

IN 1348 – IMO guidance relating to seafarers who hold certificates and documents that do not comply with the 2010 Amendments to the STCW Convention and Code from 1 January to 1 July 2017

Information Note Published on 20 December 2016

On 5 December 2016, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) issued MSC Circular MSC.1/Circ.1560 to recommend that port state control (PSC) authorities take a practical approach when inspecting ships that have seafarers carrying certificates not in accordance with the STCW 2010 amendments.

The Circular does not delay implementation of the 2010 Manila amendments per se, but rather calls on Administrations, their Recognised Organisations (ROs), and PSC to adopt a pragmatic approach in allowing a six-month period of transition – from 1 January 2017 to 1 July 2017 – during which time they will not take enforcement action against seafarers without the required certification. The rationale behind the Circular is the recognition of the fact that some Administrations will not be able to issue amended certificates in time for the deadline of 1 January 2017.

Please note that the Circular is a non-mandatory recommendation, therefore Administrations and PSC are not obligated to accept it. IMCA members are advised to treat the six-month grace period as an exceptional escape clause, only if needed. Members are encouraged to urge their seafarers to obtain the required STCW certificates and endorsements in accordance with the STCW 2010 amendments at the earliest opportunity. IMCA invites members to maintain a copy of the IMO Circular (attached to the present Regulatory Notification) on board any ship with affected seafarers and to notify their flag Administration if during a port state inspection, any assistance is required to avoid any delays to the ship. Certain flag Administrations (e.g. the Bahamas Maritime Authority) have already issued Technical Alerts to provide further information on the implementation of the IMO MSC Circular.

The guidance in the Circular is only applicable until 1 July 2017 and all parties should note that IMO will be discussing matters relating to the STWC 2010 amendments at its Subcommittee meeting on Human Element, Training & Watchkeeping (HTW) from 29 January 2017 to 3 February 2017.

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