



Shipping Guidance Notice 119

The STCW Convention and the Issue of endorsements attesting the recognition of a Certificate of Competency

To: Ship Owners, Operators, Master's, Classification Societies and Recognised Organisations

References:

- **FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2;**
- **The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended;**
- **Seafarer's Training, Certification and Watch keeping (STCW) Code.**

1. Background

In accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping, 1978 ("STCW" or "STCW Convention"), officers on board a Gibraltar registered ship are required to hold a Certificate of Competency (CoC) issued in accordance with STCW from a country whose standards of competency and training are considered to be equivalent to those of the United Kingdom.

Holders of such a CoC also require an endorsement from the Gibraltar Maritime Administration attesting the acceptance of their CoC. (Reg. I/10 STCW)

This Shipping Notice –

- Outlines requirements to hold a Gibraltar Endorsement;
- Explains online application process, format and Verification portal for Gibraltar Endorsements;
- Provides information on the Countries whose Certificates of Competency are considered acceptable for service as an officer on a Gibraltar registered ship;
- Outlines certain requirements for competence in the English language;
- Makes recommendations for the manning levels of pleasure vessels;
- Outlines how certain seafarers can demonstrate adequate knowledge of Gibraltar laws and administrative procedures;
- Clarifies policy on the acceptance of on-line STCW training.

This Shipping Notice primarily applies to ships subject to the STCW and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC) however Section 7 contains guidance to the masters of pleasure vessels on safe manning.

2. Requirements to hold a Gibraltar endorsement

The Gibraltar Ship Registry does not issue Certificates of Competency (CoCs), but the Ship Registry is required to issue an endorsement recognizing other national CoCs. Endorsements are required for all officers sailing on Gibraltar registered vessels unless they hold a CoC issued by the United Kingdom.

Officers serving on Gibraltar registered vessels may be of any nationality or residency provided they hold a CoC issued by one of the [countries recognized by the Gibraltar Maritime Administration](#).

If a seafarer holds a United Kingdom issued Certificate of Equivalent Competency (CEC), they are not required to apply for a Gibraltar endorsement.

The Ship Registry does not normally accept applications direct from individual seafarers; applications should be made through the owner/operator or one of their manning agents.

3. Online Application Process – Seafarer HQ cloud based system

Using assigned login credentials, the applicant via https://Gibraltar.seafarerhq.com/sign_in may by following the on-screen requirements, and upon upload/submission of required underlying documentation obtain the necessary Gibraltar STCW Endorsement.

First time users will require account/login credentials, this may be obtained upon email application to maritime.seafarers@gibraltar.gov.gi

The following details should be included in the emailed request:

- Name;
- Email address;
- Username preference;
- Invoicing details.

When applying for endorsements, candidates should ensure that applications are complete in all respects and that electronic copies of all required supporting documentation is included with the application.

Applicants should be aware that incomplete applications or missing supporting information can lead to lengthy delays in processing the application.

4. Verification of authenticity and validity for Electronic STCW Seafarer Endorsements issued in compliance with: -

Verification of the authenticity and validity of an electronic certificate may be undertaken via the following means: (See Figure 1 - Example of electronic STCW endorsement)

- a) Via scanning of the embedded QR Code with an electronic device having internet capability, or;
- b) Via the use of the certificate's Unique Tracking Number (UTN) upon accessing the dedicated verification portal. <https://portal.gibraltarship.com/>

6. PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

It is a requirement that the officers on board a Gibraltar registered ship, both at operational and management level, and irrespective of the common language of the ship, have an appropriate level of proficiency in the English language, commensurate with the functions the officer is permitted to perform. Evidence of proficiency in the English language should be submitted in the application for a Gibraltar Endorsement.

7. MANNING OF PLEASURE VESSELS

The master of every ship is responsible for the safety of the ship and those on board. This includes ensuring that manning of the ship is sufficient to safely execute any intended voyage.

Where there are no prescriptive manning requirements for a pleasure vessel, it is strongly recommended that the master ensures that the vessel is manned at the level that would be required for a similar vessel in commercial service. Please refer to our *Pleasure vessel Handbook* <https://www.gibraltarship.com/core-services/yachts> for our manning recommendations.

8. KNOWLEDGE OF MARITIME LEGISLATION

Officers serving at the “management level” (masters, chief officers, chief engineers and second engineers) are required to have an appropriate knowledge of the maritime legislation of the Administration, relevant to the functions they are permitted to perform.

For officers on Gibraltar registered ships this requirement is met by the officer demonstrating knowledge of Gibraltar legal & Admin procedures which as per *Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Safety, etc.) Act 1993, Administrative Instructions under the Merchant Shipping Act 1993, Administrative Instruction No. Stcw- 4- Administrative Instruction On Recognition Of Certificates Issued Abroad And Issue Of A Gibraltar Endorsement.*

<https://www.gibraltarlaws.gov.gi/legislations/administrative-instructions-under-the-merchant-shipping-safety-etc-act-1993-680/download>

To further assist our seafarers with knowledge of Legal and Admin procedures, we would encourage seafarers to also review our Master or Yacht Master’s Handbooks. These manuals are very useful day to day guides, please visit <https://www.gibraltarship.com/survey> for *Master’s handbook* and <https://www.gibraltarship.com/core-services/yachts> for *Yacht and pleasure vessel handbook*.

9. ON BOARD FAMILIARISATION TRAINING

Before being assigned shipboard duties, all seafarers are required to have received familiarisation training in accordance with Section A-VI/1 of the STCW Code.

10. REFRESHER TRAINING

Seafarers qualified in accordance with the training listed below shall be required (as applicable), every five years, to provide evidence of having maintained the required standard of competence, to undertake the tasks, duties, and responsibilities:

- Proficiency in Personal Survival Techniques, STCW Table A-VI/1-1;
- Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats, other than Fast Rescue Boats, STCW Table A-VI/2-1;
- Proficiency in Fast Rescue Boats, STCW Table A-VI/2-2;
- Proficiency in Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting, STCW Table A-VI/1-2;
- Proficiency in Advanced Fire Fighting, STCW Table A-VI/3;
- Passenger ship Crowd Management training, STCW A-V/2 para. 3;
- Crisis Management and Human Behaviour STCW A-V/2 para 4.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMPANIES

As well as placing responsibilities on masters and other seafarers, the STCW Convention also places responsibilities on the owners / managers of ships subject to STCW. The obligations are outlined in STCW I/14 and are reflected in Gibraltar legislation.

In summary, these obligations relate to –

- Ensuring seafarers assigned to any of its ships are appropriately qualified in accordance with the STCW Convention;
- Ensuring its ships are manned in accordance with the applicable minimum safe manning document;
- Seafarers receiving the appropriate refresher and updating training;
- Full, readily available, records of seafarers being maintained (See STCW I/14.4 for details of the information to be recorded);
- Ensuring seafarers are properly familiarised when assigned to its ships;
- Ensuring effective coordination of the ship's complement in emergency situations and when performing safety, security and pollution prevention duties; and
- Ensuring that there is an effective means of oral communication on board.

12. WATCHKEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to the measure to prevent fatigue in Section 5 (above) masters are required to ensure that the principles of keeping a safe watch outlined in STCW A-VIII are implemented on board.

Such measures include –

- The principles contained in STCW A-VIII/2 Part 4-1 in relation to a navigation watch;
- The principles contained in STCW A-VIII/2 Part 4-2 in relation to an engineering watch;
- The principles contained in STCW A-VIII/2 Part 4-3 in relation to a radio watch; and
- The principles contained in STCW A-VIII/2 Part 5 in relation to watch keeping in port.

13. STCW COURSE APPROVAL AND ONLINE TRAINING

Following the growth of online training, we would like to clarify that we do not consider online distance learning to adequately cover the practical requirements as detailed in STCW Code 1978 (as amended) Sect A-VI/1. To simplify, we have produced the following table which clarifies which STCW online training courses may be accepted for service on board our vessels.

The table, as seen in Annex 1, also details which approval is required i.e., certificates issued under the authority of any IMO 'Whitelist' country, (MSC.1/Circ.1163 - as amended) or certificates to be issued under the authority of a Country listed in Section 2 of this notice.

Gareth Sheriff – Chief Surveyor (Ag)

For & on behalf of the Maritime Administrator

Issue date: 21 August 2023

All notices are available via <https://www.gibraltarship.com/>

This copy of the Administrative Instruction has been sent electronically and does not carry a signature or official stamp. A sign and stamped copy will be available upon enquiry

Annex 1

Recognition of STCW Training Courses for Service on-board Gibraltar Vessels			
STCW Course (including Refresher Training unless stated)	STCW Code	Online training accepted	Certificates issued under the authority of any IMO 'White List' country (MSC.1/Circ.1163 - as amended)
Personal Survival Techniques	Table A-VI/1-1	N	Y
Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting	Table A-VI/1-2	N	Y
Elementary First Aid	Table A-VI/1-3	N	Y
Personal Safety and Social Responsibility	Table A-VI/1-4	Y	Y
Proficiency in Security Awareness	Table A-VI/6-1	Y	Y
Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats	Table A-VI/2-1	N	Y
Proficiency in Fast Rescue Boats	Table A-VI/2-2	N	Y
Advanced Fire Fighting	Table A-VI/3	N	Y
Advanced Fire Fighting - Refresher only	Table A-VI/3	Y	Y
Medical First Aid	Table A-VI/4-1	N	Y
Medical Care	Table A-VI/4-2	N	Y
Basic Oil and Chemical Tanker Training	Table A-V/1-1-1	Y	N*
Basic Liquefied Gas Tanker Training	Table A-V/1-2-1	Y	N*
Advanced Oil/Chemical Training	Table A-V/1-1-2/3	Y	N*
Advanced Liquefied Gas Tanker Training	Table A-V/1-2-2	Y	N*
Proficiency for Seafarers with Designated Security Duties	Table A-VI/6-2	Y	Y
Proficiency for Ship Security Officers	Table A-VI/5	Y	Y
Crowd Management Training	Table A-V/2-1	Y	Y
Crisis Management and Human Behaviour Training	Table A-V/2-2	Y	Y
Passenger Safety, Cargo Safety and Hull Integrity Training for Ro-Ro Passenger Ships	Sect A-V/2.5	Y	Y
Polar Code Basic	Table A-V/4-1	Y	Y
Polar Code Advanced	Table A-V/4-2	Y	Y
Basic IGF (International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-Flashpoint Fuels)	Table A-V/3-1	Y	N*
Advanced IGF (International Code of Safety for Ships Using Gases or Other Low-Flashpoint Fuels)			

N* - Certificates to be issued under the authority of a Country listed in the hyperlink contained in section 2 - *Requirements to hold a Gibraltar endorsement*