



## Minimum Safe Manning

*To : Shipowners, Ship Managers and Ship Masters*

### *Summary*

The purpose of this Note is to promulgate the Principles of Minimum Safe Manning and the application procedures for a Minimum Safe Manning (MSM) Certificate.

This Note supersedes the Hong Kong Merchant Shipping Information Note No. 33/2009 issued on 11 November 2009.

### **Introduction**

1. The implementation of 2010 Manila amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers 1978 (STCW), the adoption of the Assembly Resolution A.1047(27) by the IMO and Regulation 2.7 of Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC 2006) have brought about changes to the assessment of minimum safe manning for Hong Kong registered ships.

2. The owner or ship manager of a Hong Kong registered ship is required to make an assessment of the numbers and grades of crew required for its safe operation, for its security, for protection of the marine environment, and for dealing with emergency situations. The manning on board should be sufficient to ensure that:

- (a) the required watchkeeping standard can be maintained;
- (b) the officers and the ratings can perform their duties in accordance with the provisions of the approved Ship's Security Plan (SSP) and the framework of operational guidance section A-VIII of the STCW Code;
- (c) personnel are not required to work more hours than is safe in relation to the safety and the security of the ship; and

- (d) the officers and ratings are not required to work such hours or under such condition which may be injurious to their health and safety.

3. Proposals based on the assessment should be submitted to the Senior Surveyor of Ships, Cargo Ships Safety Section for consideration. In the event that this Department is not satisfied with the proposals put forward by the owner or ship manager, a counter proposal will be made by the Department. In case where the owner or ship manager disagrees with the counter proposal, they can invite a surveyor of the Department for a practical demonstration of the crew to carry out the essential tasks in the context of the principles of safe manning under their proposal. However, the cost of such assessment would be borne by the owners or operators.

4. Similarly, in the event of any change in the equipment, construction, use of the ship or the provisions of the approved SSP which may affect the safe manning scale, insufficient manning level in complying with the hours of rest requirements or change of management company, the owner or ship management company should make an application for the issue of a new safe manning document.

## **Determination of Safe Manning Levels**

### *Principles of Safe Manning*

5. This Department will consider a ship to be safely manned if there are sufficient crew with appropriate skill and experience to ensure that the following guiding principles are fulfilled:

- (a) the capability to:
  - (i) maintain safe navigational, port, engineering and radio watches in accordance with regulation VIII/2 of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, and also maintain general surveillance to the ship;
  - (ii) moor and unmoor the ship safely;
  - (iii) manage the safety functions of the ship when employed in a stationary or near-stationary mode at sea;
  - (iv) perform operations, as appropriate, for the prevention of damage to the marine environment;
  - (v) maintain the safety arrangements and the cleanliness of all accessible spaces to minimize the risk of fire;
  - (vi) provide for medical care on board ship;
  - (vii) ensure safe carriage of cargo during transit;

- (viii) inspect and maintain, as appropriate, the structural integrity of the ship;  
and
- (ix) operate in accordance with the approved SSP; and
- (b) the ability to:
  - (i) operate all watertight closing arrangements and maintain them in effective condition, and also deploy a competent damage control party;
  - (ii) operate all onboard fire-fighting and emergency equipment and life-saving appliances, carry out such maintenance of this equipment as is required to be done at sea, and muster and disembark all persons on board; and
  - (iii) operate the main propulsion and auxiliary machinery including pollution prevention equipment and maintain them in a safe condition to enable the ship to overcome the foreseeable perils of the voyage.

6. In considering the fulfilments of the above principles, the owners and ship managers should take into account the following onboard functions, when applicable:

- (a) ongoing training requirements for all personnel, including the operation and use of fire-fighting and emergency equipment, life-saving appliances and watertight closing arrangements;
- (b) specialized training requirements for particular types of ships and in instances where crew members are engaged in shipboard tasks that cross departmental boundaries;
- (c) provision of proper food and drinking water;
- (d) need to undertake emergency duties and responsibilities; and
- (e) need to provide training opportunities for entrant seafarers to allow them to gain the training and experience needed.

*Guidelines for determination of minimum safe manning and Responsibilities in the application of principles of minimum safe manning*

7. In determining the minimum safe manning of a ship, the owner or manager of a Hong Kong registered ship shall take into account the requirements of Annexes 2 and 3 of IMO Resolution A.1047(27), in the context of the management of the safety, security and protection of the marine environment functions of a ship.

*Application for a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate*

8. The application form for a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate is available from the Marine Department web site [http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/forms/pdf/msmc\\_app.pdf](http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/forms/pdf/msmc_app.pdf). The owner or ship manager shall assess the proposed manning scale and they should:

- (a) identify all the functions to be undertaken on board during a representative voyage;
- (b) identify the skill and experience required to perform those functions;
- (c) identify those functions in normal operations which need to be undertaken concurrently;
- (d) determine the minimum number of crew required to undertake concurrent operations safely and to carry out security duties in accordance with the approved SSP;
- (e) ensure the working arrangements with respect to the skill and training of the crew are capable of undertaking concurrent and continuous operations; and
- (f) ensure that the working arrangements allow for sufficient rest periods to avoid fatigue.

9. The number of officers, who are required by the Merchant Shipping (Seafarers) (Certification of Officers) Regulation, should be taken into consideration in assessing the proposed manning scale.

10. To assist ship owners/managers to apply for the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate, please refer to the IMO Resolution A.1047(27) in Appendix I, the application form for a Minimum safe Manning Certificate in Appendix II and the guidance on the application in Appendix III of this Note.

11. Shipowners or ship managers should submit the signed application form together with the following documents to Cargo Ships Safety Section at 24/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong, by facsimile to Fax. No.: (852) 2545 0556 or by E-mail: [ss\\_css@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:ss_css@mardep.gov.hk).

- (a) Copy of Mooring Arrangement Plan or General Arrangement for the cargo vessel in question;
- (b) Copy of Certificate of Survey;
- (c) Copy of UMS Certificate, if applicable; and

(d) Copy of Document of Compliance (ISM).

12. Whenever there is a need to re-issue a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate, the obsolete copy should be returned to Cargo Ships Safety Section for cancellation.

### **Enquiries**

13. Enquiries arising from this Note should be directed to the Senior Surveyor of Ships/Cargo Ships Safety Section, at 24/F., Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong  
Tel. No.: (852) 2852 4510, Fax No.: (852) 2545 0556 or E-mail: [ss\\_css@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:ss_css@mardep.gov.hk).

Marine Department  
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