

COMMENTARY ON CHAPTER II:

MASTER AND DECK DEPARTMENT

Chapter II of the STCW Annex, and the associated sections of the STCW Code, are devoted to the requirements for the master, and officers and ratings who serve in the deck department, and/or those who perform functions relating to navigation; cargo handling and stowage; and controlling the operation of the ship and care for persons on board. There are four regulations in the chapter.

Regulation II/1 - Officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more

The first paragraph of this regulation requires that everyone who serves as an officer in charge of the navigational watch on a seagoing ship of 500 gross tonnage or more must hold an "appropriate certificate". (See the definition of "appropriate certificate" on page 17 of this handbook.) The second paragraph sets out the requirements a candidate must meet to acquire a certificate for service in this capacity, including age limits, and minimum periods of seagoing service. The candidate must also complete approved education and training, and meet the standard of competence and other requirements of section A-II/i of the STCW Code.

Section A-II/1 of the STCW Code specifies the minimum standard of competence in the form of four-column tables for each of three functional areas, at the operational level. The first column broadly defines the area of competence to be assessed. Column 2 lists specific areas of knowledge, understanding and proficiency which the candidate must be shown to possess. Column 3 identifies methods for demonstrating competence. These are usually in the form of examination and demonstration of practical ability based on evidence obtained from one or more environments (such as approved in-service experience, or approved simulator training). The last column provides criteria to be used in evaluating whether the candidate is indeed competent. The criteria are normally expressed as statements of what the assessor should take into account when judging whether a candidate's performance is acceptable and consistent with professional practices.

Tables are presented for functions relating to: navigation; cargo handling and stowage; and controlling the operation of the ship and care for persons on board. In regulation II/1 these tables relate to the operational level of responsibility. The management level is addressed in regulations II/2 and II/3; and the support level is addressed in regulation II/4.

Regulation II/2 - Masters and chief mates on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more

The requirements in this regulation are divided on the basis of ship tonnage (ships of 3000 gross tonnage or more; and ships of between 500 and 3000 gross tonnage). The first paragraph of this regulation requires that everyone who serves as a master or chief mate on a seagoing ship of 3000 gross tonnage or more (i.e., without any tonnage limit) must hold an "appropriate certificate". (See the definition of "appropriate certificate" on page 14 of this handbook.)

The second paragraph sets out the requirements a candidate must meet to acquire a certificate for service in this capacity. The candidate must be qualified as an officer in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more (i.e. meet the requirements of regulation II/1); and must meet certain minimum periods of seagoing service as officer of the watch and/or chief mate. The candidate must also meet the standard of competence and other requirements of section A-II/2 of the STCW Code. Section A-II/2 of the STCW Code specifies the minimum standard of competence in the form of four-column tables for each of three functional areas, at the management level. The tables are formatted in the same way as those in section A-II/1; but the focus is on the

management level of responsibility, and the statements of competence, the areas of knowledge, the methods of assessment and the criteria for assessment are designed to apply to that level of professional skill and judgement.

The third paragraph of regulation II/2 requires that everyone who serves as a master or chief mate on a seagoing ship of between 500 and 3000 gross tonnage must hold an "appropriate certificate". (See the definition of "appropriate certificate" on page 17 of this handbook.)

The fourth paragraph sets out the requirements a candidate must meet to acquire a certificate for service in this capacity. The candidate must be qualified as a officer in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more (i.e. meet the requirements of regulation II/1); and must meet certain minimum periods of seagoing service as officer of the watch and/or chief mate. The candidate must also meet the relevant standard of competence and other requirements of section A-II/2 of the STCW Code. As before, section A-II/2 of the STCW Code specifies the minimum standard of competence in the form of four-column tables for each of three functional areas, at the management level. The tables are the same regardless of tonnage, but the level of knowledge may be varied according to whether the certificate is to be valid for ships of 3,000 gross tonnage or more or for ships of between 500 gross tonnage and 3,000 gross tonnage. Some flexibility is also available in determining the knowledge requirements for service on ships engaged exclusively on near-coastal voyages.

Regulation II/3 - Officers in charge of a navigational watch and of masters on ships of less than 500 gross tonnage

All of the requirements in this regulation are related to officers serving on seagoing ships of less than 500 gross tonnage. But the requirements in this regulation are divided on the basis of level of responsibility (officer of the watch, and master) and also on the basis of voyage type (engaged, or not engaged, on near-coastal voyages). The first paragraph of this regulation requires that everyone who serves as an officer in charge of the navigational watch on a seagoing ship of less than 500 gross tonnage not engaged on near-coastal voyages must hold an "appropriate certificate" for ships of 500 gross tonnage or more.

The second paragraph requires that everyone who serves as a master on a seagoing ship of less than 500 gross tonnage not engaged on near-coastal voyages must hold an "appropriate certificate" for ships of between 500 and 3,000 gross tonnage.

Paragraphs 3 to 6 deal with qualifications for officers of the navigational watch and masters on ships of less than 500 gross tonnage engaged on near-coastal voyages.

The last paragraph gives the flag State authority to exempt officers and masters on smaller ships from the full application of the regulation, when such application would be unreasonable or impracticable.

Regulation II/4 - Ratings forming part of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more

The first paragraph of this regulation requires that every rating forming part of a navigational watch (as, for example, a lookout or helmsman) on a seagoing ship of 500 gross tonnage or more must be "duly certificated." It is not required that the format provided in regulation I/2 be used to comply with the regulation (though all the other provisions of regulation I/2 apply); and certification is not required for ratings who are under training or whose duties are of an unskilled nature.

The second paragraph sets out the requirements a candidate must meet, including minimum age, approved seagoing service and training associated with watchkeeping functions. The candidate must also meet the standard of competence set out in Section A-11/4 of the STCW Code.

Section A-II/4 of the STCW Code specifies the minimum standard of competence in the form of a four-column table for the navigation function area, at the support level. The table is formatted in the same way as those in sections A-II/1, A-II/2 and A-II/3; but the focus is on the support level of responsibility, and the statements of competence, the areas of knowledge, the methods of assessment and the criteria for assessment are designed to apply to that level of skills and abilities.