

IMO HTW 12 Meeting Summary

16 March 2026



The 12th session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW 12), was held 23-27 February 2026 at the IMO Headquarters in London. The meeting was supplemented by the hybrid (remote) participation. This report also includes the relevant outcome of the intersessional working group held 2 – 6 March on comprehensive revision of the STCW Convention and Code, which was authorized to report the outcome to the next meeting of the HTW Sub-Committee (HTW 13) scheduled for 2027.

LISCR participated in the following groups in addition to the plenary.

Group	Agenda
WG 1	Working Group on the Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code (agenda item 6);
WG 2	Working Group on the STCW oversight and verification processes (agenda item 6);
WG 3	Working Group on the Development of training provisions for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and technologies
DG 2	Drafting Group on Scoping exercise of fatigue-related provisions (agenda item 8)

Model training course

New model courses

HTW 12 validated the following model training courses:

- 1.21 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities;
- 1.37 on Chemical Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator; and
- 2.06 on Oil Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator)

Comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code

Following the completion of phase 1 of the work at HTW 11 (February 2025), which identified gaps in the current STCW Convention and Code, HTW 12 addressed concrete proposals submitted to the session, consisting of 168 documents. The Sub-Committee focused on chapters I, II and III.

Discussions associated with Chapters I, II and III of STCW Convention

Transitional arrangements

The proposal was to revise articles. HTW 12 agreed to address it under relevant regulations and therefore, invited the submitters to submit a new proposal to HTW 13.

Simulator training substituting seagoing experience

ISWG-STCW 2 considered gaps related to the use of simulator training to meet part of the required seagoing service and agreed on a set of guiding principles for further development. It concluded that simulator training could be used as an optional means to partially substitute seagoing service for deck, engine and electro-technical officers under regulations II/1, III/1 and III/6, applicable to both the 12-month approved training programme route and the 36-month service route outside such programmes. The possible reduction of required seagoing service would be limited to up to three months, while certain minimum practical experience requirements would remain mandatory, including the six months of supervised bridge or engine-room watchkeeping and the six months of seagoing service required within electro-technical officer training programmes. ISWG-STCW 2 also agreed that criteria for simulator training, including instructor qualifications and possible credit ratios between simulator training and seagoing service, should be addressed through amendments to chapter I of the STCW Convention and Code.

Violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault

ISWG-STCW 2 considered proposals related to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault. Regarding the proposal to nominate a support contact ashore, ISWG-STCW 2 agreed that this matter would be more appropriately addressed in the guidance provisions of section B-I/6 (training and assessment) rather than through amendments to sections A-II/1 and A-III/1, and invited interested Member States and organizations to submit proposals to HTW 13. On violence and harassment more broadly, ISWG-STCW 2 agreed to avoid duplicating provisions already contained in table A-VI/1-4, to develop new knowledge, understanding and proficiency (KUP) within existing competences, and to introduce additional training requirements for both management and operational levels. ISWG-STCW 2 considered that no further amendments were needed for the support level, noting that existing basic training provisions in section A-VI/1.2 already addressed the issue, while observers highlighted that this provision currently applies only to seafarers assigned designated safety or pollution-prevention duties. Draft amendments to several competence tables were subsequently prepared for further consideration.

Mental health, psychological safety, and gender and cultural diversity

ISWG-STCW 2 considered proposals related to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, and agreed that the proposal to nominate a support contact ashore should be addressed under section B-I/6 (guidance regarding training and assessment) rather than through amendments to sections A-II/1 and A-III/1, and invited interested Member States and organizations to submit proposals to HTW 13 accordingly. ISWG-STCW 2 also agreed to avoid duplication of provisions in table A-VI/1-4, to develop new KUPs within existing competences, and that additional training should apply to both management and operational levels. It further noted that basic training in section A-VI/1.2 already contained relevant provisions applicable to support level seafarers, therefore additional KUPs or amendments for the support level were not necessary, while observers noted that the provision only applies to seafarers assigned designated safety or pollution-prevention duties.

Cybersecurity

ISWG-STCW 2 considered proposed amendments addressing gaps related to cybersecurity and agreed to develop a new competence to cover this area. ISWG-STCW 2 agreed that the amendments should remain generic, recognizing that detailed cyber risk management on board should continue to be addressed through the ISM Code, and that the new competence should apply only at the operational level.

Ballast water management

ISWG-STCW 2 considered proposed amendments related to ballast water management and agreed to develop new KUPs within existing competences. ISWG-STCW 2 agreed that these should address basic knowledge of the BWM Convention and the impacts of discharging untreated ballast water, without introducing overly prescriptive requirements, noting that detailed knowledge of implementation could be obtained through familiarization with the ship's Ballast Water Management System (BWMS) and procedures in the approved Ballast Water Management Plan. The amendments were agreed to apply only to the management and operational levels.

Senior electro technical officer

ISWG-STCW 2 considered proposals to establish a new regulation and section in chapter III of the STCW Convention and Code for a Senior Electro-Technical Officer (SETO). During the discussion, it was noted that recognition of such a position is generally left to the company's discretion, and that during the development of the 2010 Manila amendments, it had already been agreed that no SETO level should be created. ISWG-STCW 2 therefore agreed not to proceed with the proposed amendments to establish a new regulation and section for this capacity.

Parametric rolling

Due to time constraints, ISWG-STCW 2 deferred the discussion to HTW 13.

Standardized list of methods of demonstrating competence

ISWG-STCW 2 considered proposals regarding the standardization of methods for demonstrating competence used in column 3 of the competence tables in part A of the STCW Code. After discussion, ISWG-STCW 2 prepared a standardized list of methods for demonstrating competencies.

STCW Oversight and Verification Processes

HTW 12 reaffirmed the previously agreed principles that the STCW oversight system should be consolidated with the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS), while retaining key STCW elements such as the "White List" and the role of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) in confirming Parties giving full and complete effect to the Convention and Code. HTW 12 agreed that the consolidated process developed by the correspondence group (CG) would form the basis for further development.

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

HTW 11 (held in February 2025) developed generic interim training guidelines, which were approved by MSC 110 as STCW.7/Circ.25 on *Generic interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using alternative fuels and new technologies*.

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

HTW 12 developed the draft STCW.7 on *interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using methyl/ethyl alcohols as fuel* for approval by MSC 111.

The Guidelines introduce a structured two-level training model:

- 1 Basic training for personnel with designated safety duties related to fuel systems;
- 2 Advanced training for masters, engineer officers and personnel with immediate responsibility for fuel and fuel systems.

Training should address, inter alia:

- Fuel system design and operation;
- Bunkering procedures and fuel management;
- Hazard identification and control (flammability, toxicity, electrostatic risks, corrosion);
- Emergency response, including spill and leak scenarios;
- Fire-fighting specific to alcohol fuels;
- Occupational health and safety; and
- Pollution prevention and regulatory compliance.

Documentary evidence of completion should be issued by the Administration.

Interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using ammonia as fuel

HTW 12 developed the draft STCW.7 on *interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using ammonia as fuel* for approval by MSC 111.

The Guidelines establish a two-level training structure:

- 1 Basic training for personnel with designated safety duties related to ammonia fuel systems;
- 2 Advanced training for masters, engineer officers and personnel with immediate responsibility for fuel and fuel systems.

Training requirements cover, inter alia:

- Ammonia fuel storage arrangements (including atmospheric, pressurized and low-temperature systems);
- Fuel system design and operation;
- Bunkering procedures and fuel calculations;
- Hazard prevention, including toxicity, vapour dispersion, phase change hazards, low temperature and pressure risks, Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapour Explosion (BLEVE), and electrostatic hazards;
- Emergency response, including ammonia release scenarios and mitigation systems;
- Fire-fighting specific to ammonia;
- Occupational health and safety, including gas detection and personal toxicity monitoring; and
- Pollution prevention and compliance with relevant IMO instruments.

Risk analyses should be incorporated into training, and documentary evidence of completion should be issued by the Administration.

HTW 12 discussed whether seafarers serving on IGC Code ships using ammonia cargo as fuel should be excluded from the scope of the draft Interim Guidelines. Concerns were expressed that application to IGC Code ships could result in over-training, given existing cargo training requirements, while other views held that such training does not address the specific engine-room hazards associated with ammonia as a propulsion fuel and that additional training is therefore necessary. HTW 12 agreed to maintain a broad scope of application without explicitly excluding IGC Code ships, noting the non-

mandatory nature of the Guidelines and that flag State Administrations may apply alternative arrangements. HTW 12 agreed to consider inviting MSC to determine whether separate training guidelines should be developed for seafarers on IGC Code ships using ammonia cargo as fuel, taking into account that the draft Guidelines were developed on the basis of instruments not applicable to IGC Code ships and the Committee's ongoing "one ship, one code" policy. It was also emphasised that the Guidelines should remain precautionary and conservative in light of limited operational experience and potential safety and pollution risks.

Wind propulsion system

In the absence of a base document, the CG was tasked to work on draft interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using wind propulsion systems and wind-assisted power.

Other fuels and technologies

Owing to time constraints, HTW 12 could not progress further development of the draft interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using other alternative fuels and new technologies (i.e. hydrogen fuel cell, LPG, hydrogen and battery) and agreed that further work should be undertaken by the CG.

Fatigue and seafarers' hours of work and rest

MSC 110 instructed the HTW Sub-Committee to progress the output on fatigue and seafarers' hours of work and rest, including consideration of recommendation 4 of the Study on the effectiveness and effective implementation of the ISM Code. HTW 12 also noted the ongoing comprehensive review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code addressing an identified gap on hours of rest. It was recognized that port State control faces significant limitations in verifying compliance with work and rest hour requirements and safe manning levels, and that flag States and companies bear primary responsibility for effective implementation. Guidance was identified as a means to clarify the interrelationship between relevant requirements and strengthen implementation.

HTW 12 considered proposals for a structured scoping exercise on fatigue and hours of work and rest, including a phased, evidence-based approach, and agreed that preparatory work should compile relevant evidence, applicable IMO and other international instruments, and other material of international relevance. HTW 12 emphasized the importance of coordination with ILO, particularly in light of potential updates to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, to ensure alignment and coherent implementation.

The CG would assess the regulatory framework, including relevant IMO and other international instruments and casualty investigation reports, analyze root causes of seafarer fatigue and concerns related to hours of work and rest, undertake a gap analysis of current implementation, and, if time permits, identify possible measures to enhance effectiveness.

Work programme

HTW 12 agreed to include "Development of guidelines addressing risks of falls from height" in the agenda of the next meeting.

Any other business

Application of Violence and Harassment Training Requirements

HTW 12 considered the submission, which highlighted uncertainty regarding the application of resolution MSC.560(108), introducing amendments to table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code on violence and harassment training, particularly in respect of seafarers holding valid basic training certificates issued prior to 1 January 2026. While reaffirming the Organization's shared objective of ensuring a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment on board ships and acknowledging the value of the new training requirements, HTW 12 noted differing views on whether harmonized guidance was required to ensure consistent implementation, certification, inspection and enforcement, taking into account article X of the 1978 STCW Convention concerning recognition of certificates. The Secretary-General emphasized that the Convention does not distinguish between "existing" and "new" seafarers and stressed that the new training requirements were intended to apply to all seafarers to strengthen personal safety, professional conduct and protection from violence and harassment.

HTW 12 concluded that the text was clear, and no further clarification was required.

Further information

For further information please contact: imo@liscr.com

Annex

Provisional list of draft circular/resolution

- Model training course
 - 1.21 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities;
 - 1.37 on Chemical Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator; and
 - 2.06 on Oil Tanker Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator)
- Draft measures to enhance expert participation in the review process
- Draft interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using methyl/ethyl alcohols as fuel
- Draft interim guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using ammonia as fuel