

# Amendments to STCW Code Section A-VI/1

## Resolution MSC.560 (108)



Relevant for ship owners, managers and Surveyors

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### Background

Resolution MSC.560 (108) introduces amendments to Section A-VI/1 of the STCW Code by replacing Table A-VI/1-4 (Specification of minimum standard of competence in personal safety and social responsibilities).

The revised table reinforces the competence “Contribute to effective communications on board ship” and introduces additional and enhanced competence elements addressing violence and harassment prevention, human interaction, and fatigue awareness and management, reflecting current international expectations for safe and respectful shipboard working environments.



### Scope of the amendments

The amendments introduced by Resolution MSC.560 (108) primarily focus on strengthening human element aspects within basic safety training. In particular, the revised Table A-VI/1-4:

- Introduces explicit competence related to preventing and responding to violence and harassment, including awareness of the continuum of harm, intervention and reporting mechanisms, and the application of trauma-informed principles;
- Enhances competence related to fatigue, covering knowledge of causes and consequences of fatigue and methods for its prevention and management; and
- Maintains and reinforces existing elements of personal safety and social responsibilities, including social responsibilities, employment conditions, individual rights and obligations, and awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

The revised competence framework emphasizes behavioral awareness, communication effectiveness, and human interaction onboard ships. Training and assessment are expected to ensure that seafarers not only understand technical safety requirements, but also demonstrate appropriate conduct, situational awareness, and responsible behavior in relation to interpersonal interactions, fatigue management, and social responsibilities.

### **Introduction of Competence on Fatigue Management**

Resolution MSC.560 (108) introduces a new and explicit competence requiring seafarers to understand and take necessary actions to control fatigue. This competence did not exist as a standalone or assessable requirement in the previous version of Table A-VI/1-4, where fatigue considerations were addressed only indirectly through hours-of-rest provisions.

Under the amended table, seafarers are required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and proficiency in relation to the importance of obtaining adequate rest; the effects of sleep, work schedules and circadian rhythms on fatigue; the effects of physical stressors on seafarers; the effects of environmental stressors both on board and ashore; and the effects of schedule changes on seafarer fatigue. Competence is evaluated on the basis that appropriate fatigue-management actions are observed at all times. The method for demonstrating competence remains assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or attendance at an approved course.

### **Introduction of Competence on Violence and Harassment**

A new mandatory competence has been introduced requiring seafarers to contribute to the prevention of and response to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault. This competence is entirely new and was not addressed in the previous version of Table A-VI/1-4.

The amended table requires seafarers to possess basic knowledge and understanding of violence and harassment and the continuum of harm, as well as an understanding of the consequences of such behaviour for victims, perpetrators, bystanders and other stakeholders, and its effects on safety, health and well-being on board ship. Seafarers must also understand that factors such as abuse of power relations, discrimination, stress, isolation, fatigue, and the use of drugs or alcohol may contribute to violence and harassment.

In terms of skills and actions, seafarers must be able to identify violence and harassment, take appropriate action to intervene, and report such conduct in accordance with company and flag-State procedures. The amended table also introduces a requirement for basic understanding of trauma-informed response principles and the provision of appropriate support to victims, bystanders and oneself. Competence is evaluated on the basis that acceptable practices and procedures for intervention in and reporting of violence and harassment are observed at all times. Demonstration of competence is achieved through assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or attendance at an approved course.

### **Expansion of “Human Relationships” to Include Psychosocial Safety**

While the competence relating to contributing to effective human relationships on board ship existed previously, Resolution MSC.560 (108) expands its scope by formally integrating psychosocial safety elements. This expansion links interpersonal behavior directly to safety outcomes through the explicit inclusion of fatigue awareness and the prevention of violence and harassment as assessable competences. This represents a qualitative strengthening of the “social responsibilities” component of Table A-VI/1-4, transforming previously implicit expectations into mandatory, assessable training outcomes.

## Actions Required by Training Providers

Training providers approved to deliver courses in accordance with Section A-VI/1 of the STCW Code are required to review and update their training programs, syllabi, training materials, and assessment methods to ensure full compliance with the amended Table A-VI/1-4 introduced by Resolution MSC.560 (108).

In particular, training providers shall:

- Incorporate explicit learning objectives, training content and assessment criteria addressing fatigue awareness and management, including causes and consequences of fatigue and practical measures for its prevention and control;
- Integrate dedicated training content on prevention of and response to violence and harassment, including awareness of the continuum of harm, identification of unacceptable behavior, intervention and reporting mechanisms, and basic principles of trauma-informed response;
- Ensure that existing elements related to personal safety and social responsibilities, including social responsibilities, employment conditions, individual rights and obligations, and awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, continue to be adequately covered;
- Review instructor competence and awareness to ensure instructors are suitably prepared to deliver and assess the newly introduced and expanded competence elements; and
- Update course approval documentation and submit revisions to the Administration or Recognized Organization, as applicable, where required.

## Actions Required by Shipping Companies / Ship Managers

Shipping companies and ship managers employing seafarers subject to STCW basic safety training requirements are required to take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with the amended competence requirements.

In particular, companies shall:

- Ensure that seafarers assigned to ships hold valid STCW certification reflecting training and assessment in accordance with the amended Table A-VI/1-4, as applicable;
- Review and, where necessary, update company policies, procedures and onboard practices related to fatigue management, violence and harassment prevention, and reporting mechanisms, in line with the revised competence framework;
- Promote onboard awareness of acceptable behavior, effective communication, and psychosocial safety as integral elements of shipboard safety culture;
- Support seafarers in accessing approved training or refresher courses where additional training is required to meet the amended competence standards; and
- Ensure that onboard management and supervisory personnel are aware of their responsibilities in supporting the implementation of these competence requirements.

## Note for Auditors

During statutory audits related to STCW certification and training compliance, auditors may verify that training, certification and company arrangements appropriately reflect the amended requirements of Table A-VI/1-4, including competence related to fatigue management and prevention of violence and harassment.

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