



MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
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ROLE OF THE HUMAN ELEMENT

Ongoing work of the Human Factors Task Group (HFTG) established by the industry

Submitted by ICS, IAPH, CEFIC, OCIMF, INTERTANKO and IPTA

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides an outline proposal from the Industry Human Factors Task Group (HFTG) for the inclusion within the STCW Code of additional competencies

Action to be taken: Paragraph 11

Related documents: MSC 81/8/1; MSC 81/25; MSC 81/INF.8; MSC 81/INF.12 and MSC 82/10/3

Introduction

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-first session (10 to 19 May 2006), considered the report of the IIWG, established to study the reported incidents of explosions on chemical and product carriers (MSC 81/8/1 and MSC 81/INF.8). The Committee noted the IIWG conclusion that the failure to follow procedures was the primary cause of the incidents in question, the industry has established a task group on human factors to enhance efforts to identify and address factors influencing procedural compliance on board tankers.

2 In MSC 82/10/3 the HFTG advised that it hoped to develop proposals in the medium term to make the ISM Code more effective.

3 Under the authority of the Steering Committee formed by the submitting industry partners the HFTG has continued its work as advised in MSC 82/10/3. The HFTG advises the Committee of its proposal to include competencies within the STCW Code specifically to support the application of a Safety Culture at sea.

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Background

4 The HFTG gave detailed consideration to the conclusion in MSC 81/8/1 that: “the most significant contribution to the incidents in question was a failure to follow cargo operation guidelines and procedures (at both shipboard and ship management level). This would point toward a failure within the companies’ safety culture”, noting that this indicated that established and internationally recognized industry guidelines such as the ICS Tanker Safety Guide (Chemicals) were not always being fully complied with. Amongst the possible reasons for the failures identified is the continuing trend for ship’s officers and crews of all nationalities and backgrounds to move between different ships and different companies. This has the potential to limit the familiarity and understanding of personnel with each ships’ systems, and procedures, and with each companies’ operating procedures.

5 The information provided in document MSC 81/INF.12 (United Kingdom) on human element research into leadership qualities and the publication of a booklet “Leading for Safety” demonstrates the importance of establishing and operating an effective safety culture. Personnel working within a successful safety culture demonstrate a high degree of compliance with safety procedures and guidelines.

6 The HFTG noted that many companies have established a safety culture and that a mechanism to make such schemes more common and universally effective would be of benefit. In addition it was noted that effective safety cultures have been found to comprise of five key elements:

- Understanding
- Behaviour
- Compliance
- Risk management
- Leadership

7 Whilst recognizing that the STCW tables are designed to support on-board functions at different levels the HFTG noted that the current STCW competency tables do not expressly include the five essential safety culture components identified above.

8 The HFTG considers therefore, that amendments to the STCW tables to include the five key elements (identified in paragraph 6), as competencies, would facilitate a more widespread application of an effective safety culture at sea. In order to gain the maximum benefit from the introduction of the five key elements the HFTG considers that each element should be applicable to all current functions and at support, operational and management levels.

9 The HFTG considers that the effect of introducing the five key elements under each STCW Code function would prepare all seafarers undergoing STCW training for the variations of company specific safety cultures when operating on individual ships. Personnel would also have an improved common understanding and baseline competence regarding safety culture that would remain a transferable skill irrespective of the ship type, ship owner or operator. In addition all personnel would gain an improved understanding of the need to comply with procedures and guidelines and how such compliance is both required by and supported by a safety culture.

Proposal

10 The HFTG proposes that the Committee instructs the STW Sub-Committee to consider introducing for each STCW Function at support, operational and management level the additional five key elements, as the competencies of Understanding, Behaviour, Compliance, Risk management and Leadership.

Action requested of the Committee

11 The Committee is invited to note the above information and take action as appropriate.
