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4 July 2016

To: Shipowners / Ship Managers and Ship Masters

Dear Sir/Madam,

Implementation of the Manila amendments to STCW Convention and Code

1. The Manila amendments to the STCW Convention, introduced new grades of “Able Seafarer Deck” (AS(D)) and “Able Seafarer Engine” (AS(E)). Ratings contribute to certain functions such as shipboard operations and maintenance as stipulated in STCW Code A-II/5 and A-III/5 are required to be certified as AS(D) and AS(E) respectively. Every seafarer who performs any functions specified in table A-II/5 (contribute to anchoring and mooring, cargo handling and etc.) or A-III/5 (contribute to fuelling and oil transfer, ballast, operation of equipment and machinery, shipboard maintenance and etc.) shall hold a certificate of proficiency (CoP), as applicable.

2. The Amended STCW Convention will be fully implemented on 1 January 2017, ship operators shall ensure the manning scales in their MSM certificates are complied with the STCW Convention and the IMO Assembly Resolution A.1047(27). The existing MSM Certificates issued by HKMD do not include the scale on AS(D) and AS(E), and hence do not meet the requirements of the amended STCW Convention and will only be valid until 31 December 2016. The ship operators are therefore requested to submit new application for the MSM certificate.

3. Merchant Shipping Information Note (MSIN) No. 32/2013 and its appendices (Annex 1) promulgate the Principal of Minimum Safe Manning and the application procedures for a Minimum Safe Manning (MSM) Certificate. They serve to provide

guidance for ship owners/managers on the application for MSMC. Marine Department notes a number of qualified AS(D)s and AS(E)s may not be issued corresponding CoPs in time. This circular provides additional information for ship operators in renewing the MSM certificates.

4. According to Regulation II/5.6 and III/5.4 of the STCW Convention, qualified watch-keeping ratings, i.e. holding CoPs in respect of Regulation II/4 or III/4, may be considered to have met the respective requirements of Regulation II/5 and III/5 respectively if they have served in relevant capacities in their corresponding department for a period of not less than 12 months within the last 60 months preceding the entry into force of the Regulation II/5 and III/5. However, some of the Administrations may not adopt the regulations to issue CoPs for them. Ship operators may find difficulties in employing sufficient AS(D) and AS(E) to work on board. In this regard, Marine Department (MD) is going to temporarily accept a certain number of competent ratings who have not yet received their CoPs.

5. As a temporary measure, a minimum number of two AS(D)s and one AS(E) are required, and the differences may be substituted by corresponding ratings holding CoPs of Ratings forming part of a navigational watch (RW(D)) or Rating forming part of an engineering watch (RW(E)) with relevant capacities as required in paragraph 4.

6. Consider a vessel of 10,000 GT or above with +MOD and UMS modes, the required number of ratings are listed below in table 1:

RATINGS		
Grade	STCW Reg.	No.
Able Seafarer Deck (AS(D))	II/5	5
Ratings forming part of a navigational watch (RW(D))	II/4	0
Other Deck Ratings (OR(D))	VI/1	0
Able Seafarer Engine (AS(E))	III/5	2
Ratings forming part of an engineering watch (RW(E))	III/4	0
Other Engine Room Ratings (OR(E))	VI/1	0

Table 1: Recommended Minimum Safe Manning Scale (for rating) – Conventional Manning Mode

7. Should companies find difficulties in employing the required number of certified AS(D)s and AS(E) to work onboard their ships, they may apply to MD for granting a maximum number of substitutions of three AS(D)s and one AS(E). And the minimum number of ratings will be revised as in table 2:

RATINGS		
Grade	STCW Reg.	No.
Able Seafarer Deck (AS(D))	II/5	2
Ratings forming part of a navigational watch (RW(D))	II/4*	3
Other Deck Ratings (OR(D))	VI/1	0
Able Seafarer Engine (AS(E))	III/5	1
Ratings forming part of an engineering watch (RW(E))	III/4**	1
Other Engine Room Ratings (OR(E))	VI/1	0

Remarks * - Ratings acquire 12 months experience in relevant capacities while holding certificate of proficiency of RW (D) (II/4)

** - Ratings acquire 12 months experience in relevant capacities while holding certificate of proficiency of RW (E) (III/4)

Table 2: Revised Minimum Safe Manning Scale (for rating) – Conventional Manning Mode

8. The number of the substitutions may vary depending on various factors. For details, please refer to the guidance on MSIN No. 32/2013.
9. It is anticipated that about 2400 applications have to be processed and to ensure the revised MSM Certificate is on board before 1 January 2017, you are advised to submit the application the soonest possible.
10. Whenever a revised MSM Certificate is issued, the obsolete copy should be returned to Cargo Ship Safety Section for cancellation.
11. Should you have any query, please do not hesitate to contact the Senior Surveyor/Cargo Ships Safety Section at telephone number (852) 2852 4510, fax number (852) 2545 0556 or by email to "ss_css@mardep.gov.hk".

Yours faithfully,

No signature on website copy

(C.H. TSO)
General Manager / Ship Safety Branch
for Director of Marine