



COMDTCHANGENOTE 16721
NVIC 19-14
April 1, 2019

NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 19-14, CH-1

Subj: CH-1 TO POLICY ON QUALIFIED ASSESSORS, NVIC 19-14, COMDTPUB 16721

Ref: (a) Policy on Qualified Assessors, NVIC 19-14, COMDTPUB 16721

1. PURPOSE. This Commandant Change Notice publishes CH-1 to NVIC 19-14.
2. ACTION. The Coast Guard will use NVIC 19-14 and 46 CFR 10.405(a) to establish that persons who assess the competency of mariners are qualified to perform assessments for STCW endorsements. Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMIs) should also bring this notice to the attention of the maritime industry within their zones of responsibility.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. With the release of this Commandant Change Notice, NVIC 19-14 is updated.
4. DISCUSSION. After publication of NVIC 19-14, the Coast Guard extended the date for acceptance of assessments of mariner competence that are not signed by a Coast Guard approved Qualified Assessor. This change notice revises NVIC 19-14 to reflect this extension.
5. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a regulation. It is not intended to, nor does it impose legally binding requirements on any party. It represents the Coast Guard’s current thinking on this topic and is issued for guidance purposes to outline methods of best practice for compliance with applicable law. You can use an alternative approach if the approach satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations.
6. MAJOR CHANGES. This Commandant Change Notice revises NVIC 19-14 to:
 - a. Reflect previously published policy extending the date for acceptance of assessments that were not signed by a Coast Guard approved Qualified Assessor; and
 - b. Provide guidance concerning assessments that are performed on military vessels.

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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.

- a. The development of this Commandant Change Notice and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office, and are categorically excluded (CE) under current CE #A3 from further environmental analysis, in accordance with Section 2.B.2. and Appendix A, DHS Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01, Revision 01, Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Because this NVIC implements, without substantive change, the applicable Commandant Instruction or other federal agency regulations, procedures, manuals, and other guidance documents, Coast Guard categorical exclusion #A3 is appropriate.
- b. This Commandant Change Notice will not have any of the following: significant cumulative impacts on the human environment; substantial controversy or substantial change to existing environmental conditions; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local laws or administrative determinations relating to the environment. All future specific actions resulting from the general policies in this NVIC must be individually evaluated for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), DHS and Coast Guard NEPA policy, and compliance with all other environmental mandates.

8. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Commandant Change Notice. An electronic version will be located at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/nvic>.

9. PROCEDURE. Remove and insert the following pages:

Remove

Enclosure (1), Page 1

Enclosure (1), Page 4

Enclosure (2)

Insert

Enclosure (1), Page 1 CH-1

Enclosure (1), Page 4 CH-1

Enclosure (2) CH-1

10. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. This Commandant Change Notice has been thoroughly reviewed during the directives clearance process, and it has been determined there are no further records scheduling requirements, in accordance with the Federal Records Act (44 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.), NARA requirements, and the Information and Life Cycle Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12 (series). This policy does not create significant or substantial change to existing records management requirements.

11. FORMS/REPORTS. None.

12. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. All requests for changes or questions regarding implementation of NVIC 19-14 and this Commandant Change Notice should be directed to the Mariner Credentialing Program Policy Division (CG-MMC-2), at (202) 372-2357 or MMCPolicy@uscg.mil. To obtain approval as a Qualified Assessor, contact the NMC at (888) 427-5662 or IAskNMC@uscg.mil.

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Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard

Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy

NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 19-14

- c. The Convention is not self-implementing; therefore, the U.S., as a signatory to the STCW Convention, initiated regulatory changes to ensure full implementation of the amendments to the STCW Convention and STCW Code. The U.S. implements these provisions under the Convention and under the authority of United States Code, Titles 33 and 46. The Coast Guard published a final rule in the Federal Register on December 24, 2013, (78 FR 77796) that implements the STCW, including the 2010 amendments. The final rule became effective on March 24, 2014. The Coast Guard is publishing this NVIC to provide guidance on complying with the new regulations and is cancelling previous policy. Accordingly, this NVIC cancels NVIC 6-97.

5. DISCUSSION.

- a. As defined in 46 CFR 10.107, a Qualified Assessor (QA) is a person who is qualified to evaluate candidates for STCW endorsements to determine whether they have demonstrated the level of competence in the task for which the assessment is being made.
 - b. Additional information on QAs is provided in Enclosure (1), including information on how to obtain approval as a QA. Guidance on professional qualification criteria for assessors for various STCW endorsements is provided in Enclosure (2). Enclosure (3) provides guidance on conducting assessments. QAs are encouraged to become familiar with and apply the concepts discussed in this enclosure. Portions of Enclosure (3) that are not consistent with the Final Rule published in the Federal Register on December 24, 2014, (78 FR 77796) have been redacted to avoid confusion. Enclosure (4) contains excerpts of relevant portions of the STCW Convention and STCW Code.
 - c. All assessments of competence for STCW endorsements must be signed by a QA approved by the Coast Guard, in accordance with 46 CFR 11.301(a)(1)(i) and 12.601(b)(1)(i). In order to facilitate the transition to this new requirement, the Coast Guard will accept assessments that have been demonstrated in the presence of and signed by an assessor who has not been Coast Guard approved until December 31, 2016, provided that the assessor meets the professional requirements in 46 CFR 10.405(a)(3) to assess competence for the specific endorsement. Assessors must be in possession of the level of endorsement, or other professional credential, which provides proof that he or she has attained a level of experience and qualification equal or superior to the relevant level of knowledge, skills, and abilities to be assessed (46 CFR 10.405(a)(3)). In the interim, the Coast Guard will accept assessments signed by mariners who hold an appropriate national endorsement and meet the qualifications described in Enclosure (2). After December 31, 2016, QAs must be approved by the National Maritime Center to conduct assessments.
6. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a regulation. It is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party. It represents the Coast Guard's current thinking on this topic and is issued for guidance purposes to outline methods of best practice for compliance to the applicable law. You can use an alternative approach if the approach satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.

- a. The development of this NVIC and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office, and are categorically excluded (CE) under current USCG CE # 33 from further environmental analysis, in accordance with Section 2.B.2. and Figure 2-1 of the National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts, COMDTINST M16475.1 (series). Because this NVIC implements, without substantive change, the applicable Commandant Instruction or other federal agency regulations, procedures, manuals, and other guidance documents, Coast Guard categorical exclusion #33 is appropriate.
- b. This NVIC will not have any of the following: significant cumulative impacts on the human environment; substantial controversy or substantial change to existing environmental conditions; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local laws or administrative determinations relating to the environment.

8. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. This NVIC has been thoroughly reviewed during the directives clearance process, and it has been determined there are no further records scheduling requirements, in accordance with Federal Records Act, 44 U.S.C. 3101 et seq., National Archives and Records Administration requirements, and Information and Life Cycle Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12 (series). This policy does not create a significant or substantial change to existing records management requirements.

9. QUESTIONS. All questions regarding implementation of this Circular should be directed to the Mariner Credentialing Program Policy Division (CG-CVC-4), at (202) 372-2357 or MMCPolicy@uscg.mil. To obtain approval as a Qualified Assessor, for a course or training program, or for new instructors to teach training that has already been approved, please contact the National Maritime Center at (888) 427-5662 or IAskNMC@uscg.mil.



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Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy

- Encl: (1) Frequently Asked Questions
(2) Qualification Guidelines for Qualified Assessors
(3) Assessor's Manual for Conducting Mariner Assessments (Redacted)
(4) Excerpts from STCW Convention and STCW Code

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *What is a Qualified Assessor?*

The term “Qualified Assessor” (QA) is defined in 46 CFR 10.107 as “a person who is qualified to evaluate, for STCW endorsements, whether an applicant has demonstrated the level of competence in the task for which the assessment is being made. This person must be individually approved by the Coast Guard or through a Coast Guard approved or accepted course or program of training.”

QAs who assess mariners independent of approved training, including in-service assessments on board a vessel, must be individually approved by the Coast Guard to conduct specific assessments (46 CFR 11.301(a)(1)(i) and 12.601(b)(1)(i)).

A QA assesses the ability of an individual to perform a task, duty, or responsibility properly, using established criteria and professional judgment in determining whether an acceptable level of proficiency and competence has been demonstrated. A QA must always personally witness the performance of the task, duty, or responsibility by the person whose competence is to be assessed. This performance is called a “practical demonstration” and is defined in 46 CFR 10.107 as “the performance of an activity under the direct observation of a QA for the purpose of establishing that the performer is sufficiently proficient in a practical skill to meet a specified standard of competence or other objective criterion.” For purposes of assessment of competence of a skill or ability required for an STCW endorsement, the assessment criteria are set out in the standards of competence contained in the tables in the STCW Code.

2. *Do I need to be approved as a QA to conduct shipboard assessments?*

On or after January 1, 2020, assessors must be approved by the National Maritime Center. In order to facilitate the transition to the new requirement for approval of QAs, the Coast Guard will accept assessments that have been demonstrated in the presence of and signed by an assessor who has not been Coast Guard approved until December 31, 2019, provided that the assessor meets the professional requirements in 46 CFR 10.405(a)(3) to assess competence for the specific endorsement. During this interim period, assessors must be in possession of the level of endorsement, or other professional credential, which provides proof that he or she has attained a level of experience and qualification equal or superior to the relevant level of knowledge, skills, and abilities to be assessed (46 CFR 10.405(a)(3)). Until December 31, 2019, the Coast Guard will accept assessments signed by mariners who hold an appropriate national endorsement and meet the qualifications described in Enclosure (2).

Qualified military personnel need not be approved QAs to continue to sign assessments on military vessels after December 31, 2019.

3. *What are the requirements to be a Qualified Assessor?*

As specified in 46 CFR 10.405(a), to become a QA you should:

- Have experience, training, or instruction in assessment techniques;
- Be qualified in the task(s) for which the assessment is being conducted; and
- Hold or have held the level of endorsement or other professional credential which provides proof that he or she has attained a level of experience and qualification equal or superior to the relevant level of knowledge, skills, and abilities for the task to be assessed.

4. *How do I demonstrate that I have experience and/or training in assessment techniques?*

Documentation of training or instruction may be in the form of performance evaluations that include an evaluation of effectiveness in on-the-job conduct of assessment activities and/or a certificate of successful completion from a “train the trainer” or an assessor training course. A “train the trainer” course should be based on IMO model course 6.09, *Training Course for Instructors* and an assessor training course should be based on IMO model course 1.30, *On-Board Assessment*, or a similar syllabus covering the following areas:

- Identification of performance standards;
- Assessment of knowledge;
- Assessment of skills and abilities;
- Measurement of progress toward objectives and of adequate performance;
- Favorable and unfavorable conditions for assessment; and
- Use of feedback for performance improvement.

5. *What experience do I need to be “qualified in the task(s) to be assessed”?*

Guidance on qualifications and experience for assessors is provided in Enclosure (2).

6. *Do I have to hold a current and valid merchant mariner credential (MMC) to be a Qualified Assessor?*

No. While a QA should have the training and experience described above, they do not need to have a current, valid MMC. A mariner may not have a current MMC for a variety of reasons that are unrelated to having the experience and other qualifications needed to serve as a QA. For example, a mariner who is disqualified from holding a mariner credential for medical reasons may still be capable of competently serving as a QA.

A specialist in a particular field of non-maritime education (such as fire fighting or first aid), is not required to hold an MMC to be approved to conduct assessments in that field. A specialist is someone whose expertise, experience, and current practice are concentrated within a particular subject matter.

7. *How can I become a Qualified Assessor?*

You should submit a written request to be approved as a QA to either NMCCourses@uscg.mil or to:

Commanding Officer (NMC-21)
National Maritime Center
100 Forbes Drive
Martinsburg, WV 25404

Your request should identify the specific portions of the STCW you wish to assess and provide evidence that you meet the qualifications discussed above.

8. *I am approved as an instructor in Coast Guard approved courses. Do I need approval as a Qualified Assessor in order to perform the assessments in the courses that I teach?*

No. Approved instructors may conduct all assessments within the course(s) they are approved to instruct without further approval. Also, a faculty member employed at a state maritime academy or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy operated in accordance with 46 CFR Part 310 and instructing in a navigation or engineering course, is qualified to serve as a Qualified Assessor in their area(s) of specialization without individual evaluation by the Coast Guard.

9. *Does an approval as a Qualified Assessor expire?*

Yes. Approvals are granted for 5-year periods, and may be renewed as described below (46 CFR 10.405(d)).

10. *What should I do to renew my approval as a Qualified Assessor?*

As specified in 46 CFR 10.405(d), in order to renew their qualifications, each QA must have either experience, training, or evidence of instruction in effective assessment within the past 5 years. To renew your approval, you should request renewal from the NMC as described above for an original approval, and submit evidence of your most recent experience as a Qualified Assessor, your recent experience performing the tasks you are approved to assess, and your continued ability to assess the competence of candidates for STCW endorsements.

11. *Can the company I work for request approval for me to serve as a Qualified Assessor on my behalf?*

Yes. Employers may request approval of the persons who will serve as QAs on their vessels or at their training facilities. The approval as a QA is given to the individual assessor, not the company. Upon approval, the company should give the QA approval letter to the assessor.

12. *Does a Qualified Assessor have to use the national assessment guidelines in the relevant NVIC?*

No. However, unless approval for the alternative assessment(s) is given by the National Maritime Center (NMC), shipboard QAs may only make minor changes to the assessments in the national guidelines to reflect differences in shipboard equipment and operating procedures (46 CFR 11.301(a)(1)(i) and 12.601(b)(1)(i)). Approval is not needed to use the assessment guidelines included in the applicable NVIC.

13. *I have been assessing mariners for various STCW endorsements without approval. May I continue to do so?*

Yes, but only until December 31, 2019. After that date, the Coast Guard will only accept assessments conducted and signed by an approved Qualified Assessor.

14. *Is there any guidance about conducting assessments?*

Yes. Enclosure (3), *Assessor's Manual for Conducting Mariner Assessments*, provides an overview of the STCW assessment process.

15. *Can assessments be conducted on a military vessel?*

Generally, yes. Military assessors should have qualifications equivalent to those for QAs on commercial vessels. More specific guidance on qualifications for military assessors is provided in Enclosure (2). Military assessors should only conduct assessments that are within their personal experience and are relevant to the vessel on which they are conducted. For example, assessments involving a specific propulsion mode should not be performed on a vessel that is not fitted with that mode of propulsion and/or by an assessor who lacks experience in that propulsion mode. Qualified military personnel need not be approved QAs to continue to sign assessments on military vessels after December 31, 2019.

QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES FOR QUALIFIED ASSESSORS

As specified in 46 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 10.405(a), to become a Qualified Assessor (QA), an applicant should have evidence to establish:

1. Experience, training, or instruction in assessment techniques;
2. Qualifications in the task for which the assessment is being conducted; and
3. Possession of the level of endorsement, or other professional credential, which provides proof that he or she has attained a level of experience and qualification equal or superior to the relevant level of knowledge, skills, and abilities for the task to be assessed.

All assessments of competence for STCW endorsements must be signed by a QA approved by the Coast Guard in accordance with 46 CFR 11.301(a)(1)(i) and 12.601(a)(1). In order to facilitate the transition to this new requirement, the Coast Guard will accept assessments that have been demonstrated in the presence of and signed by an assessor who has not been Coast Guard approved until December 31, 2019, provided that the assessor meets the professional requirements in 46 CFR 10.405(a)(3) to assess competence for the specific endorsement. Qualified military personnel need not be approved QAs to continue to sign assessments on military vessels after December 31, 2019. Assessors must be in possession of the level of endorsement, or other professional credential, which provides proof that he or she has attained a level of experience and qualification equal or superior to the relevant level of knowledge, skills, and abilities to be assessed (46 CFR 10.405(a)(3)). In the interim, the Coast Guard will accept assessments signed by mariners who hold an appropriate national endorsement and meet the qualifications described in the table below. Military assessors should only conduct assessments that are within their personal experience and are relevant to the vessel on which they are conducted. For example, assessments involving the carriage of cargo should not be performed on a vessel that does not carry cargo and/or by an assessor who lacks experience on cargo-carrying vessels. The Coast Guard will also consider other experience, including, but not limited to military experience, that is equivalent to that noted below.

STCW ENDORSEMENT	ASSESSOR QUALIFICATIONS
Chief Mate and Master 3,000 GT or More (STCW II/2; 46 CFR 11.305, 11.307)	Assessors should have at least 1 year experience as Master on vessels of at least 1,600 GRT or 3,000 GT. Military assessors should have experience as Commanding Officer (CO) or Executive Officer (XO) on seagoing vessels of at least 1,600 GRT or 3,000 GT. For the function "cargo handling and stowage," the assessor should have at least 1 year of experience as or equivalent to Chief Mate and/or Master on cargo-carrying vessels of at least 1,600 GRT or 3,000 GT.

STCW ENDORSEMENT	ASSESSOR QUALIFICATIONS
Chief Mate and Master 500 GT or More and Less Than 3,000 GT (STCW II/2; 46 CFR 11.311, 11.313)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as Master valid on vessels of at least 200 GRT or 500 GT. Military assessors should have experience as Commanding Officer (CO) or Executive Officer (XO) on seagoing vessels of at least 200 GRT or 500 GT.
Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch 500 GT or More (STCW II/1; 46 CFR 11.309)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as the officer in charge of a navigational watch (OICNW) on sea-going vessels of at least 200 GRT or 500 GT. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS) for underway officer of the deck (OOD).
Master Less Than 500 GT (STCW II/2; 46 CFR 11.315)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as Master on oceans vessels of 100 GRT or more. Military assessors should have experience as Commanding Officer (CO) on seagoing vessels of at least 100 GRT.
Master Less Than 500 GT Limited to Near-Coastal Waters (STCW II/3; 46 CFR 11.317)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as Master on oceans or near coastal vessels of 100 GRT or more. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for underway officer of the deck (OOD).
Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch Less Than 500 GT (STCW II/1; 46 CFR 11.319)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as the officer in charge of a navigational watch on oceans vessels of 100 GRT or more. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for underway officer of the deck (OOD).
Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch Less Than 500 GT Limited to Near-Coastal Waters (STCW II/3; 46 CFR 11.321)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as the officer in charge of a navigational watch on near-coastal or oceans vessels of 100 GRT or more. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for underway officer of the deck (OOD).
Able Seafarer-Deck (STCW II/5; 46 CFR 12.603)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as OICNW on vessels of at least 200 GRT or 500 GT. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for Deck Watch Officer or be a First Class Boatswains Mate or above.

STCW ENDORSEMENT	ASSESSOR QUALIFICATIONS
Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch (STCW II/4; 46 CFR 12.605)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as OICNW on vessels of at least 200 GRT or 500 GT. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for Helmsman and Lookout.
Chief Engineer and Second Engineer Officer 3,000 kW / 4,000 HP or More (STCW III/2; 46 CFR 11.325, 11.327)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as Chief Engineer and/or First Assistant Engineer on vessels of at least 3,000 kW or 4,000 HP. Assessors should have this experience for each propulsion mode they will assess. Military assessors should have experience as Chief Engineering Officer on seagoing vessels of at least 3,000 kW (4,000 HP) or more for each propulsion mode they will assess.
Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch 750 kW / 1,000 HP or More (STCW III/1; 46 CFR 11.329)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as Chief Engineer and/or First Assistant Engineer on vessels of the applicable propulsion mode(s) of at least 1,000 HP or 750 kW. Assessors should have this experience for each propulsion mode they will assess Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for underway officer of the engineering watch (EOOW).
Chief Engineer and Second Engineer Officer Between 750 kW / 1,000 HP and 3,000 kW / 4,000 HP (STCW III/3; 46 CFR 11.331, 11.333)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as Chief Engineer Unlimited, Chief Engineer-Limited or Designated Duty Engineer, or First Assistant Engineer on vessels of at least 750 kW or 1,000 HP. Assessors should have this experience for each propulsion mode they will assess. Military assessors should have experience as Chief Engineering Officer on seagoing vessels of at least 750 kW (1,000 HP) or more for each propulsion mode they will assess.
Electro-Technical Officer 750 kW / 1,000 HP or More (STCW III/6; 46 CFR 11.335)	Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as Chief Engineer and/or First Assistant Engineer or hold an STCW endorsement as an Electro-Technical Officer and have at least 1 year of experience performing duties as an Electro-Technical Officer or equivalent. Military assessors should have experience as Chief Engineering Officer on seagoing vessels of at least 750 kW (1,000 HP) or more.

STCW ENDORSEMENT	ASSESSOR QUALIFICATIONS
<p>Able Seafarer-Engine (STCW III/5; 46 CFR 12.607)</p>	<p>Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as the officer in charge of an engineering watch on vessels of the applicable propulsion mode(s) of at least 750 kW or 1,000 HP. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for Engineering Officer of the Watch.</p>
<p>Rating Forming Part of an Engineering Watch (STCW III/4; 46 CFR 12.609)</p>	<p>Assessors should have at least 1 year of experience as the officer in charge of an engineering watch on vessels of the applicable propulsion mode(s) of at least 750 kW or 1,000 HP. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for Engineering Officer of the Watch.</p>
<p>Electro-Technical Rating 750 kW / 1,000 HP or More (STCW III/7; 46 CFR 12.611)</p>	<p>Assessors should have experience as Second Assistant Engineer, or hold an STCW endorsement as Electro-Technical Officer. Military assessors should be authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard PQS for underway officer of the engineering watch (EOOW).</p>
<p>Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats Other Than Fast Rescue Boats (STCW VI/2-1; 46 CFR 12.613)</p>	<p>Assessors should have shipboard experience with assigned duties as the person in charge of a lifeboat on vessels of at least 200 GRT or 500 GT.</p>
<p>Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats Other Than Lifeboats and Fast Rescue Boats (STCW VI/2-1; 46 CFR 12.615)</p>	<p>Assessors should have shipboard experience with assigned duties as the person in charge of a survival craft on vessels of at least 200 GRT or 500 GT.</p>

ASSESSOR'S MANUAL FOR CONDUCTING MARINER ASSESSMENTS

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Research & Development Center
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JUNE 2000

Prepared for:

**U.S. Department of Transportation
United States Coast Guard
National Maritime Center
Arlington, VA 22203-1804**

REDACTED

Portions of this manual that refer to NVICs that have been cancelled or superseded or are inconsistent with this NVIC and the Final Rule published in the Federal Register on December 24, 2013, (78 FR 77796) have been redacted to avoid confusion.

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CONDUCTING MARINER ASSESSMENTS: A PRACTICAL MANUAL FOR ASSESSORS

Introduction

The STCW Challenge

Recent enactment of the *Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Code* by the *International Maritime Organization (IMO)* has led to new requirements in conducting assessments of mariner proficiency. The STCW Code identifies a broad set of proficiency areas comprised of skills, knowledge, and abilities. It further directs maritime industries in its member nations to assess mariner proficiency in selected areas on the basis of practical demonstration. Assessors will be responsible for administering assessments to mariners and ensuring that valid and reliable results are obtained.

The Role of the Assessor

As an assessor, you will be responsible for assessing the ability of candidates to perform a task, duty, or responsibility properly. You will use established criteria and your professional judgment to determine whether the candidate has demonstrated an acceptable level of proficiency. You will use assessment procedures that have been carefully developed, reviewed, and approved prior to the assessment. You should personally observe the mariner's performance and determine the outcome of the assessment.

Purpose of Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide assessors with guidelines for conducting valid and reliable mariner assessments based on practical demonstration. This manual is not intended to provide comprehensive instruction in the full range of assessment issues. Rather, it is intended as a focused introduction and reference to selected factors that affect validity (job criticality) and reliability (consistency) while conducting such assessments.

The reference section of this manual lists specific STCW documents, applicable NVICs, and other source documents that can be referred to for more detailed guidance in developing and conducting mariner assessments based on practical demonstration.

Components of an Assessment Procedure

Any assessment procedure that is designed to meet IMO and U.S. Coast Guard requirements for practical demonstration of mariner proficiency will typically be comprised of several common components: *assessment objectives*, *assessment conditions*, *performance measures*, *performance standards*, and *scoring procedures*. As an assessor, you should familiarize yourself with these components, referring to the specific assessment procedures you will be using.

When conducting an assessment, you will evaluate a candidate's ability to meet pre-defined *assessment objectives*. These objectives can be derived from the STCW Code and U.S. regulations, as well as technical manuals, job instructions, textbooks, and task analyses. Each assessment objective consists of one or more separate actions. An example assessment objective from a Lookout assessment is "describe lookout duties and responsibilities." As part of this objective, the candidate must demonstrate knowledge of the procedures for reporting sightings, including identifying and describing the procedure and reporting all relevant information. An example objective from a Prepare Main Engine for Operation assessment is "perform engine auxiliaries pre-start checks." To meet this objective, one action the candidate must perform is to determine the status of the main engine controls and ensure that they are appropriate for starting the main engine.

The candidate's performance on the stated assessment objectives will be evaluated under various *assessment conditions*. Conditions for the Lookout assessment, for example, include the presence of appropriate targets to be sighted, clear visibility during daylight and at night, and restricted visibility. The assessment conditions will be explicitly defined in the assessment procedures.

Each assessment objective will have one or more corresponding sets of performance measures and performance standards. *Performance measures* include observation and recording of specific mariner actions, or the outcome of those actions. Table 1 below provides a sample of mariner actions, performance measures, performance standards, and a scoring checklist from a Helmsman assessment procedure. It shows three of the five actions for the assessment objective "Demonstrates use of magnetic and gyro compasses in open waters." The first performance measure in this table is "Report of compass comparison," which is measured when assessing the action "Compare and report course by gyro and magnetic compass after a course change." Here, the assessor is required to record the mariner's report of the compass comparison, then apply the corresponding performance standard.

Performance standards specify the level of performance that is considered an acceptable or target level. Continuing with the example in the first row of Table 1, there are two performance standards that are to be applied in scoring the corresponding performance measure. In this case, the mariner is required to both (1) make a report after the course change and (2) provide a reported magnetic reading that is ± 2 degrees of actual.

Scoring procedures are used in scoring individual actions, as well as sets of scores to determine the outcome of performance assessments. Both of these types of scoring procedures should be explicitly defined in the assessment procedures. Pass/fail is the most common scoring procedure for individual actions. In this case, a candidate obtains a passing score for an action by passing all performance standards corresponding to that action. Scoring procedures applied to sets of multiple scores will most commonly be based on some range of acceptable scores. However,

assessments often involve critical objectives that must be passed or the candidate fails the entire assessment. For example, a candidate undertaking an assessment of his ability to start the main engine must be able to correctly place the emergency stop valve in the run position. This action is essential to safe job performance, so a candidate must be able to perform it to pass the assessment.

Table 1. Example of Actions, Performance Measures, and Performance Standards from the Helmsman Assessment

Action	Performance Measure	Performance Standard	Score
Compare and report course by gyro and magnetic compass after a course change.	Report of compass comparison.	<p>Performance meets all standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Report after course change. <input type="checkbox"/> Reported magnetic reading to be +/- 2 degrees of actual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Compare and report course by gyro and magnetic compass periodically.	Report of compass comparison.	<p>Performance meets all standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Report at the time interval specified in the standing orders or company policy. <input type="checkbox"/> Comparison of gyro and magnetic compass to be unprompted by assessor/watch officer if consistent with company procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Reported magnetic reading to be +/- 2 degrees of actual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Steer by magnetic compass in moderate weather.	Maintain a steady course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Course to be maintained at +/- 5 degrees of ordered course for 30 minutes, relying solely upon the magnetic compass. <p>In adverse winds or current, allowance can be made for a less stringent standard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Overview of the Assessment Process

You should follow the same basic series of five steps in conducting an assessment, even if you are conducting assessments of a number of mariner proficiencies. The first step is to prepare for the assessment by reviewing and ensuring the required assessment conditions and scheduling the assessment at an appropriate time (e.g., at night for certain Lookout objectives). The second step is to brief the candidate before the assessment. This involves verifying the candidate's readiness to undertake the assessment and then briefing the candidate on the assessment objectives, measures, standards, and scoring. The third step involves observing the candidate's performance during the assessment and recording the results. For the fourth step, the assessment outcome is determined by scoring each performance measure and tallying the scores across objectives. The fifth and final step is to debrief the candidate following the assessment. Figure 1 depicts the steps involved in conducting an assessment.

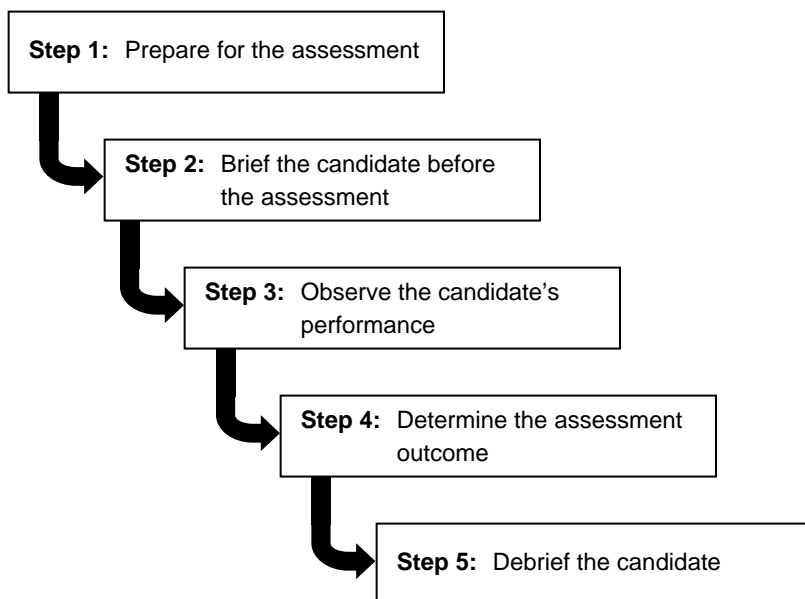


Figure 1. Steps involved in conducting mariner assessments based on practical demonstration.

The remainder of this manual consists of guidelines for conducting mariner assessments. The guidelines are organized around the five steps involved in conducting mariner assessments. At each step, guidance is provided regarding factors to consider in preparing for and conducting assessments, followed by a general checklist of issues to consider.

Guidelines for Conducting Mariner Assessments

As an assessor, you should always strive to conduct valid and reliable assessments. An assessment is *valid* when it accurately measures the job-critical knowledge, skills, and abilities required for proficient job performance. An assessment is *reliable* when it consistently obtains the same results across mariners with comparable skills.

How do you know if you are prepared to conduct a valid assessment that will accurately measure the job-critical knowledge, skills, and abilities required for proficient job performance?

Your assessment will be valid if the conditions of assessment reasonably reflect a representative range of working conditions and requirements. Some questions you should consider in determining whether you are prepared to conduct a valid assessment are listed below.

- Will the assessment be conducted under realistic working conditions that adequately assess the mariner's abilities to perform his or her duties on the job?
- Will the mariner be required to demonstrate the skills and knowledge that are identified in the assessment as critical to proficiency?
- Will the mariner be required to rely on his or her own skills and knowledge?

How do you know if you are prepared to conduct a reliable assessment that will consistently obtain the same results across mariners with comparable skills?

Your assessment will be reliable if you carefully follow prescribed assessment procedures that are designed to ensure consistent results from one assessment to the next. Some questions you should consider in determining whether you are prepared to conduct a reliable assessment are listed below.

- Have you reviewed the instructions in the assessment package to ensure that you are prepared to carefully follow prescribed assessment procedures?
- Will you provide the candidate with a complete set of instructions and answer any appropriate questions that he or she may have?
- Are you prepared to accurately observe and record all mariner performance, as instructed in the assessment package?

Step 1: Prepare for the Assessment

Ideally, you should begin preparing for an assessment several days before it is scheduled. The first activity is to coordinate the assessment with the candidate(s) to ensure that they are properly prepared and qualified to take part in the assessment. Each assessment procedure should specify candidate prerequisites for assessment, in terms of prior training, experience, licenses, and successful completion of other related assessments. If these are absent, they should be discussed and established by those responsible for assessment in your organization. You should verify that a candidate meets all prerequisites for an assessment. In addition, you should determine that a candidate is scheduled to be onboard for an adequate period of time to complete the assessment, which will range from an hour to days or weeks, depending upon the specific assessment procedures.

The second activity involved in preparing for the assessment is to consider and plan for the required conditions. Carefully read the assessment conditions listed in the assessment procedures. Prior to conducting an onboard assessment, check your passage plan to determine when the required conditions might be present. Plan to schedule your assessment to match the availability of these conditions, if possible. Common conditions that can often be planned for in advance are being underway at sea, maneuvering in restricted waters, or being moored. Other conditions, such as restricted visibility or heavy seas, cannot be planned for in advance and can only be taken advantage of when the conditions arise. When you have prepared a schedule, inform the candidate(s), the relevant watch officer(s), and other personnel of the date and time(s) of the assessment so that they can plan their activities accordingly.

The third preparatory activity is to check all equipment required for the assessment and ensure that it is operational and available. The assessment procedures should specify the equipment required to assess a particular proficiency. If an engineering assessment involves checking equipment status, make sure you know the normal range for each variable and record this information so that you can refer to it during the assessment. As part of your check of equipment, you should also review all applicable safety precautions and procedures to ensure full adherence to them.

General Checklist for Assessment Preparation

- ❑ Gather and review all assessment materials.
- ❑ Verify that the candidate meets the assessment prerequisites.
- ❑ Check the candidate's duty schedule.
- ❑ Ensure that the appropriate conditions will be present for the assessment.
- ❑ Schedule the assessment and inform all affected personnel.
- ❑ Prepare the assessment area(s).
- ❑ Prepare and arrange the necessary equipment, and ensure that it is operational.
- ❑ Determine the necessary safety precautions.

Step 2: Brief the Candidate before the Assessment

The pre-assessment briefing should take place at least one day prior to the assessment (earlier if at all possible). This will help both you and the candidate to be well prepared for the assessment. During this briefing, you should provide the candidate with a copy of the Candidate Instructions and Assessment Control Sheet. The *Candidate Instructions* are instructions prepared especially for the candidate, focusing on the issues that will be of concern to that individual. The *Assessment Control Sheet* summarizes the assessment objectives and all of the actions required for each objective. It is also the document on which you will record the candidate's final scores for each objective.

Begin the briefing with a discussion of the candidate's prior experience, training, and qualifications. At this time, you should verify that this candidate is both qualified and willing to undertake the assessment. If you both agree the candidate is ready for the assessment, then continue with the assessment process. If not, arrange for additional on-the-job or simulator training and set a date for another review of the candidate's qualifications.

Review the conditions of the assessment with the candidate. Specifically, discuss the different operational conditions under which assessment will occur. You should also discuss the period of assessment. Some assessments can be completed in a single, relatively brief period of time. Other assessments require repeated observation, taking advantage of available conditions, such as restricted visibility, as they occur.

Safety is of paramount concern during the assessment. Because of this, you should remind the candidate that it is permissible to ask questions during the assessment. This can help to reduce the risk of an unsafe act during the course of the assessment. For all assessments, ensure that the candidate has the proper equipment to carry out the assessment. Inform the candidate that an assessment will be stopped at any time if you, the assessor, judge that safety conditions are being violated for any reason.

General Checklist for Briefing the Candidate before the Assessment

- ❑ Provide the candidate with copies of the *Candidate Instructions* and *Assessment Control Sheet*.
- ❑ Discuss the candidate's readiness for the assessment.
- ❑ Review the *Candidate Instructions* with the candidate and answer any questions.
- ❑ Discuss the desired outcome(s) and consequences of failing to perform part or all of the assessment.
- ❑ Advise the candidate of the conditions and schedule of the assessment.
- ❑ Review the circumstances under which the assessment will be terminated, due to safety concerns.

Step 3: Observe the Candidate's Performance

The third step in the assessment process is to observe the candidate's performance during the assessment. Remember that you must continuously observe the candidate. Throughout the assessment, require the candidate to adhere to standard procedures, except when assessment procedures require demonstration of knowledge or skills different from those standard procedures. For example, a company may use points to report sightings, but a candidate may also be asked to demonstrate knowledge of the relative bearing system as part of the Lookout assessment.

Specific assessment objectives, performance measures, performance standards, and scoring procedures will be included in each assessment. Your consistent application of these procedures will ensure that you conduct a valid and reliable assessment. However, adherence to these procedures may require some flexibility on your part. Specifically, in some cases you may be required to remember the performance of the candidate for some time before you are able to record and score his or her performance. In addition, there may be times during the assessment when you will need to ask the candidate what he or she is doing. You should try to limit your questions during the candidate's performance, so that you minimize the amount of coaching the candidate receives from you.

Typically, an assessment will include a number of questions regarding the candidate's knowledge of rules and procedures pertaining to the duties under assessment. In addition, there will commonly be a number of questions regarding the candidate's performance that must be asked for clarification. Generally, a good time to ask all of these questions is following the candidate's demonstration of practical skills. At this point, you can ask specific questions you have about the performance you observed and use these questions as introductions, when appropriate, to more general questions about knowledge and rules included as part of the assessment.

Remember that, in order to maintain assessment validity and reliability, candidates should be assessed on their ability to perform their job tasks and duties and to demonstrate their knowledge of job procedures and rules. Avoid training candidates to successfully complete an assessment rather than proficiently perform their job. Also avoid allowing candidates to observe

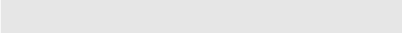
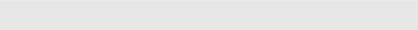
assessments of other mariners when this will provide them with an unfair advantage during subsequent assessment.

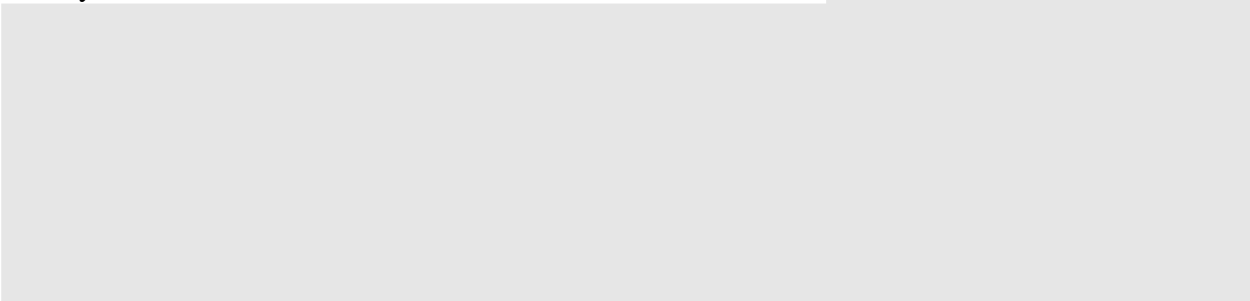
Finally, it is important to remain constantly vigilant regarding operational effectiveness and safety. Assessments should be conducted only where they do not adversely affect the normal operation of the ship. In addition, assessments must be terminated whenever safety conditions are being violated.

General Checklist for Observing the Candidate's Performance

- ❑ If a safety violation occurs, terminate the assessment immediately.
- ❑ Ensure that the candidate can concentrate on the task at hand.
- ❑ Do not allow other crewmembers to interfere with the assessment.
- ❑ Ensure realistic assessment conditions with a normal working environment.
- ❑ Continuously observe the candidate during the assessment. Record the observed performance and apply the performance standards as soon as practical during the assessment.
- ❑ Require that standard procedures be adhered to, except when assessment procedures require demonstration of knowledge or skill different from these procedures.
- ❑ Avoid asking leading questions. Try to keep your questions fair but general in nature.
- ❑ Avoid giving the candidate unsolicited assistance, but respond to appropriate questions and provide appropriate equipment when required.
- ❑ Remain objective and maintain positive control of the operation at all times.

Step 4: Record Results and Determine Assessment Outcome

The fourth step in the assessment process is to determine the assessment outcome. To do this, record the candidate's performance  and then apply the scoring procedures specified in the assessment procedures. Remember that if the candidate incorrectly performs any of the critical, required actions, he or she automatically fails the entire assessment. Finally, determine and document the outcome of the assessment 



General Checklist for Determining Assessment Outcome

- ❑ Record performance on the appropriate *Assessment Worksheet*.
- ❑ Strictly adhere to the prescribed performance standards and scoring procedure(s).
- ❑ Determine and document the outcome of the assessment [REDACTED]
- ❑ Attest to successful demonstration of tasks [REDACTED]

Step 5: Debrief the Candidate

The fifth and final step in the assessment process is to debrief the candidate as soon as possible after the assessment. During this debriefing, you should restate the assessment objectives and discuss the candidate's performance on each objective. A good strategy for beginning a debriefing is to review the candidate's positive accomplishments. The candidate will then likely be in a better frame of mind to hear any comments regarding areas needing improvement.

If the candidate failed to demonstrate proficiency, you may work together with him or her to develop an improvement plan to prepare for reassessment. Conditions for conducting reassessments should be specified in the assessment procedure. If these are absent, they should be discussed and established by those responsible for assessment in your organization. Specific issues to consider are: (1) the period between initial assessment and reassessment, and (2) any changes in the performance standards and scoring procedures that are adopted for reassessment.

General Checklist for Debriefing the Candidate

- ❑ Debrief the candidate as soon as possible after the assessment.
- ❑ Restate the assessment objective(s).
- ❑ Focus on positive accomplishments first.
- ❑ Identify areas needing improvement.
- ❑ If the candidate failed to demonstrate proficiency, jointly develop an improvement plan to prepare for reassessment.

GLOSSARY

Assessor. Anyone who conducts an assessment or evaluation of an individual's proficiency. The term *assessor* is used in many discussions of STCW requirements, including the STCW Code

Assessment. The process of evaluating whether an individual's performance meets established *proficiency criteria*.

Assessment Conditions. The *assessment conditions* define the setting, tools, references, aids, and safety precautions that are required for an assessment of a candidate's proficiency.

Assessment Objectives. The goals for the performance-based assessment of proficiency based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the job. A complete *assessment objective* description includes the required mariner performance, the conditions of assessment, and the standards of performance for successful accomplishment of the objective.

Assessment Procedures. The activities that are conducted in administering the assessment of a candidate's proficiency. The term *assessment procedure* can describe either the actions taken or the written instructions and activity descriptions that are used in conducting an assessment.

Duty. An ongoing responsibility within a job that usually requires the performance of multiple tasks (e.g., *Officer in Charge of the Engineering Watch, Lookout, and Helmsman*).

Evaluation Criteria. The *evaluation criteria* comprise the general *standards of competence*. In practice, the *evaluation criteria* are further defined on the basis of *performance measures*, *performance standards*, and *proficiency criteria*.

Job. An employment post consisting of a cluster of related work responsibilities and duties (e.g., *Chief Engineer, Third Mate, Able-bodied Seaman*). In the STCW Code, a job is further defined on the basis of licensure level (e.g., Officer in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more).

Knowledge. The learned concepts, cues, facts, rules, and procedures that are necessary for proficient performance of a task (e.g., *knowledge of algebra, knowledge of the Navigation Rules, knowledge of procedures for starting the main engine*).

Objective Measure. A measure that relies primarily upon measurement apparatus that can be calibrated to yield highly consistent and accurate measurement results.

Performance Measure. The procedures used for observing and recording mariner actions, or the outcome of those actions. *Performance measures* record either the process of performance or the product of performance.

Performance Standard. The standard established for individual *performance measures*. *Performance measures* and *performance standards* are combined on the basis of *scoring procedures* to establish *proficiency criteria* for an assessment objective.

Proficiency. An individual's demonstrated ability to meet job performance requirements, as established on the basis of *performance measures*, *performance standards*, and *proficiency criteria*.

Proficiency Criteria. The scoring procedures and standards applied in determining the proficiency level of a candidate on the basis of *performance measures* and *performance standards*.

Reliability. The *consistency* of a measurement procedure. In the context of assessment, *reliability* can be generally defined as the consistency of the assessment outcome when applied under comparable conditions. Reliable assessments have well-defined assessment conditions, administration procedures, performance measures, performance standards, scoring procedures, and proficiency criteria. The reliability of an assessment establishes the maximum level of assessment *validity* possible. That is, an assessment can not be any more valid than it is reliable.

Scoring Procedures. The defined procedures for combining individual *performance measures* and *performance standards* that are conducted in the application of *proficiency criteria*.

Skills and Abilities. The behaviors that must be applied in successful performance (e.g., *typing skills*, *equipment fault-finding skills*, *navigation skills*, *shiphandling skills*). Measurable and observable skills are those of interest in proficiency assessment.

Subjective Measure. A measure that relies primarily upon an assessor's direct observation and interpretation of mariner performance to determine the assessment outcome.

Task. A single, observable work assignment that is independent of other actions and supports successful job performance. A task must be observable, be a complete work assignment, have a specific beginning and end, and be measurable by its intended product or outcome.

Validity. The extent to which a measure represents what was intended to be measured. In the context of assessment, *validity* can be defined as the degree to which successful completion of an assessment accurately predicts successful performance on the job. The maximum validity of an assessment is established on the basis of its *reliability*. That is, an assessment cannot be any more valid than it is reliable.

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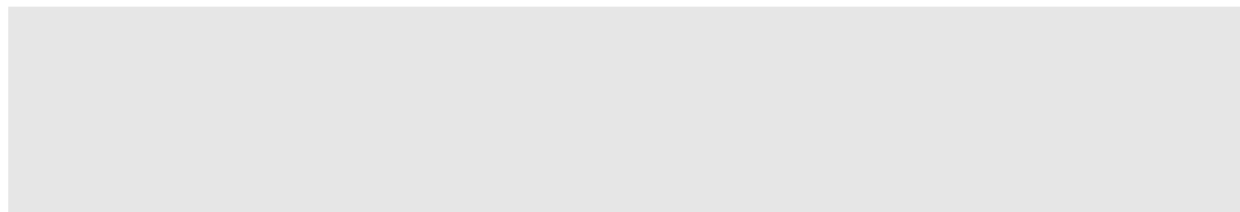
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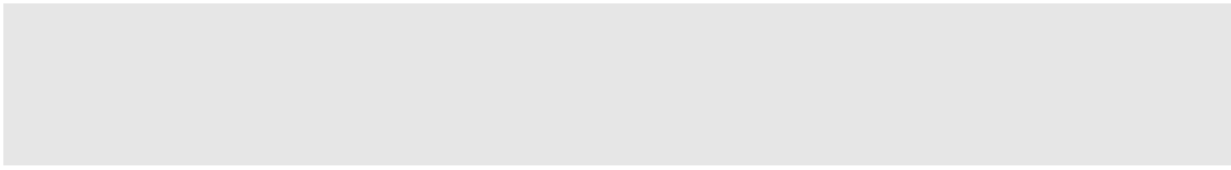
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Excerpts from the International Convention on Standards of Training,
Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended

and

Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code, as amended

Notice: These excerpts are provided for background information. By themselves, they do not constitute Coast Guard policy.

The Manila Amendments to the annex to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978

Chapter I

General provisions

Regulation I/6

Training and assessment

Each party shall ensure that:

- .1 the training and assessment of seafarers, as required under the Convention, are administered, supervised and monitored in accordance with the provisions of section A-I/6 of the STCW Code; and
- .2 those responsible for the training and assessment of competence of seafarers, as required under the Convention, are appropriately qualified in accordance with the provisions of section A-I/6 of the STCW Code for the type and level of training and assessment involved.

Regulation I/8

Quality standards

1 Each Party shall ensure that:

- .1 in accordance with the provisions of section A-I/8 of the STCW Code, all training, assessment of competence, certification, including medical certification, endorsement and revalidation activities carried out by non-governmental agencies or entities under its authority are continuously monitored through a quality standards system to ensure achievement of defined objectives, including those concerning the qualifications and experience of instructors and assessors; and
- .2 where governmental agencies or entities perform such activities, there shall be a quality standards system.

2 Each Party shall also ensure that an evaluation is periodically undertaken, in accordance with the provisions of section A-I/8 of the STCW Code, by qualified persons who are not themselves involved in the activities concerned. This evaluation shall include all changes to national regulations and procedures in compliance with the amendments to the Convention and STCW Code, with dates of entry into force later than the date information was communicated to the Secretary-General.

3 A report containing the results of the evaluation required by paragraph 2 shall be communicated to the Secretary-General in accordance with the format specified in section A-I/7 of the STCW Code.

Regulation I/12

Use of Simulators

1 The performance standards and other provisions set forth in section A-I/12 and such other requirements as are prescribed in part A of the STCW Code for any certificate concerned shall be complied with in respect of:

- .1** all mandatory simulator-based training;
- .2** any assessment of competency required by part A of the STCW Code which is carried out by means of a simulator; and
- .3** any demonstration, by means of a simulator, of continued proficiency required by part A of the STCW Code.

* * * * *

**The Manila Amendments to the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping
(STCW) Code**

Chapter I

Standards regarding general provisions

Section A-I/6

Training and assessment

- 1 Each Party shall ensure that all training and assessment of seafarers for certification under the Convention is:
 - .1 structured in accordance with written programmes, including such methods and media of delivery, procedures, and course material as are necessary to achieve the prescribed standard of competence; and
 - .2 conducted, monitored, evaluated and supported by persons qualified in accordance with paragraphs 4, 5 and 6.
- 2 Persons conducting in-service training or assessment on board ship shall only do so when such training or assessment will not adversely affect the normal operation of the ship and they can dedicate their time and attention to training or assessment.

Qualifications of instructors, supervisors and assessors*

- 3 Each Party shall ensure that instructors, supervisors and assessors are appropriately qualified for the particular types and levels of training or assessment of competence of seafarers either on board or ashore, as required under the Convention, in accordance with the provisions of this section.

In-service training

- 4 Any person conducting in-service training of a seafarer, either on board or ashore, which is intended to be used in qualifying for certification under the Convention, shall:
 - .1 have an appreciation of the training programme and an understanding of the specific training objectives for the particular type of training being conducted;
 - .2 be qualified in the task for which training is being conducted; and
 - .3 if conducting training using a simulator:
 - .3.1 have received appropriate guidance in instructional techniques involving the use of simulators; and

* The relevant IMO Model Course(s) may be of assistance in the preparation of courses.

- .3.2 have gained practical operational experience on the particular type of simulator being used.

5 Any person responsible for the supervision of in-service training of a seafarer intended to be used in qualifying for certification under the Convention shall have a full understanding of the training programme and the specific objectives for each type of training being conducted.

Assessment of competence

6 Any person conducting in-service assessment of competence of a seafarer, either on board or ashore, which is intended to be used in qualifying for certification under the Convention, shall:

- .1 have an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of the competence to be assessed;
- .2 be qualified in the task for which the assessment is being made;
- .3 have received appropriate guidance in assessment methods and practice;
- .4 have gained practical assessment experience; and
- .5 if conducting assessment involving the use of simulators, have gained practical assessment experience on the particular type of simulator under the supervision and to the satisfaction of an experienced assessor.

Training and assessment within an institution

7 Each Party which recognizes a course of training, a training institution, or a qualification granted by a training institution, as part of its requirements for the issue of a certificate required under the Convention, shall ensure that the qualifications and experience of instructors and assessors are covered in the application of the quality standard provisions of section A-I/8. Such qualification, experience and application of quality standards shall incorporate appropriate training in instructional techniques, and training and assessment methods and practice, and shall comply with all applicable requirements of paragraphs 4 to 6.

Section A-I/12

Standards governing the use of simulators

Part 1 – Performance standards

General performance standards for simulators used in training

- 1 Each Party shall ensure that any simulator used for mandatory simulator-based training shall:
- .1 be suitable for the selected objectives and training tasks;
 - .2 be capable of simulating the operating capabilities of shipboard equipment concerned, to a level of physical realism appropriate to training objectives, and include the capabilities, limitations and possible errors of such equipment;

- .3 have sufficient behavioural realism to allow a trainee to acquire the skills appropriate to the training objectives;
- .4 provide a controlled operating environment, capable of producing a variety of conditions, which may include emergency, hazardous or unusual situations relevant to the training objectives;
- .5 provide an interface through which a trainee can interact with the equipment, the simulated environment and, as appropriate, the instructor; and
- .6 permit an instructor to control, monitor and record exercises for the effective debriefing of trainees.

General performance standards for simulators used in assessment of competence

2 Each Party shall ensure that any simulator used for the assessment of competence required under the Convention or for any demonstration of continued proficiency so required shall:

- .1 be capable of satisfying the specified assessment objectives;
- .2 be capable of simulating the operational capabilities of the shipboard equipment concerned to a level of physical realism appropriate to the assessment objectives, and include the capabilities, limitations and possible errors of such equipment;
- .3 have sufficient behavioural realism to allow a candidate to exhibit the skills appropriate to the assessment objectives;
- .4 provide an interface through which a candidate can interact with the equipment and simulated environment;
- .5 provide a controlled operating environment, capable of producing a variety of conditions, which may include emergency, hazardous or unusual situations relevant to assessment objectives; and
- .6 permit an assessor to control, monitor and record exercises for the effective assessment of the performance of candidates.

Additional performance standards

3 In addition to meeting the basic requirements set out in paragraphs 1 and 2, simulation equipment to which this section applies shall meet the performance standards given hereunder in accordance with their specific type.

Radar simulation

4 Radar simulation equipment shall be capable of simulating the operational capabilities of navigational radar equipment which meets all applicable performance standards adopted by the Organization* and incorporate facilities to:

- .1 operate in the stabilized relative-motion mode and sea- and ground-stabilized true-motion modes;
- .2 model weather, tidal streams, current, shadow sectors, spurious echoes and other propagation effects, and generate coastlines, navigational buoys and search and rescue transponders; and
- .3 create a real-time operating environment incorporating at least two own-ship stations with ability to change own ship's course and speed, and include parameters for at least 20 target ships and appropriate communication facilities.

Automatic Radar Plotting Aid (ARPA) simulation

5 ARPA simulation equipment shall be capable of simulating the operational capabilities of ARPAs which meet all applicable performance standards adopted by the Organization*, and shall incorporate the facilities for:

- .1 manual and automatic target acquisition;
- .2 past track information;
- .3 use of exclusion areas;
- .4 vector/graphic time-scale and data display; and
- .5 trial manoeuvres.

Part 2 – Other provisions

Simulator training objectives

6 Each Party shall ensure that the aims and objectives of simulator-based training are defined within an overall training programme and that specific training objectives and tasks are selected so as to relate as closely as possible to shipboard tasks and practices.

* See relevant/appropriate performance standards adopted by the Organization.

Training procedures

- 7 In conducting mandatory simulator-based training, instructors shall ensure that:
- .1 trainees are adequately briefed beforehand on the exercise objectives and tasks and are given sufficient planning time before the exercise starts;
 - .2 trainees have adequate familiarization time on the simulator and with its equipment before any training or assessment exercise commences;
 - .3 guidance given and exercise stimuli are appropriate to the selected exercise objectives and tasks and to the level of trainee experience;
 - .4 exercises are effectively monitored, supported as appropriate by audio and visual observation of trainee activity and pre- and post-exercise evaluation reports;
 - .5 trainees are effectively debriefed to ensure that training objectives have been met and that operational skills demonstrated are of an acceptable standard;
 - .6 the use of peer assessment during debriefing is encouraged; and
 - .7 simulator exercises are designed and tested so as to ensure their suitability for the specified training objectives.

Assessment procedures

- 8 Where simulators are used to assess the ability of candidates to demonstrate levels of competency, assessors shall ensure that:
- .1 performance criteria are identified clearly and explicitly and are valid and available to the candidates;
 - .2 assessment criteria are established clearly and are explicit to ensure reliability and uniformity of assessment and to optimize objective measurement and evaluation, so that subjective judgements are kept to the minimum;
 - .3 candidates are briefed clearly on the tasks and/or skills to be assessed and on the tasks and performance criteria by which their competency will be determined;
 - .4 assessment of performance takes into account normal operating procedures and any behavioural interaction with other candidates on the simulator or with simulator staff;
 - .5 scoring or grading methods to assess performance are used with caution until they have been validated; and
 - .6 the prime criterion is that a candidate demonstrates the ability to carry out a task safely and effectively to the satisfaction of the assessor.

Qualifications of instructors and assessors*

9 Each Party shall ensure that instructors and assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced for the particular types and levels of training and corresponding assessment of competence as specified in regulation I/6 and section A-I/6.

* The relevant IMO Model Course(s) and resolution MSC.64(67), *Recommendations on new and amended performance standards*, may be of assistance in the preparation of courses.

**GUIDANCE REGARDING PROVISIONS OF THE ANNEX TO
THE STCW CONVENTION**

PART B

Chapter I

Guidance regarding general provisions

Section B-I/6

Guidance regarding training and assessment

Qualifications of instructors and assessors

1 Each Party should ensure that instructors and assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced for the particular types and levels of training or assessment of competence of seafarers, as required under the Convention, in accordance with the guidelines in this section.

In-service training and assessment

2 Any person, on board or ashore, conducting in-service training of a seafarer intended to be used in qualifying for certification under the Convention should have received appropriate guidance in instructional techniques* .

3 Any person responsible for the supervision of in-service training of a seafarer intended to be used in qualifying for certification under the Convention should have appropriate knowledge of instructional techniques and of training methods and practice.

4 Any person, on board or ashore, conducting an in-service assessment of the competence of a seafarer intended to be used in qualifying for certification under the Convention should have:

- .1** received appropriate guidance in assessment methods and practice* ; and
- .2** gained practical assessment experience under the supervision and to the satisfaction of an experienced assessor.

5 Any person responsible for the supervision of the in-service assessment of competence of a seafarer intended to be used in qualifying for certification under the Convention should have a full understanding of the assessment system, assessment methods and practice* .

* The relevant IMO Model Course(s) may be of assistance in the preparation of courses.

Use of distance learning and e-learning

6 Parties may allow the training of seafarers by distance learning and e-learning in accordance with the standards of training and assessment set out in section A-I/6 and the guidance given below.

Guidance for training by distance learning and e-learning

- 7** Each Party should ensure that any distance learning and e-learning programme:
- .1** is provided by an entity that is approved by the Party;
 - .2** is suitable for the selected objectives and training tasks to meet the competence level for the subject covered;
 - .3** has clear and unambiguous instructions for the trainees to understand how the programme operates;
 - .4** provides learning outcomes that meet all the requirements to provide the underpinning knowledge and proficiency of the subject;
 - .5** is structured in a way that enables the trainee to systematically reflect on what has been learnt through both self assessment and tutor-marked assignments; and
 - .6** provides professional tutorial support through telephone, facsimile or e-mail communications.
- 8** Companies should ensure that a safe learning environment is provided and that there has been sufficient time provided to enable the trainee to study.
- 9** Where e-learning is provided, common information formats such as XML (Extensible Markup Language), which is a flexible way to share both the format and the data on the World Wide Web, intranets, and elsewhere, should be used.
- 10** The e-learning system should be secured from tampering and attempts to hack into the system.

Guidance for assessing a trainee’s progress and achievements by training by distance learning and e-learning

11 Each Party should ensure that approved assessment procedures are provided for any distance learning and e-learning programme, including:

- .1 clear information to the trainees on the way that tests and examinations are conducted and how the results are communicated;
- .2 have test questions that are comprehensive and will adequately assess a trainee’s competence and are appropriate to the level being examined;
- .3 procedures in place to ensure questions are kept up to date and;
- .4 the conditions where the examinations can take place and the procedures for invigilation to be conducted;
- .5 secure procedures for the examination system so that it will prevent cheating; and
- .6 secure validation procedures to record results for the benefit of the Party.

Register of approved training providers, courses and programmes

12 Each Party should ensure that a register or registers of approved training providers, courses and programmes are maintained and made available to companies and other Parties on request.

Section B-I/8

Guidance regarding quality standards

1 In applying quality standards under the provisions of regulation I/8 and section A-I/8 to the administration of its certification system, each Party should take account of existing national or international models, and incorporate the following key elements:

- .1 an expressed policy regarding quality and the means by which such policy is to be implemented;
- .2 a quality system incorporating the organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, processes and resources necessary for quality management;
- .3 the operational techniques and activities to ensure quality control;

- .4 systematic monitoring arrangements, including internal quality-assurance evaluations, to ensure that all defined objectives are being achieved; and
 - .5 arrangements for periodic external quality evaluations as described in the following paragraphs.
- 2 In establishing such quality standards for the administration of their national certification system, Administrations should seek to ensure that the arrangements adopted:
- .1 are sufficiently flexible to enable the certification system to take account of the varying needs of the industry, and that they facilitate and encourage the application of new technology;
 - .2 cover all the administrative matters that give effect to the various provisions of the Convention, in particular regulations I/2 to I/15 and other provisions which enable the Administration to grant certificates of service and dispensations and to withdraw, cancel and suspend certificates;
 - .3 encompass the Administration's responsibilities for approving training and assessment at all levels, from undergraduate-type courses and updating courses for certificates of competency to short courses of vocational training; and
 - .4 incorporate arrangements for the internal quality-assurance reviews under paragraph 1.4 involving a comprehensive self-study of the administrative procedures, at all levels, in order to measure achievement of defined objectives and to provide the basis for the independent external evaluation required under section A-I/8, paragraph 3.

Quality standards model for assessment of knowledge, understanding, skills and competence

- 3 The quality standards model for assessment of knowledge, understanding, skills and competence should incorporate the recommendations of this section within the general framework of either:
- .1 a national scheme for education and training accreditation or quality standards; or
 - .2 an alternative quality-standards model acceptable to the Organization.
- 4 The above quality-standards model should incorporate:
- .1 a quality policy, including a commitment by the training institution or unit to the achievement of its stated aims and objectives and to the consequential recognition by the relevant accrediting or quality-standards authority;

- .2 those quality-management functions that determine and implement the quality policy, relating to aspects of the work which impinge on the quality of what is provided, including provisions for determining progression within a course or programme;
- .3 quality system coverage, where appropriate, of the academic and administrative organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, processes and the resources of staff and equipment;
- .4 the quality-control functions to be applied at all levels to the teaching, training, examination and assessment activities, and to their organization and implementation, in order to ensure their fitness for their purpose and the achievement of their defined objectives;
- .5 the internal quality-assurance processes and reviews which monitor the extent to which the institution, or training unit, is achieving the objectives of the programmes it delivers, and is effectively monitoring the quality-control procedures which it employs; and
- .6 the arrangements made for periodic external quality evaluations required under regulation I/8, paragraph 2 and described in the following paragraphs, for which the outcome of the quality-assurance reviews forms the basis and starting point.

5 In establishing quality standards for education, training and assessment programmes, the organizations responsible for implementing these programmes should take account of the following:

- .1 Where provisions exist for established national accreditation, or education quality standards, such provisions should be utilized for courses incorporating the knowledge and understanding requirements of the Convention. The quality standards should be applied to both management and operational levels of the activity, and should take account of how it is managed, organized, undertaken and evaluated, in order to ensure that the identified goals are achieved.
- .2 Where acquisition of a particular skill or accomplishment of a designated task is the primary objective, the quality standards should take account of whether real or simulated equipment is utilized for this purpose, and of the appropriateness of the qualifications and experience of the assessors, in order to ensure achievement of the set standards.
- .3 The internal quality-assurance evaluations should involve a comprehensive self-study of the programme, at all levels, to monitor achievement of defined objectives through the application of quality standards. These quality-assurance reviews should address

the planning, design, presentation and evaluation of programmes as well as the teaching, learning and communication activities. The outcome provides the basis for the independent evaluation required under section A-I/8, paragraph 3.

The independent evaluation

6 Each independent evaluation should include a systematic and independent examination of all quality activities, but should not evaluate the validity of the defined objectives. The evaluation team should:

- .1** carry out the evaluation in accordance with documented procedures;
- .2** ensure that the results of each evaluation are documented and brought to the attention of those responsible for the area evaluated; and
- .3** check that timely action is taken to correct any deficiencies.

7 The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the effectiveness of the quality-standard arrangements at all levels. In the case of an education or training establishment, a recognized academic accreditation or quality-standards body or Government agency should be used. The evaluation team should be provided with sufficient advance information to give an overview of the tasks in hand. In the case of a major training institution or programme, the following items are indicative of the information to be provided:

- .1** the mission statement of the institution;
- .2** details of academic and training strategies in use;
- .3** an organization chart and information on the composition of committees and advisory bodies;
- .4** staff and student information;
- .5** a description of training facilities and equipment; and
- .6** an outline of the policies and procedures on:
 - .6.1** student admission;
 - .6.2** the development of new courses and review of existing courses;
 - .6.3** the examination system, including appeals and resits;
 - .6.4** staff recruitment, training, development, appraisal and promotion;

- .6.5 feedback from students and from industry; and
- .6.6 staff involvement in research and development.

The report

8 Before submitting a final report, the evaluation team should forward an interim report to the management, seeking their comments on their findings. Upon receiving their comments, the evaluators should submit their final report, which should:

- .1 include brief background information about the institution or training programme;
- .2 be full, fair and accurate;
- .3 highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the institution;
- .4 describe the evaluation procedure followed;
- .5 cover the various elements identified in paragraph 4;
- .6 indicate the extent of compliance or non-compliance with the requirements of the Convention and the effectiveness of the quality standards in ensuring achievement of defined aims and objectives; and
- .7 spell out clearly the areas found to be deficient, offer suggestions for improvement and provide any other comments the evaluators consider relevant.

Section B-I/12

Guidance regarding the use of simulators

1 When simulators are being used for training or assessment of competency, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration in conducting any such training or assessment.

Training and assessment in radar observation and plotting*

- 2** Training and assessment in radar observation and plotting should:
- .1 incorporate the use of radar simulation equipment; and
 - .2 conform to standards not inferior to those given in paragraphs 3 to 17 below.

3 Demonstrations of and practice in radar observation should be undertaken, where appropriate, on live marine radar equipment, including the use of simulators. Plotting exercises should preferably be undertaken in real time, in order to increase trainees' awareness of the hazards of the improper use of radar data and improve their plotting techniques to a standard of radar plotting commensurate with that necessary for the safe execution of collision-avoidance manoeuvring under actual seagoing conditions.

General

Factors affecting performance and accuracy

4 An elementary understanding should be attained of the principles of radar, together with a full practical knowledge of:

- .1** range and bearing measurement, characteristics of the radar set which determine the quality of the radar display, radar antennae, polar diagrams, the effects of power radiated in directions outside the main beam, a non-technical description of the radar system, including variations in the features encountered in different types of radar set, performance monitors and equipment factors which affect maximum and minimum detection ranges and accuracy of information;
- .2** the current marine radar performance specification adopted by the Organization^{**} ;
- .3** the effects of the siting of the radar antenna, shadow sectors and arcs of reduced sensitivity, false echoes, effects of antenna height on detection ranges and of siting radar units and storing spares near magnetic compasses, including magnetic safe distances; and
- .4** radiation hazards and safety precautions to be taken in the vicinity of antennae and open waveguides.

Detection of misrepresentation of information, including false echoes and sea returns

5 A knowledge of the limitations to target detection is essential, to enable the observer to estimate the dangers of failure to detect targets. The following factors should be emphasized:

- .1** performance standard of the equipment;
- .2** brilliance, gain and video processor control settings;
- .3** radar horizon;
- .4** size, shape, aspect and composition of targets;
- .5** effects of the motion of the ship in a seaway;
- .6** propagation conditions;

^{**} See relevant/appropriate performance standards adopted by the Organization.

- .7 meteorological conditions; sea clutter and rain clutter;
- .8 anti-clutter control settings;
- .9 shadow sectors; and
- .10 radar-to-radar interference.

6 A knowledge should be attained of factors which might lead to faulty interpretation, including false echoes, effects of nearby pylons and large structures, effects of power lines crossing rivers and estuaries, echoes from distant targets occurring on second or later traces.

7 A knowledge should be attained of aids to interpretation, including corner reflectors and radar beacons; detection and recognition of land targets; the effects of topographical features; effects of pulse length and beam width; radar-conspicuous and -inconspicuous targets; factors which affect the echo strength from targets.

Practice

Setting up and maintaining displays

- 8** A knowledge should be attained of:
- .1 the various types of radar display mode; unstabilized ship's-head-up relative motion; ship's-head-up, course-up and north-up stabilized relative motion and true motion;
 - .2 the effects of errors on the accuracy of information displayed; effects of transmitting compass errors on stabilized and true-motion displays; effects of transmitting log errors on a true-motion display; and the effects of inaccurate manual speed settings on a true-motion display;
 - .3 methods of detecting inaccurate speed settings on true-motion controls; the effects of receiver noise limiting the ability to display weak echo returns, and the effects of saturation by receiver noise, etc.; the adjustment of operational controls; criteria which indicate optimum points of adjustment; the importance of proper adjustment sequence, and the effects of maladjusted controls; the detection of maladjustments and corrections of:
 - .3.1 controls affecting detection ranges; and
 - .3.2 controls affecting accuracy;
 - .4 the dangers of using radar equipment with maladjusted controls; and
 - .5 the need for frequent regular checking of performance, and the relationship of the performance indicator to the range performance of the radar set.

Range and bearing

- 9** A knowledge should be attained of:
- .1** the methods of measuring ranges; fixed range markers and variable range markers;
 - .2** the accuracy of each method and the relative accuracy of the different methods;
 - .3** how range data are displayed; ranges at stated intervals, digital counter and graduated scale;
 - .4** the methods of measuring bearings; rotatable cursor on transparent disc covering the display, electronic bearing cursor and other methods;
 - .5** bearing accuracy and inaccuracies caused by parallax, heading marker displacement, centre maladjustment;
 - .6** how bearing data are displayed; graduated scale and digital counter; and
 - .7** the need for regular checking of the accuracy of ranges and bearings, methods of checking for inaccuracies and correcting or allowing for inaccuracies.

Plotting techniques and relative-motion concepts

10 Practice should be provided in manual plotting techniques, including the use of reflection plotters, with the objective of establishing a thorough understanding of the interrelated motion between own ship and other ships, including the effects of manoeuvring to avoid collision. At the preliminary stages of this training, simple plotting exercises should be designed to establish a sound appreciation of plotting geometry and relative-motion concepts. The degree of complexity of exercises should increase throughout the training course until the trainee has mastered all aspects of the subject. Competence can best be enhanced by exposing the trainee to real-time exercises performed on a simulator or using other effective means.

Identification of critical echoes

- 11** A thorough understanding should be attained of:
- .1** position fixing by radar from land targets and sea marks;
 - .2** the accuracy of position fixing by ranges and by bearings;
 - .3** the importance of cross-checking the accuracy of radar against other navigational aids; and
 - .4** the value of recording ranges and bearings at frequent, regular intervals when using radar as an aid to collision avoidance.

Course and speed of other ships

- 12** A thorough understanding should be attained of:
- .1** the different methods by which course and speed of other ships can be obtained from recorded ranges and bearings, including:
 - .1.1** the unstabilized relative plot;
 - .1.2** the stabilized relative plot; and
 - .1.3** the true plot; and
 - .2** the relationship between visual and radar observations, including detail and the accuracy of estimates of course and speed of other ships, and the detection of changes in movements of other ships.

Time and distance of closest approach of crossing, meeting or overtaking ships

- 13** A thorough understanding should be attained of:
- .1** the use of recorded data to obtain:
 - .1.1** measurement of closest approach distance and bearing;
 - .1.2** time to closest approach; and
 - .2** the importance of frequent, regular observations.

Detecting course and speed changes of other ships

- 14** A thorough understanding should be attained of:
- .1** the effects of changes of course and/or speed by other ships on their tracks across the display;
 - .2** the delay between change of course or speed and detection of that change; and
 - .3** the hazards of small changes as compared with substantial changes of course or speed in relation to rate and accuracy of detection.

Effects of changes in own ship's course or speed or both

- 15** A thorough understanding of the effects on a relative-motion display of own ship's movements, and the effects of other ships' movements and the advantages of compass stabilization of a relative display.

- 16** In respect of true-motion displays, a thorough understanding should be attained of:
- .1** the effects of inaccuracies of:
 - .1.1** speed and course settings; and
 - .1.2** compass stabilization data driving a stabilized relative-motion display;
 - .2** the effects of changes in course or speed or both by own ship on tracks of other ships on the display; and
 - .3** the relationship of speed to frequency of observations.

Application of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended

- 17** A thorough understanding should be attained of the relationship of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended to the use of radar, including:
- .1** action to avoid collision, dangers of assumptions made on inadequate information and the hazards of small alterations of course or speed;
 - .2** the advantages of safe speed when using radar to avoid collision;
 - .3** the relationship of speed to closest approach distance and time and to the manoeuvring characteristics of various types of ships;
 - .4** the importance of radar observation reports and radar reporting procedures being well defined;
 - .5** the use of radar in clear weather, to obtain an appreciation of its capabilities and limitations, compare radar and visual observations and obtain an assessment of the relative accuracy of information;
 - .6** the need for early use of radar in clear weather at night and when there are indications that visibility may deteriorate;
 - .7** comparison of features displayed by radar with charted features; and
 - .8** comparison of the effects of differences between range scales.

Training and assessment in the operational use of

Automatic Radar Plotting Aids (ARPA)

18 Training and assessment in the operational use of automatic radar plotting aids (ARPA) should:

- .1** require prior completion of the training in radar observation and plotting or combine that training with the training given in paragraphs 19 to 35 below;*
- .2** incorporate the use of ARPA simulation equipment; and
- .3** conform to standards not inferior to those given in paragraphs 19 to 35 below.

19 Where ARPA training is provided as part of the general training under the 1978 STCW Convention, masters, chief mates and officers in charge of a navigational watch should understand the factors involved in decision-making based on the information supplied by ARPA in association with other navigational data inputs, having a similar appreciation of the operational aspects and of system errors of modern electronic navigational systems, including ECDIS. This training should be progressive in nature, commensurate with the responsibilities of the individual and the certificates issued by Parties under the 1978 STCW Convention.

Theory and demonstration

Possible risks of over-reliance on ARPA

20 Appreciation that ARPA is only a navigational aid and:

- .1** that its limitations, including those of its sensors, make over-reliance on ARPA dangerous, in particular for keeping a look-out; and
- .2** the need to observe at all times the Principles to be observed in keeping a navigational watch and the Guidance on keeping a navigational watch.

Principal types of ARPA systems and their display characteristics

21 Knowledge of the principal types of ARPA systems in use; their various display characteristics and an understanding of when to use ground- or sea-stabilized modes and north-up, course-up or head-up presentations.

* The relevant IMO Model Course(s) and resolution MSC.64(67), as amended, may be of assistance in the preparation of courses.

IMO performance standards for ARPA

22 An appreciation of the IMO performance standards for ARPA, in particular the standards relating to accuracy.*

Factors affecting system performance and accuracy

23 Knowledge of ARPA sensor input performance parameters – radar, compass and speed inputs and the effects of sensor malfunction on the accuracy of ARPA data.

24 Knowledge of:

- .1** the effects of the limitations of radar range and bearing discrimination and accuracy and the limitations of compass and speed input accuracies on the accuracy of ARPA data; and
- .2** factors which influence vector accuracy.

Tracking capabilities and limitations

25 Knowledge of:

- .1** the criteria for the selection of targets by automatic acquisition;
- .2** the factors leading to the correct choice of targets for manual acquisition;
- .3** the effects on tracking of “lost” targets and target fading; and
- .4** the circumstances causing “target swap” and its effects on displayed data.

Processing delays

26 Knowledge of the delays inherent in the display of processed ARPA information, particularly on acquisition and re-acquisition or when a tracked target manoeuvres.

Operational warnings, their benefits and limitations

27 Appreciation of the uses, benefits and limitations of ARPA operational warnings and their correct setting, where applicable, to avoid spurious interference.

* See relevant/appropriate performance standards adopted by the Organization.

System operational tests

28 Knowledge of:

- .1** methods of testing for malfunctions of ARPA systems, including functional self-testing; and
- .2** precautions to be taken after a malfunction occurs.

Manual and automatic acquisition of targets and their respective limitations

29 Knowledge of the limits imposed on both types of acquisition in multi-target scenarios, and the effects on acquisition of target fading and target swap.

True and relative vectors and typical graphic representation of target information and danger areas

30 Thorough knowledge of true and relative vectors; derivation of targets' true courses and speeds, including:

- .1** threat assessment, derivation of predicted closest point of approach and predicted time to closest point of approach from forward extrapolation of vectors, the use of graphic representation of danger areas;
- .2** the effects of alterations of course and/or speed of own ship and/or targets on predicted closest point of approach and predicted time to closest point of approach and danger areas;
- .3** the effects of incorrect vectors and danger areas; and
- .4** the benefit of switching between true and relative vectors.

Information on past positions of targets being tracked

31 Knowledge of the derivation of past positions of targets being tracked, recognition of historic data as a means of indicating recent manoeuvring of targets and as a method of checking the validity of the ARPA's tracking.

Practice

Setting up and maintaining displays

32 Ability to demonstrate:

- .1 the correct starting procedure to obtain the optimum display of ARPA information;
- .2 the selection of display presentation; stabilized relative-motion displays and true-motion displays;
- .3 the correct adjustment of all variable radar display controls for optimum display of data;
- .4 the selection, as appropriate, of required speed input to ARPA;
- .5 the selection of ARPA plotting controls, manual/automatic acquisition, vector/graphic display of data;
- .6 the selection of the timescale of vectors/graphics;
- .7 the use of exclusion areas when automatic acquisition is employed by ARPA; and
- .8 performance checks of radar, compass, speed input sensors and ARPA.

System operational tests

33 Ability to perform system checks and determine data accuracy of ARPA, including the trial manoeuvre facility, by checking against basic radar plot.

Obtaining information from the ARPA display

34 Demonstrate the ability to obtain information in both relative- and true-motion modes of display, including:

- .1 the identification of critical echoes;
- .2 the speed and direction of target's relative movement;
- .3 the time to, and predicted range at, target's closest point of approach;
- .4 the courses and speeds of targets;
- .5 detecting course and speed changes of targets and the limitations of such information;

- .6 the effect of changes in own ship's course or speed or both; and
- .7 the operation of the trial manoeuvre facility.

Application of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended

35 Analysis of potential collision situations from displayed information, determination and execution of action to avoid close-quarters situations in accordance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended, in force.

Training and assessment in the operational use of Electronic

Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS)

Introduction

36 When simulators are being used for training or assessment in the operational use of Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS), the following interim guidance should be taken into consideration in any such training or assessment.

37 Training and assessment in the operational use of the ECDIS should:

- .1 incorporate the use of ECDIS simulation equipment; and
- .2 conform to standards not inferior to those given in paragraphs 38 to 65 below.

38 ECDIS simulation equipment should, in addition to meeting all applicable performance standards set out in section A-I/12 of the STCW Code, as amended, be capable of simulating navigational equipment and bridge operational controls which meet all applicable performance standards adopted by the Organization, incorporate facilities to generate soundings and:

- .1 create a real-time operating environment, including navigation control and communications instruments and equipment appropriate to the navigation and watchkeeping tasks to be carried out and the manoeuvring skills to be assessed; and
- .2 realistically simulate "own ship" characteristics in open-water conditions, as well as the effects of weather, tidal stream and currents.

39 Demonstrations of, and practice in, ECDIS use should be undertaken, where appropriate, through the use of simulators. Training exercises should preferably be undertaken in real time, in order to increase trainees' awareness of the hazards of the improper use of ECDIS. Accelerated timescale may be used only for demonstrations.

General

Goals of an ECDIS training programme

- 40** The ECDIS trainee should be able to:
- .1** operate the ECDIS equipment, use the navigational functions of ECDIS, select and assess all relevant information and take proper action in the case of a malfunction;
 - .2** state the potential errors of displayed data and the usual errors of interpretation; and
 - .3** explain why ECDIS should not be relied upon as the sole reliable aid to navigation.

Theory and demonstration

41 As the safe use of ECDIS requires knowledge and understanding of the basic principles governing ECDIS data and their presentation rules as well as potential errors in displayed data and ECDIS-related limitations and potential dangers, a number of lectures covering the theoretical explanation should be provided. As far as possible, such lessons should be presented within a familiar context and make use of practical examples. They should be reinforced during simulator exercises.

42 For safe operation of ECDIS equipment and ECDIS-related information (use of the navigational functions of ECDIS, selection and assessment of all relevant information, becoming familiar with ECDIS man-machine interfacing), practical exercises and training on the ECDIS simulators should constitute the main content of the course.

43 For the definition of training objectives, a structure of activities should be defined. A detailed specification of learning objectives should be developed for each topic of this structure.

Simulator exercises

44 Exercises should be carried out on individual ECDIS simulators, or full-mission navigation simulators including ECDIS, to enable trainees to acquire the necessary practical skills. For real-time navigation exercises, navigation simulators are recommended to cover the complex navigation situation. The exercises should provide training in the use of the various scales, navigational modes, and display modes which are available, so that the trainees will be able to adapt the use of the equipment to the particular situation concerned.

45 The choice of exercises and scenarios is governed by the simulator facilities available. If one or more ECDIS workstations and a full-mission simulator are available, the workstations may primarily be used for basic exercises in the use of ECDIS facilities and for passage-planning exercises, whereas full-mission simulators may primarily be used for exercises related to passage-monitoring functions in real time, as realistic as possible in connection with the total workload of a navigational watch. The degree of complexity of exercises should increase throughout the training programme until the trainee has mastered all aspects of the learning subject.

46 Exercises should produce the greatest impression of realism. To achieve this, the scenarios should be located in a fictitious sea area. Situations, functions and actions for different learning objectives which occur in different sea areas can be integrated into one exercise and experienced in real time.

47 The main objective of simulator exercises is to ensure that trainees understand their responsibilities in the operational use of ECDIS in all safety-relevant aspects and are thoroughly familiar with the system and equipment used.

Principal types of ECDIS systems and their display characteristics

48 The trainee should gain knowledge of the principal types of ECDIS in use; their various display characteristics, data structure and an understanding of:

- .1 differences between vector and raster charts;
- .2 differences between ECDIS and ECS;
- .3 differences between ECDIS and RCDS* ;
- .4 characteristics of ECDIS and their different solutions; and
- .5 characteristics of systems for special purposes (unusual situations/emergencies).

Risks of over-reliance on ECDIS

49 The training in ECDIS operational use should address:

- .1 the limitations of ECDIS as a navigational tool;
- .2 potential risk of improper functioning of the system;
- .3 system limitations, including those of its sensors;
- .4 hydrographic data inaccuracy; limitations of vector and raster electronic charts (ECDIS vs RCDS and ENC vs RNC); and
- .5 potential risk of human errors.

Emphasis should be placed on the need to keep a proper look-out and to perform periodical checking, especially of the ship's position, by ECDIS-independent methods.

* SN/Circ.207/Rev.1 – Differences between RCDS and ECDIS.

Detection of misrepresentation of information

50 Knowledge of the limitations of the equipment and detection of misrepresentation of information is essential for the safe use of ECDIS. The following factors should be emphasized during training:

- .1** performance standards of the equipment;
- .2** radar data representation on an electronic chart, elimination of discrepancy between the radar image and the electronic chart;
- .3** possible projection discrepancies between an electronic and paper charts;
- .4** possible scale discrepancies (overscaling and underscaling) in displaying an electronic chart and its original scale;
- .5** effects of using different reference systems for positioning;
- .6** effects of using different horizontal and vertical datums;
- .7** effects of the motion of the ship in a seaway;
- .8** ECDIS limitations in raster chart display mode;
- .9** potential errors in the display of:
 - .9.1** the own ship's position;
 - .9.2** radar data and ARPA and AIS information;
 - .9.3** different geodetic coordinate systems; and
- .10** verification of the results of manual or automatic data correction:
 - .10.1** comparison of chart data and radar picture; and
 - .10.2** checking the own ship's position by using the other independent position-fixing systems.

51 False interpretation of the data and proper action taken to avoid errors of interpretation should be explained. The implications of the following should be emphasized:

- .1** ignoring overscaling of the display;
- .2** uncritical acceptance of the own ship's position;
- .3** confusion of display mode;
- .4** confusion of chart scale;
- .5** confusion of reference systems;
- .6** different modes of presentation;
- .7** different modes of vector stabilization;

- .8 differences between true north and gyro north (radar);
- .9 using the same data reference system;
- .10 using the appropriate chart scale;
- .11 using the best-suited sensor to the given situation and circumstances;
- .12 entering the correct values of safety data:
 - .12.1 the own ship's safety contour,
 - .12.2 safety depth (safe water), and
 - .12.3 events; and
- .13 proper use of all available data.

52 Appreciation that RCDS is only a navigational aid and that, when operating in the RCDS mode, the ECDIS equipment should be used together with an appropriate portfolio of up-to-date paper charts:

- .1 appreciation of the differences in operation of RCDS mode as described in SN.1/Circ.207/Rev.1 "Differences between RCDS and ECDIS"; and
- .2 ECDIS, in any mode, should be used in training with an appropriate portfolio of up-to-date charts.

Factors affecting system performance and accuracy

53 An elementary understanding should be attained of the principles of ECDIS, together with a full practical knowledge of:

- .1 starting and setting up ECDIS; connecting data sensors: satellite and radio navigation system receivers, radar, gyro-compass, log, echo-sounder; accuracy and limitations of these sensors, including effects of measurement errors and ship's position accuracy, manoeuvring on the accuracy of course indicator's performance, compass error on the accuracy of course indication, shallow water on the accuracy of log performance, log correction on the accuracy of speed calculation, disturbance (sea state) on the accuracy of an echo-sounder performance; and
- .2 the current performance standards for electronic chart display and information systems adopted by the Organization^{*}.

^{*} See relevant/appropriate performance standards adopted by the Organization.

Practice

Setting up and maintaining display

54 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:

- .1 the correct starting procedure to obtain the optimum display of ECDIS information;
- .2 the selection of display presentation (standard display, display base, all other information displayed individually on demand);
- .3 the correct adjustment of all variable radar/ARPA display controls for optimum display of data;
- .4 the selection of convenient configuration;
- .5 the selection, as appropriate, of required speed input to ECDIS;
- .6 the selection of the timescale of vectors; and
- .7 performance checks of position, radar/ARPA, compass, speed input sensors and ECDIS.

Operational use of electronic charts

55 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:

- .1 the main characteristics of the display of ECDIS data and selecting proper information for navigational tasks;
- .2 the automatic functions required for monitoring ship's safety, such as display of position, heading/gyro course, speed, safety values and time;
- .3 the manual functions (by the cursor, electronic bearing line, range rings);
- .4 selecting and modification of electronic chart content;
- .5 scaling (including underscaling and overscaling);
- .6 zooming;
- .7 setting of the own ship's safety data;
- .8 using a daytime or night-time display mode;
- .9 reading all chart symbols and abbreviations;

- .10 using different kinds of cursors and electronic bars for obtaining navigational data;
- .11 viewing an area in different directions and returning to the ship's position;
- .12 finding the necessary area, using geographical coordinates;
- .13 displaying indispensable data layers appropriate to a navigational situation;
- .14 selecting appropriate and unambiguous data (position, course, speed, etc.);
- .15 entering the mariner's notes;
- .16 using north-up orientation presentation and other kinds of orientation; and
- .17 using true- and relative-motion modes.

Route planning

56 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:

- .1 loading the ship's characteristics into ECDIS;
- .2 selection of a sea area for route planning:
 - .2.1 reviewing required waters for the sea passage, and
 - .2.2 changing over of chart scale;
- .3 verifying that proper and updated charts are available;
- .4 route planning on a display by means of ECDIS, using the graphic editor, taking into consideration rhumb line and great-circle sailing:
 - .4.1 using the ECDIS database for obtaining navigational, hydro-meteorological and other data;
 - .4.2 taking into consideration turning radius and wheel-over points/lines when they are expressed on chart scale;
 - .4.3 marking dangerous depths and areas and exhibiting guarding depth contours;
 - .4.4 marking waypoints with the crossing depth contours and critical cross-track deviations, as well as by adding, replacing and erasing of waypoints;
 - .4.5 taking into consideration safe speed;

- .4.6 checking pre-planned route for navigational safety; and
- .4.7 generating alarms and warnings;
- .5 route planning with calculation in the table format, including:
 - .5.1 waypoints selection;
 - .5.2 recalling the waypoints list;
 - .5.3 planning notes;
 - .5.4 adjustment of a planned route;
 - .5.5 checking a pre-planned route for navigational safety;
 - .5.6 alternative route planning;
 - .5.7 saving planned routes, loading and unloading or deleting routes;
 - .5.8 making a graphic copy of the monitor screen and printing a route;
 - .5.9 editing and modification of the planned route;
 - .5.10 setting of safety values according to the size and manoeuvring parameters of the vessel;
 - .5.11 back-route planning; and
 - .5.12 connecting several routes.

Route monitoring

- 57 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:
 - .1 using independent data to control ship's position or using alternative systems within ECDIS;
 - .2 using the look-ahead function:
 - .2.1 changing charts and their scales;
 - .2.2 reviewing navigational charts;
 - .2.3 vector time selecting;

- .2.4 predicting the ship's position for some time interval;
- .2.5 changing the pre-planned route (route modification);
- .2.6 entering independent data for the calculation of wind drift and current allowance;
- .2.7 reacting properly to the alarm;
- .2.8 entering corrections for discrepancies of the geodetic datum;
- .2.9 displaying time markers on a ship's route;
- .2.10 entering ship's position manually; and
- .2.11 measuring coordinates, course, bearings and distances on a chart.

Alarm handling

58 Knowledge and ability to interpret and react properly to all kinds of systems, such as navigational sensors, indicators, data and charts alarms and indicator warnings, including, switching the sound and visual alarm signalling system, should be attained in case of:

- .1 absence of the next chart in the ECDIS database;
- .2 crossing a safety contour;
- .3 exceeding cross-track limits;
- .4 deviation from planned route;
- .5 approaching a waypoint;
- .6 approaching a critical point;
- .7 discrepancy between calculated and actual time of arrival to a waypoint;
- .8 information on under-scaling or over-scaling;
- .9 approaching an isolated navigational danger or danger area;
- .10 crossing a specified area;
- .11 selecting a different geodetic datum;
- .12 approaching other ships;

- .13 watch termination;
- .14 switching timer;
- .15 system test failure;
- .16 malfunctioning of the positioning system used in ECDIS;
- .17 failure of dead-reckoning; and
- .18 inability to fix vessel's position using the navigational system.

Manual correction of a ship's position and motion parameters

59 Knowledge and skills should be attained in manually correcting:

- .1 the ship's position in dead-reckoning mode, when the satellite and radio navigation system receiver is switched off;
- .2 the ship's position, when automatically obtained coordinates are inaccurate; and
- .3 course and speed values.

Records in the ship's log

60 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:

- .1 automatic voyage recording;
- .2 reconstruction of past track, taking into account:
 - .2.1 recording media;
 - .2.2 recording intervals;
 - .2.3 verification of database in use;
- .3 viewing records in the electronic ship's log;
- .4 instant recording in the electronic ship's log;
- .5 changing ship's time;
- .6 entering the additional data;
- .7 printing the content of the electronic ship's log;

- .8 setting up the automatic record time intervals;
- .9 composition of voyage data and reporting; and
- .10 interface with a voyage data recorder (VDR).

Chart updating

61 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:

- .1 performing manual updating of electronic charts. Special attention should be paid to reference-ellipsoid conformity and to conformity of the measurement units used on a chart and in the correction text;
- .2 performing semi-automatic updating of electronic charts, using the data obtained on electronic media in the electronic chart format; and
- .3 performing automatic updating of electronic charts, using update files obtained via electronic data communication lines.

In the scenarios where non-updated data are employed to create a critical situation, trainees should be required to perform *ad hoc* updating of the chart.

Operational use of ECDIS where radar/ARPA is connected

62 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:

- .1 connecting ARPA to ECDIS;
- .2 indicating target's speed vectors;
- .3 indicating target's tracks;
- .4 archiving target's tracks;
- .5 viewing the table of the targets;
- .6 checking alignment of radar overlay with charted geographic features;
- .7 simulating one or more manoeuvres;
- .8 corrections to own ship's position, using a reference point captured by ARPA; and
- .9 corrections using the ARPA's cursor and electronic bar.

See also section B-I/12, Guidance regarding the use of simulators (pertaining to radar and ARPA), especially paragraphs 17 to 19 and 36 to 38.

Operational use of ECDIS where AIS is connected

63 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:

- .1 interface with AIS;
- .2 interpretation of AIS data;
- .3 indicating target's speed vectors;
- .4 indicating target's tracks; and
- .5 archiving target's tracks.

Operational warnings, their benefits and limitations

64 Trainees should gain an appreciation of the uses, benefits and limitations of ECDIS operational warnings and their correct setting, where applicable, to avoid spurious interference.

System operational tests

65 Knowledge and skills should be attained in:

- .1 methods of testing for malfunctions of ECDIS, including functional self-testing;
- .2 precautions to be taken after a malfunction occurs; and
- .3 adequate back-up arrangements (take over and navigate using the back-up system).

Debriefing exercise

66 The instructor should analyze the results of all exercises completed by all trainees and print them out. The time spent on the debriefing should occupy between 10% and 15% of the total time used for simulator exercises.

Recommended performance standards for non-mandatory types of simulation

67 Performance standards for non-mandatory simulation equipment used for training and/or assessment of competence or demonstration of skills are set out hereunder. Such forms of simulation include, but are not limited to, the following types:

- .1 navigation and watchkeeping;
- .2 ship handling and manoeuvring;
- .3 cargo handling and stowage;
- .4 reporting and radiocommunications; and
- .5 main and auxiliary machinery operation.

Navigation and watchkeeping simulation

68 Navigation and watchkeeping simulation equipment should, in addition to meeting all applicable performance standards set out in section A-I/12, be capable of simulating navigational equipment and bridge operational controls which meet all applicable performance standards adopted by the Organization,* incorporate facilities to generate soundings and:

- .1 create a real-time operating environment, including navigation control and communications instruments and equipment appropriate to the navigation and watchkeeping tasks to be carried out and the manoeuvring skills to be assessed;
- .2 provide a realistic visual scenario by day or by night, including variable visibility, or by night only as seen from the bridge, with a minimum horizontal field of view available to the trainee in viewing sectors appropriate to the navigation and watchkeeping tasks and objectives;
- .3 realistically simulate “own ship” dynamics in open-water conditions, including the effects of weather, tidal stream, currents and interaction with other ships; and
- .4 realistically simulate VTS communication procedures between ship and shore.

* See relevant/appropriate performance standards adopted by the Organization.

Ship handling and manoeuvring simulation

69 In addition to meeting the performance standards set out in paragraph 37, ship handling simulation equipment should:

- .1** provide a realistic visual scenario as seen from the bridge, by day and by night, with variable visibility throughout a minimum horizontal field of view available to the trainee in viewing sectors appropriate to the ship handling and manoeuvring training tasks and objectives; ** and
- .2** realistically simulate “own ship” dynamics in restricted waterways, including shallow-water and bank effects.

70 Where manned scale models are used to provide ship handling and manoeuvring simulation, in addition to the performance standards set out in paragraphs 68.3 and 69.2, such equipment should:

- .1** incorporate scaling factors which present accurately the dimensions, areas, volume and displacement, speed, time and rate of turn of a real ship; and
- .2** incorporate controls for the rudder and engines, to the correct timescale.

Cargo handling and stowage simulation

71 Cargo handling simulation equipment should be capable of simulating cargo handling and control equipment which meets all applicable performance standards adopted by the Organization *** and incorporate facilities to:

- .1** create an effective operational environment, including a cargo-control station with such instrumentation as may be appropriate to the particular type of cargo system modelled;
- .2** model loading and unloading functions and stability and stress data appropriate to the cargo-handling tasks to be carried out and the skills to be assessed; and
- .3** simulate loading, unloading, ballasting and deballasting operations and appropriate associated calculations for stability, trim, list, longitudinal strength, torsional stress and damage stability * .

** The relevant IMO Model Course(s) may be of assistance in the preparation of courses.

*** No standards have as yet been adopted by the Organization.

* The relevant IMO Model Course(s) may be of assistance in the preparation of courses.

GMDSS communication simulation

72 GMDSS communication simulation equipment should be capable of simulating GMDSS communication equipment which meets all applicable performance standards adopted by the Organization ** and incorporate facilities to:

- .1** simulate the operation of VHF, VHF-DSC, NAVTEX, EPIRB and watch receiver equipment as required for the Restricted Operator's Certificate (ROC);
- .2** simulate the operation of INMARSAT-A, -B and -C ship earth stations, MF/HF NBDP, MF/HF-DSC, VHF, VHF-DSC, NAVTEX, EPIRB and watch receiver equipment as required for the General Operator's Certificate (GOC);
- .3** provide voice communication with background noise;
- .4** provide a printed text communication facility; and
- .5** create a real-time operating environment, consisting of an integrated system, incorporating at least one instructor/assessor station and at least two GMDSS ship or shore stations.

Main and auxiliary machinery operation simulation

73 Engine-room simulation equipment should be capable of simulating a main and auxiliary machinery system and incorporate facilities to:

- .1** create a real-time environment for seagoing and harbour operations, with communication devices and simulation of appropriate main and auxiliary propulsion machinery equipment and control panels;
- .2** simulate relevant sub-systems that should include, but not be restricted to, boiler, steering gear, electrical power general and distribution systems, including emergency power supplies, and fuel, cooling water, refrigeration, bilge and ballast systems;
- .3** monitor and evaluate engine performance and remote sensing systems;
- .4** simulate machinery malfunctions;
- .5** allow for the variable external conditions to be changed so as to influence the simulated operations: weather, ship's draught, seawater and air temperatures;

** See relevant/appropriate performance standards adopted by the Organization.

- .6 allow for instructor-controlled external conditions to be changed: deck steam, accommodation steam, deck air, ice conditions, deck cranes, heavy power, bow thrust, ship load;
- .7 allow for instructor-controlled simulator dynamics to be changed: emergency run, process responses, ship responses; and
- .8 provide a facility to isolate certain processes, such as speed, electrical system, diesel oil system, lubricating oil system, heavy oil system, seawater system, steam system, exhaust boiler and turbo generator, for performing specific training tasks.*

* The relevant IMO Model Course(s) may be of assistance in the preparation of courses.