

PARTS THAT MAKE UP THE WHOLE

The STCW Convention is organized in three components: the Articles, the Annex, and the STCW Code. These three components are interrelated and none can be read in isolation from the other two.

The Articles

The Articles are the heart of a convention. They state the legal arrangements that exist between the countries which go through the formal process of agreeing to be bound by these arrangements. Both obligations and privileges are included in the articles of the STCW convention, as well as a number of limitations and controls. These are discussed in more detail in section 3 of this handbook.

The Articles in the STCW Convention have remained unchanged since they were originally adopted in 1978. The 1995 Amendments to the convention only affect the Annex to the convention.

The Annex

When adopted in 1978, the STCW Convention only had two components: the articles and the Annex. The Annex outlined the technical requirements which had to be met to meet the obligations imposed by the articles.

The original Annex had six chapters. The 1995 Amendments expanded the annex to eight chapters, as follows:

1978 Annex	1995 Annex
I. General Provisions with 4 regulations	General Provisions with 15 regulations
II. Master -- Deck Department	Master and Deck Department
III. Engine Department	Engine Department
IV. Radio Department	Radiocommunication and Radio Personnel
V. Special Requirements For Tankers	Special Training for Personnel on Certain Types of Ships
VI. Proficiency in Survival Craft	Emergency, Occupational Safety, Medical Care and Survival Functions
VII. [Not included]	Alternative Certification
VIII. [Not included - although watchkeeping was discussed in other annexes]	Watchkeeping

The 1978 version of the Annex was totally replaced by the 1995 version. Each chapter of the 1995 version of the Annex is discussed separately in this handbook.

One of the main new features of the 1995 amendments was the "Seafarers' Training and Certification Code" (STCW Code), which is discussed below. Each chapter of the Annex contains a number of regulations which refer to the STCW Code for more detail. A particular regulation must be read together with the section of the Code which relates to it to get a full understanding of what is being required by that regulation.

The STCW Code

The people who were involved in drafting the materials that finally were adopted as the 1995 amendments to the STCW Convention developed a new code to contain almost all of the technical details needed for meeting the requirements in the eight Chapters of the Annex. The annex is organized to follow exactly the arrangement of the regulations, and presents information by use of tables which have a uniform format. Changes which will be necessary to keep these technical details up-to-date with technical developments in the maritime industry can be made in the Code without changing the regulations in the Annex.

The STCW Code has two parts. Part A contains "mandatory standards". In other words, each section in Part A is specifically referred to in the regulation with the same number, and the standards set out in Part A are required as if they were included in the regulation itself. Part B of the STCW Code, on the other hand, contains "Recommended Guidance" which is not referred to in the regulations and is not mandatory. The Guidance in Part B is identified by reference to a specific regulation in the Annex, but the guidance is only provided to clarify a regulation or promote a uniform interpretation of a particular requirement. In the following sections of this handbook, the highlighted features take into account information from both the Annex and the STCW Code.