

28 November 2025

Applicable to: This FLEET SAFETY LETTER should be brought to the attention of ship-owners, ship managers, operators, Masters of Vanuatu-registered ships and Recognized Organizations

Subject: Mandatory Amendments to STCW Code – New Competence Standards on Prevention of Workplace Harassment

Ref: IMO Resolution MSC.560(108)

Effective Date: 01 January 2026

1. Purpose

This Fleet Safety Letter is issued to inform all Ship Owners, Managers, Operators, and vessel personnel of the forthcoming mandatory amendments to the STCW Code, adopted by the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at its 108th session under Resolution MSC.560(108).

These amendments affect Part A of the STCW Code and will enter into force on 01 January 2026.

2. Summary of Amendments

The core change introduced by the resolution is the complete replacement of Table A-VI/1-4, which sets out the *minimum standard of competence in Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities (PSSR)*.

The revised table establishes new mandatory competence standards related specifically to the prevention of and response to workplace harassment, including bullying, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.

Key New Competency Requirements

All seafarers must demonstrate the following minimum competencies:

- Basic knowledge and understanding of violence, harassment, bullying, and sexual assault.
- Awareness of the consequences of such actions for victims, perpetrators, and overall safety on board.
- Ability to identify, intervene in, or report incidents of violence or harassment.
- Fundamental understanding of trauma-informed response and providing appropriate support to affected persons.

The full text of Resolution MSC.560(108), including the revised Table A-VI/1-4, is provided in the appendix to this circular for reference.

3. Required Actions for Ship Owners, Managers, and Operators

All companies must ensure compliance with the new STCW competency standards by the implementation date: **01 January 2026**.

3.1 Requirement for Existing Personnel – Gap Training

Seafarers who currently hold valid PSSR certificates issued *before* the amendments will not have been trained in the new mandatory competence areas.

Accordingly:

1. **Competency Gap:** Existing PSSR-certified seafarers lack training in harassment prevention and response.
2. **Owner's Responsibility:** Certificate validity does not exempt personnel from meeting the new competence standards.
3. **Mandatory Familiarization:** Owners and Managers must implement gap training or supplementary familiarization for all existing crew to address the newly required competencies.
4. **Documentation:** All supplementary training must be recorded (e.g., training records, familiarization forms) and made available for audits or Port State Control inspections.

3.2 Implementation:

1. All seafarers are required to complete the new VHAS training module before joining a vessel after the 2. implementation date.
2. Existing PSSR certificates remain valid until their renewal date, at which point the updated training must be completed.
3. New basic safety training courses issued after January 1, 2026, will automatically incorporate this new module.

4. Recommendations

VISR strongly recommends that all companies immediately review their onboarding and familiarization procedures to establish a structured compliance plan well in advance of 01 January 2026.

Further VISR circulars and regulatory updates may be accessed at:

<https://register-vu.com/library/safety-letters>



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by the direction of the

Assistant Commissioner of Maritime Affairs

The Republic of Vanuatu

RESOLUTION MSC.560(108)
(adopted on 23 May 2024)

**AMENDMENTS TO PART A OF THE SEAFARERS' TRAINING,
CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING (STCW) CODE**

THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE,

RECALLING Article 28(b) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Committee,

RECALLING ALSO article XII and regulation I/1.2.3 of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 ("the 1978 STCW Convention"), concerning the procedures for amending part A of the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code ("the STCW Code"),

RECOGNIZING the need for training provisions to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment in the maritime sector, including sexual assault and sexual harassment,

HAVING CONSIDERED, at its 108th session, amendments to part A of the STCW Code, proposed and circulated in accordance with article XII(1)(a)(i) of the 1978 STCW Convention,

1 ADOPTS, in accordance with article XII(1)(a)(iv) of the 1978 STCW Convention, amendments to the STCW Code, the text of which is set out in the annex to the present resolution;

2 DETERMINES, in accordance with article XII(1)(a)(vii)(2) of the 1978 STCW Convention, that said amendments to the STCW Code shall be deemed to have been accepted on 1 July 2025, unless, prior to that date, more than one third of Parties or Parties the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than 50% of the gross tonnage of the world's merchant shipping of ships of 100 gross register tons or more have notified to the Secretary-General of the Organization that they object to the amendments;

3 INVITES Parties to note that, in accordance with article XII(1)(a)(ix) of the 1978 STCW Convention, the amendments to the STCW Code annexed hereto shall enter into force on 1 January 2026 upon their acceptance, in accordance with paragraph 2 above;

4 URGES Parties to implement the amendments to section A-VI/1 of the STCW Code at an early stage;

5 REQUESTS the Secretary-General, for the purposes of article XII(1)(a)(v) of the 1978 STCW Convention, to transmit certified copies of the present resolution and the text of the amendments contained in the annex to all Parties to the 1978 STCW Convention;

6 ALSO REQUESTS the Secretary-General to transmit copies of this resolution and its annex to Members of the Organization which are not Parties to the 1978 STCW Convention.

ANNEX

**AMENDMENTS TO PART A OF THE SEAFARERS' TRAINING,
CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING (STCW) CODE**

**CHAPTER VI
STANDARDS REGARDING EMERGENCY, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY,
SECURITY, MEDICAL CARE AND SURVIVAL FUNCTIONS**

Section A-VI/1

Mandatory minimum requirements for safety familiarization, basic training and instruction for all seafarers

1 Table A-VI/1-4 (Specification of minimum standard of competence in personal safety and social responsibilities) is replaced by the following:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	Knowledge, understanding and proficiency	Methods for demonstrating competence	Criteria for evaluating competence
Comply with emergency procedures	Types of emergency which may occur, such as collision, fire, foundering Knowledge of shipboard contingency plans for response to emergencies Emergency signals and specific duties allocated to crew members in the muster list; muster stations; correct use of personal safety equipment Action to take on discovering potential emergency, including fire, collision, foundering and ingress of water into the ship Action to take on hearing emergency alarm signals Value of training and drills Knowledge of escape routes and internal communication and alarm systems	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Initial action on becoming aware of an emergency conforms to established emergency response procedures Information given on raising alarm is prompt, accurate, complete and clear

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	Knowledge, understanding and proficiency	Methods for demonstrating competence	Criteria for evaluating competence
Take precautions to prevent pollution of the marine environment	<p>Basic knowledge of the impact of shipping on the marine environment and the effects of operational or accidental pollution on it</p> <p>Basic environmental protection procedures</p> <p>Basic knowledge of complexity and diversity of the marine environment</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Organizational procedures designed to safeguard the marine environment are observed at all times
Observe safe working practices	<p>Importance of adhering to safe working practices at all times</p> <p>Safety and protective devices available to protect against potential hazards aboard ship</p> <p>Precautions to be taken prior to entering enclosed spaces</p> <p>Familiarization with international measures concerning accident prevention and occupational health</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Safe working practices are observed and appropriate safety and protective equipment is correctly used at all times
Contribute to effective communications on board ship	<p>Understand the principles of, and barriers to, effective communication between individuals and teams within the ship</p> <p>Ability to establish and maintain effective communications</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Communications are clear and effective at all times
Contribute to effective human relationships on board ship	<p>Importance of maintaining good human and working relationships aboard ship</p> <p>Basic teamworking principles and practice, including conflict resolution</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Expected standards of work and behaviour are observed at all times

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	Knowledge, understanding and proficiency	Methods for demonstrating competence	Criteria for evaluating competence
	Social responsibilities; employment conditions; individual rights and obligations; dangers of drug and alcohol abuse		
Contribute to the prevention of and response to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault	<p>Prevention of violence and harassment:</p> <p>Basic knowledge and understanding of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, and the continuum of harm</p> <p>Basic knowledge and understanding of the consequences of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault on victims, perpetrators, bystanders and stakeholders, and its effects on safety, health and well-being</p> <p>Understand that, among others, abuse of power relations, discrimination, stress, isolation, fatigue, drugs or alcohol may contribute to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault</p> <p>Responding to violence and harassment:</p> <p>Ability to identify violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault</p> <p>Basic knowledge of the action to take to intervene in and report violence and</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	<p>Acceptable practices and procedures designed for the prevention of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault are observed at all times</p> <p>Able to identify violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, and the continuum of harm and its effects</p> <p>Acceptable practices and procedures designed for the intervention in and reporting of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault are observed at all times</p>

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	Knowledge, understanding and proficiency	Methods for demonstrating competence	Criteria for evaluating competence
	<p>harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault</p> <p>Understand the basic principles of trauma-informed response and how to provide appropriate support to a victim, bystanders and self</p>		
Understand and take necessary actions to control fatigue	<p>Importance of obtaining the necessary rest</p> <p>Effects of sleep, schedules and the circadian rhythm on fatigue</p> <p>Effects of physical stressors on seafarers</p> <p>Effects of environmental stressors in and outside the ship and their impact on seafarers</p> <p>Effects of schedule changes on seafarer fatigue</p>	Assessment of evidence obtained from approved instruction or during attendance at an approved course	Fatigue management practices are observed and appropriate actions are used at all times

