



Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers: New Edition

Notice to all Shipowners, ship operators and managers, masters and seafarers

This MIN expires 30 September 2016

Summary

This Marine Information Note provides information about the new Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers ("the Code"). The Code provides best practice guidance for health and safety on board ship. It details the regulatory framework for health and safety on board ship, safety management and identifies statutory duties underlying the advice in the Code, and includes the areas that should be covered when introducing a new recruit to the safety procedures on board.

Main points

Changes from the previous Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen (2011 consolidated edition) include:-

1. New title which reflects the terminology used in the Code.
2. Increased emphasis on practical guidance rather than legislation.
3. Improved guidance on risk assessment.
4. Simplified advice on permits to work.
5. Dangerous (Enclosed) Space chapter updated.
6. New content on good safety culture, fatigue and ergonomics.
7. Revised chapter on vessels serving offshore oil and gas.
8. Streamlined format – sections removed and now A4.

It is intended to revoke the prescriptive requirements for the number of copies of the Code to be carried on UK ships and replace this with a duty to ensure that the Code is easily accessible and readily available to all seafarers on board. This change is expected to come into force in October 2015.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A revised Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers ("the Code") was published on 4th September 2015 after consultation with industry.



1.2 The Code provides authoritative guidance on best practice in health and safety on board ships and is endorsed by the National Maritime Occupational Health and Safety Committee. It details the regulatory framework for health and safety on board ship, safety management and statutory duties underlying the advice. The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers, Consolidated Edition 2015 supersedes The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen, Consolidated Edition 2011.

2. Changes to the Code

2.1 The title of the Code has been changed to The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers, to reflect the terminology use within the Code.

2.2 The new Code updates the practical guidance on existing safety points throughout the Code. Some of the changes that are incorporated include:

2.2.1 Chapter 1: Managing Occupational Health and Safety outlines the importance of a good safety culture, including guidance on risk assessment.

2.2.2 Chapter 14: Permit to Work Systems has been simplified and the number of permits to work reduced.

2.2.3 Chapter 15: Entering dangerous (enclosed) spaces now reflects new SOLAS requirements, IMO A.27/Res 1050 and other best practice.

2.2.4 Chapter 26: Anchoring, towing and mooring contains revised guidance on snap back zones in mooring operations, following recommendations on the Morraborg from the Swedish Accident Investigation Branch.

2.2.5 Chapter 33: Ergonomics is a new chapter, and includes advice on the use of Display Screen Equipment.

2.3 In addition there is new content on fatigue.

2.4 The contents, appendices and index have all been updated.

3. Carriage of the Code

3.1 Subject to satisfactory completion of legislative procedures it is intended to revoke the Merchant Shipping (Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen) Regulations 1998 (S.I. 1998/1838) which contain prescriptive requirements for numbers of copies of the Code to be carried on UK ships, and who they are supplied to, and to replace this with a duty to ensure that the Code is easily accessible and readily available to all seafarers on board. This will allow shipowners greater flexibility to determine the appropriate number and location of copies of the Code depending on the organisation on board. It will also prepare the way for possible development of digital versions of the Code in future. This change is expected to come into force in October 2015.

3.2 Making the Code available to any seafarer will remain a statutory requirement on board all UK ships other than fishing vessels and pleasure craft.

4. Availability of the Code



- 4.1 The Code is an A4 loose leaf publication. Companies may subscribe to a standing order system for the issue of amendments. The Stationery Office (TSO) will provide details of the system when copies of the Code are purchased. The new Code (ISBN 9780115534027) will cost £40.00.
- 4.2 Printed copies of the latest edition are available by writing to TSO, Customer Services, PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN; or by telephoning +44 (0) 333 202 5070; or fax +44 (0) 333 202 5080; or by emailing customer.services@tso.co.uk . Alternatively the latest edition can be ordered online at www.tsoshop.co.uk where a list of all TSO Agents can be found; or from any reputable book seller.
- 4.3 The “Official Electronic Version” of the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers (2015) will include all amendments and will be available from TSO from September 2015.
- 4.4 Provided that the requirements of the Regulations are met, including the requirement for copies of the Code to be easily accessible, the MCA accepts that some copies may be electronic. In all cases at least one printed copy of the Code should be readily available.

More Information

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