

SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN ELEMENT,
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING
10th session
Agenda item 6

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COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE 1978 STCW CONVENTION AND CODE

Proposal for amendment to section B-VI/4 of the STCW Code to include a new footnote

Submitted by ICS, IMHA and ITF

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document proposes that the *International Medical Guide for Seafarers and Fishers*, published in March 2023, be referenced – through a footnote under section B-VI/4 of the STCW Code – as a recommended alternative industry guidance to the current 2008 (third) edition of the ILO/IMO/WHO *International Medical Guide for Ships*, to be used by maritime education and training institutes, shipowners, ship managers and the wider industry.

Strategic direction, if applicable: 6

Output: 6.17

Action to be taken: Paragraph 10

Related document: MSC 107/INF.6

Background

1 The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, sets mandatory minimum requirements relating to medical first aid and medical care through regulation VI/4.

2 The 2006 Maritime Labour Convention of the International Labour Organization (MLC 2006), through standard A4.1 or regulation 4.1, mandate the carriage of a medical guide for the purpose of protecting the health of seafarers and ensuring their prompt access to medical care on board.

Discussion

3 Section A-VI/4 of the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code (STCW Code) specifies the standard of competence for seafarers designated to provide medical first aid on board ship and the standard of competence for seafarers designated to take charge of medical care on board ship.

4 Section B-VI/4 of the STCW Code, which provides guidance regarding requirements in medical first aid and medical care, reads:

"Training programmes for seafarers designated to undertake the tasks, duties and responsibilities listed in column 1 of table A-VI/4-1 to provide medical first aid on board ship should take into account guidance in the revised International Medical Guide for Ships, as appropriate".

Proposal

5 The co-sponsors propose the inclusion of a new footnote "†Alternative medical guides can be used by Administrations for training purposes such as the International Medical Guide for Seafarers and Fishers" under section B-VI/4 of the STCW Code, as follows:

"Section B-VI/4

Guidance regarding requirements in medical first aid and medical care

Training programmes for seafarers designated to undertake the tasks, duties and responsibilities listed in column 1 of table A-VI/4-1 to provide medical first aid on board ship should take into account guidance in the revised International Medical Guide for Ships, as appropriate.†

† *Alternative medical guides can be used by Administrations for training purposes such as the International Medical Guide for Seafarers and Fishers.*"

6 The inclusion of this footnote will ensure that maritime education and training institutes, shipowners, ship managers and wider industry stakeholders will have the option to choose the latest up-to-date, internationally applicable medical guidance, to train and support crew in support of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code implementation and to fulfil the carriage requirement within the ILO MLC, 2006.

The new International Medical Guide for Seafarers and Fishers

7 The Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping, at its sixth session (HTW 6), considered document HTW 6/3/5 (ICS), providing information regarding an industry initiative to develop a new international medical guide. ICS worked alongside ITF, IMHA and other industry stakeholders, to develop this new international guide, which provides clear, comprehensive and up-to-date guidance to seafarers and fishers responsible for administering medical care on board. This includes updated guidance for the ship's medicine chest.

8 For ease of reference, an overview of the features of this publication and information about the project partners can be found in the annex to document MSC 107/INF.6, as submitted to the 107th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 107).

9 The co-sponsors suggest that a similar footnote could also be referenced in regulation III/1 of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F), 1995.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

10 The Sub-Committee is requested to consider the information provided in this document, including the proposals in paragraphs 5 and 6, and to take action as appropriate.