

IMO HTW 11 Meeting Summary

26 February 2025



The 11th session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW 11), was held 10-14 February 2025 at the IMO Headquarters in London. The meeting was supplemented by the hybrid (remote) participation. LISCR participated in the following groups in addition to the plenary.

Group	Agenda
Working Group 1	Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code
Working Group 2	Development of training provisions for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and technologies

Model training course

New model courses

HTW 11 validated the following model training courses:

- 1.25 on General Operator's Certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS);
- 1.26 on Restricted Operator's Certificate for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS);
- 3.20 on Company Security Officer;
- 3.21 on Port Facility Security Officer; and
- 3.23 on Actions to Be Taken to Prevent Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery

Proposed amendments to the Guidelines for the development, review and validation of model courses (MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.15/Rev.2)

HTW 11 prepared amendments for approval by MSC 110. The revision includes the standard template of the model courses.

Role of human element

Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) related matters

HTW 11 concluded that MASS trials should be undertaken in accordance with regulation I/13 of the STCW Convention on Conduct of trials.

Unlawful practices associated with certificates of competency

HTW 11 noted anonymized information on fraudulent certificates of competency and endorsements provided by the IMO Secretariat. During the session, many delegates expressed concerns about the current situation. HTW 11 also emphasized the importance of Member States and companies verifying seafarers' documentation before issuing endorsements attesting recognition or employing seafarers.

Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code

In 2024, MSC 108 approved the methodology for the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention and Code, adopting a two-phase approach: Phase 1 (Review/Identification of gaps), followed by Phase 2 (Revision).

Phase 1 (Gap analysis)

HTW 11 completed phase 1 of the work, i.e. identification of the gap of the current STCW Convention after undergoing the review of over 500 proposals.

In this regard, HTW 11 acknowledged the concerns expressed on the cumulative impact of new and additional training requirements for seafarers without removing any existing requirements. HTW 11 agreed that this will be considered when concrete amendments are considered in phase work and thereafter.

Term "Endorsement"

Having considered the background information on clarifying when an endorsement should be issued under the provisions of the Convention and Code, HTW 11 noted that the term "endorsement" could refer either to the issuance of certificates (when the issuing and flag State Administration were the same) or to their recognition (when the issuing and flag State Administrations were different). Recognizing that this ambiguity might cause confusion, HTW 11 agreed to include this proposal in the list of gaps.

Port State control

In relation to including the familiarization of seafarers, HTW 11 noted that the Convention and Code do not currently include a provision for exercising this control. HTW 11 agreed to include this proposal in the list of gaps and recommended caution when evaluating proposals on this issue in phase 2 to ensure that Port State Control Officers (PSCOs) do not become assessors of seafarers.

In agreeing, HTW 11 noted the view that PSCOs might carry out operational control to check the effectiveness, communication, interaction, and familiarity of the master and crew, including procedures, the human interface, and/or a functional test to verify the correct operation of a piece of equipment.

Fraudulent STCW Certificate

Action against Fraudulent STCW certification was identified as a gap, including the promotion of the use of electronic certificates.

Simulation and seagoing service

HTW 11 agreed that the use of simulators to meet a portion of seagoing service requirements was only appropriate for the first issuance of certificates of competency at the operational level, for certificates of proficiency issued under Chapter V and for revalidation, noting that Article IX of the Convention already permits individual Administrations to extend the use of simulators.

Phase 2 (actual amendments)

HTW 11 agreed that phase 2 starts at HTW 12 followed by the Intersessional Working Group right after the HTW 12 meeting.

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To facilitate the work, the IMO Secretariat was instructed to prepare the standard template for the proposal.

HTW 11 agreed on the following work plan:

- HTW 12 (2026): Chapters 1, 2 and 3
- HTW 13 (2027): Chapters 2 and 3
- HTW 14 (2028): Chapters 4, 6 and then 1
- HTW 15 (2029): Chapters 1, 4 and 6,
- HTW 16 (2030): Chapters 5, 7 and 8
- HTW 17 (2031): Finalization of the amendments to the STCW Convention and Code

Cumulative impact

HTW 11 acknowledged that it is currently impossible to quantify the cumulative impact of adding new training requirements to the Convention. However, it agreed that, at each stage of the road map, the cumulative effect should be assessed to ensure this issue is carefully considered throughout Phase 2 of the review.

Oversight and verification of the STCW Convention implementation

Several documents were submitted to HTW 11 regarding the relationship between the oversight mechanism under the STCW Convention (regulations I/2, I/7, I/8, and I/10) and the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) under the IMO Instruments Implementation (III) Code (resolution A.1070(28)).

HTW 11 invited the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) to consider the possible integration of the two schemes and to provide instructions to the Sub-Committee on the Implementation of IMO Instruments (III) accordingly.

Additionally, HTW 11 established a dedicated correspondence group (CG) to address this matter.

Medical provisions in the STCW Convention

HTW 11 reviewed and finalized the draft MSC resolution on accessibility of information related to medical provisions in the Convention. The draft resolution:

- Recognizes that the ISM Companies must have a means to verify the validity of a seafarer's medical certificate;

- Invitees Parties to the STCW Convention to consider publishing the information through the official websites of authorized government organizations. This information should be available in English; and
- Also invites Parties to note the necessity of providing prompt verification of the validity of seafarer medical certificates on the official websites of authorized government organizations and shall be available in English.

Seafarer training to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels

HTW 11 noted the following development, which was taken into consideration during the discussion at HTW 11:

- .1 MSC.1/Circ.1621 on the Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel;
- .2 MSC.1/Circ.1647 on the Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using fuel cell power installations;
- .3 MSC.1/Circ.1666 on the Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using LPG as fuel;
- .4 MSC.1/Circ.1679 on the Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using LPG cargo as fuel; and
- .5 MSC.1/Circ.1687 on the Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using ammonia as fuel.

Generic interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and new technologies

HTW 11 prepared the draft generic interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and new technologies, using *the Interim guidance on training for seafarers on ships using gases or other low-flashpoint fuels* (STCW.7/Circ.23), as amended by STCW.7/Circ.23/Add.1, as the basis of the work. The interim guidelines were developed based on the following principles:

- containing provisions on basic and advanced training;
- addressing alternative fuels and new technologies collectively;
- excluding knowledge, understanding, and proficiency (KUP) tables; and
- not including specific provisions on exemptions, with the understanding that any exemption provisions could be considered and incorporated in the development of fuel/technology-specific interim guidelines.

The key points of the guidelines are:

- Seafarers responsible for designated safety duties must undergo basic training in the care, use, and emergency response related to the fuel and systems on board ships using alternative fuels and new technologies.
- Masters, engineer officers, and all personnel with immediate responsibility for the care and use of fuel and systems must complete advanced training.

It should be noted that:

- Documentary evidence should be issued by the Administration indicating that the holder has completed the above-mentioned training; and
- Emergency exercises related to the fuels and/or systems on board ships using alternative fuels and new technologies should be conducted at regular intervals.

Draft fuel/technology-specific interim guidelines

HTW 11 initiated the work on fuel/technology-specific interim guidelines, which will consist of several individual sets of interim guidelines, instead of a comprehensive set. Each fuel/technology-specific interim guidelines would contain KUP tables.

Draft interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel

HTW 11 commenced development of draft interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel, taking into account MSC.1/Circ.1621 on *Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel*.

The work will continue in the corresponding group (CG).

Amendments to the STCW Convention

HTW 11 decided not to embark on the amendments to the STCW Convention and Code at this stage.

Further information

For further information please contact: imo@liscr.com

Annex

Provisional list of draft circular/resolution

- Draft revision of the Guidelines for the development, review and validation of model courses (MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.15/Rev.2); and
- Draft MSC resolution on accessibility of information related to medical provisions in the Convention.