Latest developments at the IMO- STCW

CMMI Maritime Potpourri 2025

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About IMO GMA

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code

Background

- The last STCW Comprehensive revision was in 2010. This was after 15 years.

- After 2010, there have been some revisions to STCW

- But now it's time for a comprehensive revision again

- Deliberations have commenced at IMO from the HTW 9 sub-committee meeting onwards.

- Finalize the revisions after HTW 15 (2030)
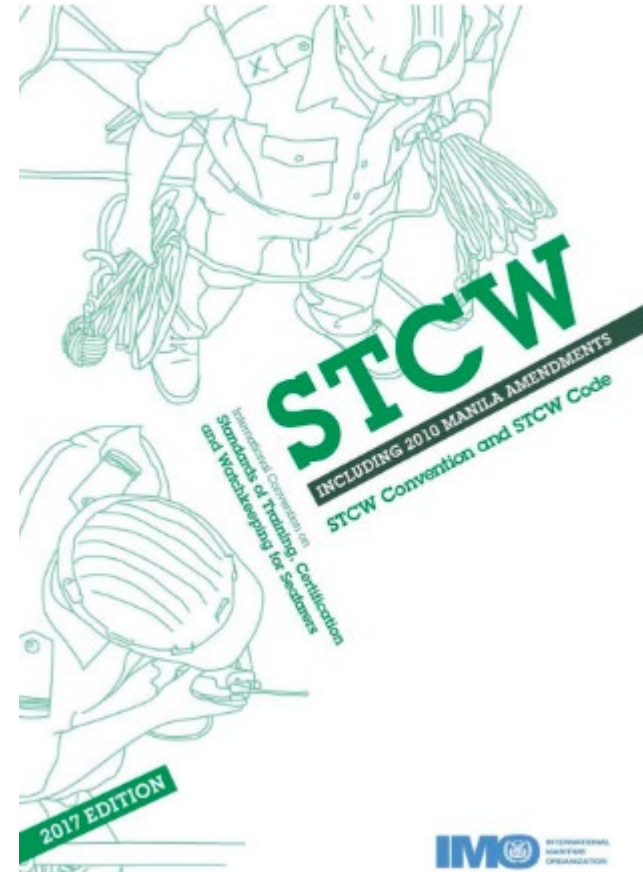
Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code

Phase 1
(Review/ Identification of gaps)

Phase 2
(Revision stage- Proposing and agreeing amendments to fill identified gaps)

✓ Completed (416 gaps identified)

Ongoing

3   HTW 11 (10 to 14 February 2025) agreed on the list of gaps identified in the STCW Convention and Code, with a view to being addressed in phase 2 of the comprehensive review (HTW 11/WP.4, paragraphs 5 to 45 and annex 1). The Sub-Committee also endorsed the completion of phase 1 (Review/identification of gaps); and agreed to the commencement of phase 2 (Revision/preparation of amendments) of the comprehensive review (HTW 11/WP.4, paragraph 47).

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 1

LIST OF SPECIFIC AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE STCW CONVENTION AND CODE

1. Emerging technologies on ships and ship operations
2. Digitalization of documentation, including certificates issued under STCW
3. Emerging technologies in education and training
4. Facilitation, flexibility and quality of onboard, shore-based and workshop skills training, including use of simulators
5. Flexibility and efficiency in the implementation of new training requirements and reduction of administrative burdens

6. Requirements for sea time or practical experience in relation to new and emerging technologies, including the use of simulation
7. Psychological safety, bullying and harassment, including SASH, gender diversity and gender sensitization
8. Mental health
9. Twenty-first century and interpersonal skills
10. Addressing inconsistencies
11. Addressing different interpretations

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 1

LIST OF SPECIFIC AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE STCW CONVENTION AND CODE

11. Emerging technologies on ships and ship operations
12. Addressing taxonomy and terminologies
13. Flexibility in revalidation of certificates and endorsements
14. Overview of the implementation of the Convention, in particular the need to update the STCW "White List"
15. Lessons learned
16. Flexibility

17. Alternative certification under chapter VII
18. Watchkeeping arrangements and principles to be observed (chapter VIII)
19. Alignment of STCW with requirements placed on ships, seafarers, and shipowners by other IMO and relevant international instruments
20. Cybersecurity
21. Implementation and transitional provisions
22. Addressing outdated training requirements

> To be comprehensive, the scope includes all pertinent issues and provisions of the STCW Convention and Code, including the articles.

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 1

IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Chapter II-VI Columns 3: All Competency Tables	There is a need for standardized language to be used in column 3 of the Competence Tables in part A of the STCW Code. Currently, the tables identify over 40 different methods for demonstrating competence. Several tables contain KUPs and criteria for evaluating competence within column 3 (e.g. table A-VI/2-1).	ISWG-STCW 1/2/16 Develop a standardized list of methods of demonstrating competence (Column 3) to eliminate inconsistencies. Review all tables to remove KUPs or criteria for evaluating competence from column 3. Where found, revise columns 2 and 4 as needed to ensure requirements are in the appropriate columns. Consider development of guidance for this standardized list of methods for demonstrating competence to be included in part B-I/6.

All competency tables in the STCW Code

Gap Number	Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
11	STCW Code	Consistency with regard to the use of action verb taxonomy should be ensured in all tables of part A of the STCW Code to classify the requirements for seafarers into KUPs, methods for demonstrating competence, and criteria for evaluating competence, which should be in line with the taxonomy used in the modern education system.	HTW 11/6/7

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 1

IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Table A-II/1 Table A-II/2 Table A-III/3	Review the navigation and associated equipment competencies and KUPs in line with modern practices. Evaluate the inclusion of deck maintenance and instrument knowledge in the competencies to enhance operational safety. Only mentioned in table A-II/5, so it appears they cannot be performed by anyone other than the able seafarer deck without any reference to whom they must report. Competencies for deck officers should include managing deck maintenance and repair to ensure comprehensive qualifications.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/19

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Table A-II/1	Review requirements in terms of modernization for: - Celestial Navigation (o) - Meteorology (o) - Visual Signalling (o) - Combine Bridge Resource management and Leadership &Teamworking skill (o with further consideration)	ISWG-STCW 1/2/30
Table A-II/1 Table B-II/1	Adjust the training on celestial navigation taking into consideration the compass errors.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/10

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Table A-II/1 Table A-II/2, A-II/3, A-II/4, A-II/5, A-III/1, A-III/2, A-III/3, A-III/4, A-III/5, A-III/6 and A-III/7	21st century skills such as interpersonal skills, mentoring, information management, communication, situational awareness, ability to adapt to a changing work environment, multicultural environments and different cultures, stress management, workload management, etc., are not specifically addressed by the STCW Convention and Code	ISWG-STCW 1/2/19

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Table A-II/1, column 3 Table A-II/2 Table A-II/3 Table A-II/5	It is necessary to review whether there is a need to add training equipment that utilizes digitalization and emerging technologies. Such as Immersive Reality Technology (IRT)1 as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Mixed Reality (MR)2, and Metaverse.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/30

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 1

IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS

HTW 11 concluded that using simulators to meet a portion of seagoing service requirements was only appropriate for the first issuance of certificates of competency at the operational level, for certificates of proficiency issued under chapter V and for revalidation.

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Simulation and Seagoing Service further consideration is needed, risk-based analysis		
Regulation II/1	There are no specific guidelines regarding the exact duration or methods of the approved seagoing service.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/30 Review the extent to which simulation training and other methods can substitute for the approved seagoing service related to onboard training. Additionally, if possible, it is also necessary to review the requirements for training ships, the duration of training, and whether additional weight should be given to training on a training ship.
Regulation II/1	Addition of new paragraphs to regulation II/1 which allow for substitution of approved seagoing service by alternative measures such as simulator training.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/43, annex 2

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 1

IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Table A-II/1 Table A-II/2	Current provisions lack training requirements for the use of electronic nautical publications as they are widely used and are significantly different from traditional paper publications.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/25 Evaluate the need to add competency requirements for the use of electronic nautical publications and add as appropriate.
Table A-II/1 Table B-II/1 Table A-II/2 Table A-II/3	References to celestial navigation, checking compass errors through the use of celestial bodies and the use of sextants should be deleted.	ISWG-STCW 1/2
Tables for Operational and Management Level	New competences are proposed to cover the skills required for non-technical behavioural soft skills needed to operate in the 21st century.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/15

.1 Team Working;
.2 Communications and Influencing;
.3 Situation Awareness;
.4 Decision-Making;
.5 Results Focus; and
.6 Leadership and Managerial Skills.

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Sections A-III/1, A-III/2 and A-III/3 Tables A-III/1 and A-III/2	Section A-III/1 requires the addition of a new paragraph to include that an Administration may omit knowledge requirements for High Voltage installation for the engineer officer serving on ships without High Voltage installations, which are issued a certificate not valid for service on ships with High Voltage installations and renumbering of existing paragraphs. Table A-III/1 should be revised to align with the relevant modern shipping context and technologies, including analysis and fault finding in modern systems, robust understanding of the Human Element, and Data Science skills. Table A-III/1 should be revised to reflect modern propulsion and emission control systems and technologies.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/46
Table A-III/1	Addition of "Networking, configuring IPs, computer set-up, etc." to Function: Electrical, electronic and control engineering at the operational level Column 1 (Competence) Column 2 (KUP)	ISWG-STCW 1/2/37
A-III/1, A-III/2, A-III/3 and A-III/6	There are no operational training requirements for anti-pollution equipment and systems, such as exhaust gas treatment devices and ballast water treatment devices.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/25

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 1

IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Table A-III/5	Add a KUP for "Basic understanding of electronic control system on equipment, like main engine, auxiliary engine, purifiers". Under Competence Contribute to the monitoring and controlling of an engine-room watch.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/36

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Section A-I/6	There are no mandatory standards for distance learning and e-learning, which may affect the quality of training or lead to abuse.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/25 Move the guidance about distance learning and e-learning in section BI/6 to the mandatory provisions in section A-I/6.

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Table A-III/2	After blackout, necessary action and restoration of power to MSB either by manual or automatic needs to be added in competence.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/37
Table A-III/2	Revise table to ensure they cover current and emerging seagoing technologies, practical problem-solving techniques, and best practices.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/46

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Table A-IV/2	Amendment to SOLAS chapter IV (January 2024.) In the said amendment, portable radio life-saving equipment has been taken out from SOLAS chapter III and added to SOLAS chapter IV. Amend Column 1 to add: "Transmit and receive information using GMDSS subsystems and equipment including portable radio lifesaving equipment (EPIRB-AIS, AIS-SART, portable VHF radio and Aeronautical VHF radio) and reserve source batteries and fulfilling the functional requirements of GMDSS." Include competency related to battery management, covering maintenance, monitoring, safe disposal, and replacement procedures.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/38

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 2

- Invitations are invited for submissions of proposals for draft amendments to chapters 2 and 3 (Deck/ Engine/ Electrical) for consideration at HTW 12. The template has been circulated for submission of proposals for draft amendments

- Intersessional Working Group will convene after HTW 12

- The new STCW is likely to be finalized by 2030 (After HTW 15)

- Concerns were raised about the cumulative impact of additional training requirements on seafarers and maritime education and training institutions. It was agreed that the cumulative impact would be considered at each step of the roadmap.

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 2

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE 1978 STCW CONVENTION AND CODE

Proposed draft amendments to the 1978 STCW Convention and Code to address gap(s) No. xxx

Submitted by [...]

SUMMARY	
Executive summary:	This document provides draft amendments to the 1978 STCW Convention and Code, in order to address gap(s) No. xxx.
Strategic direction, if applicable:	6
Output:	6.17
Action to be taken:	10
Related documents:	HTW 11/11 and HTW 12/6

Template

Information to support the proposed amendments

Gap No.¹ xxx	
Related documents, if any:	[ISWG-STCW X/X][HTW X/X]
Action requested:	[addition] [deletion] [modification] [merge] [migration] [others]
Available evidence, data, research, etc., if any, to support the proposed amendments:	[reference to the source]
Voluntary assessment on the possible cumulative impact (if the proposal aims at adding new training requirements, provide information on the cumulative impact on seafarer's training/certification and possible measures to address the impact):	Information on the cumulative impact:
	Possible measures to address the cumulative impact:

Proposal

4   It is proposed to amend [regulation X/x] [and][section A-X/x and/or B-X/x of the Code], as set out in the annex.

Regulation

Standards

Guidance

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 2

- For consideration at HTW 12: New provisions for..

Violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault	Mental health, psychological safety, gender and cultural diversity	Cybersecurity	Ballast Water Management

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 2

VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Regulation I/14	Lacks provision for the responsibility of companies to ensure a maritime workplace safe from violence and harassment. Addition of companies' responsibilities under regulation I/14 to include establishing and implementing policies on zero tolerance for violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, protection against non-retaliation or blacklisting of victim-seafarers, and a grievance mechanism that ensures safe zones for victims, enabling them to file complaints without fear	ISWG-STCW 1/2/22
Regulation I/14	There are no provisions to require company policies and procedures for prevention of and response to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/16
Section A-I/14 Section A-I/16	A-I/14 "Responsibilities of companies" may include a more specific provision on the matter of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault. Section A-I/16 of the STCW Code should reflect "prevention of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault" in the area of "fitness for duty and watchkeeping arrangements" pending until after IMSAS related decision has been made	ISWG-STCW 1/2/10
Table A-II/1, A-II/2, A-II/3, A-III/1, A-III/2, A-III/3, A-III/6	There are no competence requirements for operational or Management level prevention of and response to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/16 Develop competences to address the prevention of and response to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault.

MENTAL HEALTH, PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND GENDER AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Regulation I/5	Lacks provision for the responsibility of each Party in promoting a psychologically safe maritime work environment. Addition of a provision under regulation I/5 about the responsibilities of each Party in promoting a psychologically safe maritime work environment	ISWG-STCW 1/2/22
Chapters II and III, part A Table A-VI/1-4	Proposed that a new competence be added to tables A-II/1 and 2 and A-III/ 1 and 2 titled: Gender and Cultural Sensitivity	ISWG-STCW 1/2/13
Table A-II/2 Table A-II/3 Table A-III/2 Table A-III/3 Table A-VI/1-4 Table A-VI/1-3	At a management level, the inclusion of educational requirements to enable comprehensive mental health management of subordinate seafarers through recognition, assessment, and onboard responding and supporting techniques using leadership and managerial skills.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/30
Table A-VI/1-3, Table A-VI/1-4	There are no competence requirements for mental health awareness.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/16 Develop competences in tables A-VI/1-3 and A-VI/1-4 to address mental health.
Table A-VI/1-3 (EFA):	'Signs/ symptoms arising due to mental health and emotional and psychological issues of self and fellow seafarers on board' may be added to column 2, sub-paragraph 2	ISWG-STCW 1/2/40
Section A-VI/1-4	Table A-VI/1-4 Under the requirements for safety familiarization, basic training, and instruction for all seafarers, the inclusion of education requirements that equip seafarers with the skills to recognize and manage their own mental health.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/30

Comprehensive Review of the 1978 STCW Convention and Code: Phase 2

BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Tables A-II/1, A-II/2, A-II/3, A-III/1, A-III/2, A-III/3, and A-III/6	In order to facilitate the implementation of the BWM Convention, amendments to the minimum standard of competence for officer, engineer officer, and rating in the STCW Code A are required.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/30
Tables A-II/1, A-II/2, A-II/3, A-III/1, A-III/2, A-III/3, and A-III/6	The standards of competence detailed in the above-mentioned tables should include new competencies and KUPs related to ballast water management as detailed in HTW 7/12 (China and ICS).	ISWG-STCW 1/2/19 HTW 7/12
Table A-III/1	Function: Marine engineering at the operational level Column 1 (Competence) - Operate fuel, lubrication, ballast and other pumping systems and associated control systems Column 2 (KUP) - Proposed to add after Oily-water separators (or similar equipment) requirements and operation, "Ballast water treatment systems requirement and operation" Inclusion of BWTS in KUP Column	ISWG-STCW 1/2/37
Table A-II/1, A-II/2, A-II/3, A-III/1, A-III/2, A-III/3	There are no competence requirements for operational or management level compliance with the Ballast Water Management Convention and BWMS Code.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/16 Develop competences to address the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention.

CYBERSECURITY

Gap areas in the Convention and Code	Gap description	Reference to documents and remarks
Chapter II, III, IV and VI	With the development of new technologies, cybersecurity has an increasing significant impact on the safe operation of ships. The existing provisions of the STCW Convention only have partial and incomplete requirements on the knowledge and skills of computer network and cybersecurity for electro-technical officers at the operational level. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the requirements for cybersecurity knowledge and skills for other deck officers and engineer officers.	ISWG-STCW 1/2/25
Chapter II, III, IV and VI	It is proposed that provisions be developed to incorporate cybersecurity training requirements for seafarers in the above sections. Reference could be drawn from resources such as the Guidelines on maritime cyber risk management (MSC-FAL.1/Circ.3/Rev.2).	ISWG-STCW 1/2/26
Chapter II, III, IV and VI	With the advent of advanced digital technology in newly built ships and the increasing number of IT and OT (Operational Technology) devices in their operational equipment, the incidence of cybersecurity incidents on ships is on the rise. The scale of these incidents has a significant impact on both the safety and economic aspects of maritime industry. New competence and KUPs in Tables A-II/1, A-II/2, and A-II/3. New competence and KUPs in Tables A-III/1, A-III/2, and A-III/6. New paragraph in section A-VI including competence and KUPs of STCW Code	ISWG-STCW 1/2/30

Work Plan- Phase 2

Phase 2	
Intersessional Correspondence Group (CG)	- Consideration of chapter 1 on oversight system. - Report of the Intersessional Correspondence Group to HTW 12.

Session	**Action**

HTW 12 (spring 2026)	- Consideration of:
	
	  .1 report of the CG on chapter 1 (oversight system); and
	
	  .2 proposals for draft amendments to chapters 2 and 3.
	
	- [Consideration of the establishment of Intersessional Correspondence Group(s) (with virtual support) and agree to their ToR, if required]
	
	- Invite proposals for revision of the Convention and Code (chapters 4 and 6, and remaining of chapter 1) to HTW 13, in accordance with the stepped approach.
	
	- Report of HTW 12 to MSC 111, seeking approval of the establishment of ISWG-STCW 3 immediately after HTW 13

ISWG 2 (immediately after HTW 12)	- Continuation of the draft amendments to chapters 1, 2 and 3, as appropriate. - Consideration of cumulative impact of new requirements. - Update the road map in accordance with the progress made during the session. - Report of HTW 12 WG and ISWG 2 to HTW 13.

Work Plan- Phase 2

Intersessional Correspondence Groups, if needed	- After ISWG 2, continuation of the draft amendments to chapters 1, 2 and 3 by correspondence to be reported to HTW 13, if needed. - Report of Correspondence Groups to HTW 13.
MSC 111 (summer 2026)	- Consideration of the report of the HTW 12. - Approval of the establishment of ISWG 3 (immediately after HTW 13), subject to endorsement by the Council.
HTW 13 (spring 2027)	- Finalization of amendments to chapters 1 (oversight system), 2 and 3. - Consideration of proposals on draft amendments to chapters 4 and 6, as well as remaining of chapter 1. - Invite proposals for revision of the Convention and Code chapters 5, 7 and 8 to HTW 14, in accordance with the stepped approach. - [Consideration of the establishment of Intersessional Correspondence Groups (with virtual support) and agree to their ToR, if required.]
ISWG 3 (immediately after HTW 13)	- Prepare draft amendments to chapters 4 and 6, as well as the rest of chapter 1. - Consideration of cumulative impact of new requirements. - Update the road map in accordance with the progress made during the session. - Report of HTW 13 WG and ISWG 3 to HTW 14.

WORK PLAN
2026
2027

Work Plan- Phase 2

MSC 113 (summer 2027)	- Consideration of the report of the HTW 13. - Endorse the updates to road map in accordance with the progress made during the session. - Approval of the establishment of ISWG 4 (immediately after HTW 14), subject to endorsement by the Council.
HTW 14 (spring 2028)	- Finalization of draft amendments to chapters 1, 4 and 6. - Consideration of proposals on draft amendments for the revision of the Convention and Code chapters 5, 7 and 8. - [Consideration of the establishment of Intersessional Correspondence Groups (with virtual support) and agree to their ToR, if required.] - Develop a plan for the revision of model courses. - Report of HTW 14 to MSC 114, seeking approval of the establishment of ISWG-STCW 5 immediately after HTW 15 in 2029.
ISWG 4 (immediately after HTW 14)	- Prepare draft amendments to chapters 5, 7 and 8. - Consideration of cumulative impacts of new requirements. - Update the road map in accordance with the progress made during the session. - Report of HTW 14 WG and ISWG 4 to HTW 15.

WORK PLAN

2027
2028

Work Plan- Phase 2

| Session	Action
MSC 114 (summer 2028)	- Consideration of the report of the HTW 14. - Endorse the updates to road map in accordance with the progress made during the session. - Approval of the establishment of ISWG 5 (immediately after HTW 15), subject to endorsement by the Council.
HTW 15 (spring 2029)	- Finalization of draft amendments to chapters 5, 7 and 8. - Authorization for ISWG-STCW 5 to report to MSC 116, directly.
ISWG 5 (immediately after HTW 15)	- Finalization of the revision of the Convention and Code.
MSC 116 (spring/summer 2029)	- Approval of the draft text of amendments to the Convention and Code in accordance with the procedures set out in the Convention.
Meeting to adopt the revision (2029 or 2030)	- Adoption of the draft amendments to the Convention and Code, and the associated draft resolutions.

Model Courses (HTW 12)

- Model Course 1.37 on Chemical tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator

- Model Course 2.06 on Oil tanker cargo and ballast handling simulator

- Model Course 1.21 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities

MODEL
COURSE
1.37

CHEMICAL TANKER
CARGO AND BALLAST
HANDLING SIMULATOR

2007 Edition

IMO
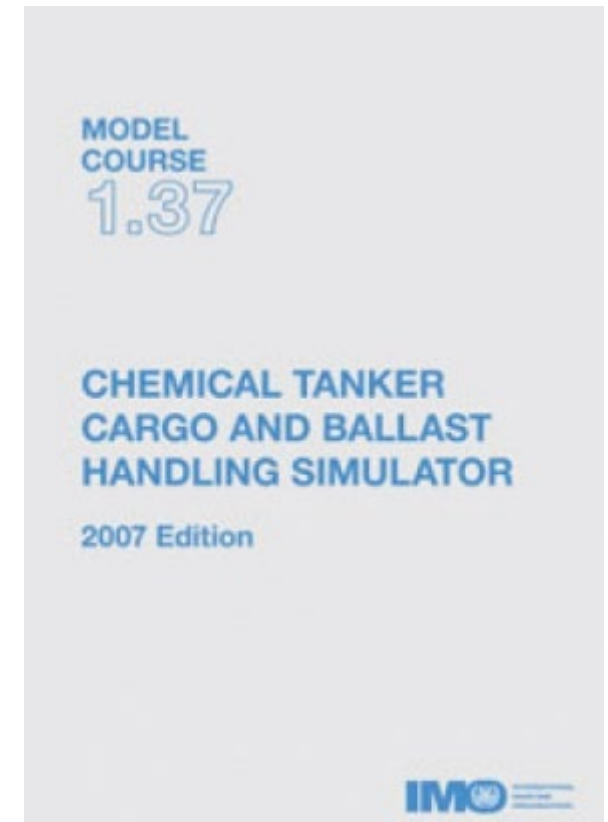
Training on Alternative Fuels

Fuel/technology-specific interim guidelines would be developed (with KUP tables) using the draft generic interim guidelines as a basis- the following is the order of priority:

1. Methyl/ Ethyl alcohol as fuel

2. Ammonia as fuel

3. Hydrogen fuel cell-powered ships

4. LPG as fuel

5. Hydrogen as fuel

6. Battery-powered ships

ALTERNATIVE FUEL TRAINING FOR SEAFARERS

Thank you

Capt. Vinayak Mohla

Anglo-Eastern