MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE
SHIPPING CIRCULAR TO SHIPOWNERS
NO 17 OF 2018

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Applicable to: Shipowners, ship managers, Masters, chief mates and officers of navigational watch of Singapore registered ships operating in the polar waters.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SHIPS OPERATING IN THE POLAR WATERS

1. These requirements apply to ships operating in the polar waters[1] and hold Polar Ship Certificate issued in accordance with the Polar Code.

2. The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers, 1978, (STCW Convention) was amended in 2016 to require mandatory minimum training and qualifications for masters and deck officers on ships operating in polar waters. The amendments include a new Regulation in Chapter V in the annex to the STCW Convention and the corresponding section in the STCW Code. These amendments had entered into force on 1 July 2018 with a transitional provisions until 1 July 2020, for seafarers who have commenced sea service in the polar waters prior to 1 July 2018.

3. Masters, chief mates and deck officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships operating in polar waters and subjected to the requirements of the Polar Code must complete approved trainings and hold appropriate certificate issued in accordance with Regulation V/4[2] of the STCW Convention, as amended. Officers in charge of navigational watch should hold certificate of proficiency (COP) in basic training complying with regulation V/4 paragraph 1, while Masters and chief mates should hold COP in advanced training as per regulation V/4 paragraph 3 of the STCW Convention, as amended. Marine Engineer Officers and ratings do not require such COP to serve on ships operating in polar waters.

Requirements to qualify for COP

[1] See Q1 of the Frequently asked Questions and Answers (FAQ) for the defined limits
[2] See Q11 of FAQ for details

Basic training for ships operating in polar waters

4. Holders of a deck officer certificate of competency issued by MPA or recognised by MPA shall complete an approved training meeting the standards of competence specified in section A-V/4, paragraph 1 and table A-V/4-1 of the STCW code.

Advanced training for ships operating in polar waters

5. Holders of deck officer certificate of competency at management level (viz. class 2 and 1 deck officer) shall, in addition to meeting the requirements of the above paragraph shall comply with the following:

- Have at least 2 months of approved sea service performing watchkeeping duties on board a ship operating within the polar waters as defined in the Polar code; and
- Complete an approved advanced training for ships operating in polar waters meeting the standards of competence specified in section A-V/4 paragraph 2 and table A-V/4-2 of the STCW Code.

Transitional Provisions

6. Holders of deck officer certificates of competency, who have seagoing experience in polar waters prior to 1 July 2018 can qualify for COP in basic or advanced training as follows:

i. Have completed at least three months sea service in total as a deck officer at operational or management level in polar waters or equivalent sea service. Equivalent sea service means service in waters that contain ice in concentration of 2/10[3] or more; and
ii. Have attended appropriate training course(s) complying with IMO resolution A.1024 (26).

7. Seafarers who wish to apply COPs under the transitional provisions will have to provide documentary evidence of seagoing service in polar waters or equivalent sea service and attendance an appropriate training course to be considered for issuance of COP at basic or advanced training respectively for ships operating within Polar waters. The transitional provisions is valid until 1 July 2020.

Application for COP

8. Holders of deck officer certificates of competency issued by MPA can apply for COP at basic and advanced training for ships operating in polar waters through MPA's website or MARINET. The cost of the application and issuance of certificate is Singapore Dollar $25.

Recognition of COP issued by Foreign Maritime Administrations

[3] This refers to the amount of sea ice covering an area and expressed as a fraction of sea ice coverage. Please refer to the World Meteorological Organisation's publication on Sea Ice Nomenclature for the details of nomenclature used in ice regions.

9. MPA will recognise COP at basic and advanced training for operating ships in Polar waters issued by foreign maritime administrations whose certificates of competency are recognised by MPA. List of countries whose certificates of competency are recognised by MPA is given in Shipping Circular 21 of 2017. It is not necessary for MPA to issue any document to confirm recognition of COP.

10. Any query relating to this circular should be directed to Training Standards Department at Tel 6375 6222 or at coc@mpa.gov.sg

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