engineer officers will be amended accordingly.

Shipping Division
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