



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency

MARINE INFORMATION NOTE

MIN 688 (M) Amendment 1 Code of safe working practices for merchant seafarers: (COSWP) Amendment 7 2022

Notice to all shipowners, ship operators, managers, masters and seafarers.

This notice replaces MIN 688 (M).

This MIN expires 30th April 2024.

Summary

This notice provides details of the 2022 amendments to the code of safe working practices for merchant seafarers (“the Code”, also “COSWP”). A comprehensive review of COSWP has taken place. A new edition will be published in the Spring of 2024 and the current 2022 amendment 7 will remain valid.

The code covers the regulatory framework and provides best practice guidance for health and safety on board ship. It also gives guidance on safety management and identifies statutory duties underlying the advice and includes practical information for safe working on board.

1. Introduction

1.1 An amendment to the code of safe working practices for merchant seafarers (“the code”) was issued on 24th October 2022 after consultation with industry.

1.2 The code is an authoritative best practice manual on health and safety on board ships and is endorsed by the National Maritime Occupational Health and Safety Committee (NMOHSC). It deals with the regulatory framework for health and safety on board ship, safety management and statutory duties underlying the advice and gives practical information on safe working.

2. Amendments

2.1 The following table summarises the changes that have occurred for the 7th amendment of the code, following stakeholder engagement and review by the COSWP Working Group, which consists of representatives of the shipping industry, seafarers and seafarers’ unions in collaboration with MCA policy leads.

2.2 In addition, in various chapters references have been updated and typographical corrections made (not detailed below).

3. Table of Amendments 2022

Chapter 4 emergency drills and procedures

2021 Amendment Title / Section Number (old reference if altered)	2022 Amendment Paragraph Number (new reference if altered)
4.2 Fire Drills	4.2.8
4.3 Action in event of fire	4.3.5
4.5 Action in the event of abandoning ship	4.5.3 and 4.5.5
4.6 Man overboard drills	4.6.9
4.8 Dangerous (enclosed) space drills	4.8 Drills for enclosed spaces and 4.8.1
4.9 Action in event of a dangerous space emergency	4.9.1, 4.9.3
4.10 Assisting a casualty	4.10.1, 4.10.2
4.12 Action in the event of a leakage or spillage	4.12.3, 4.12.5 and 4.12.11

Reason for chapter 4 2022 amendments; comments from stakeholder engagement exercise and chapter sections and annex 4.1 updated to reflect the new entry into enclosed spaces regulations 2022.

Chapter 8 personal protective equipment

2021 Amendment Title / Section Number (old reference if altered)	2022 Amendment Paragraph Number (new reference if altered)
8.8 Respiratory protective equipment	8.8.8, 8.8.9, 8.8.12, 8.8.15

Reason for chapter 8 2022 amendment; chapter sections updated to reflect the new entry into enclosed spaces regulations 2022.

Chapter 11 safe movement on board ship

2021 Amendment Title / Section Number (old reference if altered)	2022 Amendment Paragraph Number (new reference if altered)
11.8 Stairways, ladders and portable ladders	11.8.2
11.10 Entry into dangerous (enclosed) spaces	11.10 Entry into enclosed spaces, 11.10.2, 11.10.3 and 11.10.4

Reason for chapter 11.8 amendments 2022; reference to 17.3 added for guidance on inspecting the conditions of the ladder and 11.10 sections updated to reflect the new entry into enclosed spaces regulations 2022.

Chapter 14 permit to work systems

2021 Amendment Title / Section Number (old reference if altered)	2022 Amendment Paragraph Number (new reference if altered)
Annex 14.1 Permits to Work	14.1.1

Reason for chapter 14 amendment 2022; annex 14.1 updated to reflect the new entry into enclosed spaces regulations 2022.

Chapter 15

2021 Amendment Title / Section Number (old reference if altered)	2022 Amendment Paragraph Number (new reference if altered)
entering dangerous (enclosed) spaces	New title; Entering enclosed spaces
15.1 Introduction	Chapter 15 Entering Enclosed Spaces (Adjusted section numbering in places within the chapter) All 15.1 sections New sections 15.1.11, 15.1.12 enclosed spaces register
15.2 Duties and responsibilities of a competent person and an authorised officer	15.2.2, 15.2.6 and 15.2.7
15.3 Precautions before entering a dangerous space	15.3.1, 15.3.3
15.4 Identifying potential hazards	15.4.2 Oxygen deficiency, 15.4.3 Examples of oxygen deficiency, 15.4.8, 15.4.14, 15.4.16 Flammability and 15.4.17
15.5 Preparing and securing the space for entry	15.5.1, 15.5.2, 15.5.3 and 15.5.5
15.6 Testing the atmosphere of the space	15.6.1, 15.6.2, 15.6.4, 15.6.5, 15.6.7, 15.6.13 Summary
15.7 Use of Control Systems	15.7.1, 15.7.2, 15.7.3
15.8 Safety Precautions before Entry	15.8.7
15.9 Procedures and arrangements during entry	15.9.1, 15.9.2
15.11 Additional requirements for entry into a space where the atmosphere is suspect or known to be Unsafe	15.11.2
15.12 Training, instruction and information	15.12.1
15.13 Breathing apparatus and resuscitation Equipment	15.13.1, 15.13.3, 15.13.4, 15.13.9, 15.13.10, 15.13.11, 15.13.12
15.14 Preparation for an emergency	15.14.1, 15.14.2, 15.14.3, 15.14.6, 15.14.9 enclosed space diagram

Reason for chapter 15 amendment 2022; new chapter title and sections updated to reflect the new entry into enclosed spaces regulations 2022 and comments from stakeholder engagement exercise.

Chapter 17

2021 Amendment Title / Section Number (old reference if altered)	2022 Amendment Paragraph Number (new reference if altered)
17.2 General	17.2.1, 17.2.2, 17.2.3, 17.2.5 and 17.2.10
17.3 Portable ladders	17.3.2, 17.3.3, 17.3.4 and 17.3.7
17.7 Scaffolding, including scaffolding towers	17.7.4

Reason for chapter 17 amendment 2022; section 17.3.2 to 17.3.4 updated to reflect Health and Safety Executive and Ladder Associations [LA455](#) use of ladders and stepladders and comments from stakeholder engagement exercise.

Chapter 26

2021 Amendment Title / Section Number (old reference if altered)	2022 Amendment Paragraph Number (new reference if altered)
26.2 Anchoring and weighing anchor	26.2.1, 26.2.4 and 26.2.5
26.3 Making fast and casting off	26.3.2, 26.3.3, 26.3.7, 26.3.11 and 26.3.13

Reason for chapter 26 amendment 2022; comments from stakeholder engagement exercise.

Chapter 27

2021 Amendment Title / Section Number (old reference if altered)	2022 Amendment Paragraph Number (new reference if altered)
27.4 Fire safety/ prevention	New 27.4.3
27.6 Safe movement	27.6.3 new bullet points and information on risk assessment
27.12 Specialised vehicles	New 27.12.3, 27.12.4, 27.12.7, 27.12.8 and 27.12.9

Reason for amendment 2022; chapter updated to reflect the new [MGN 653 \(M\)](#) electric vehicles onboard passenger roll-on/roll-off ferries and the [MAIB safety bulletin \(ClipperPennant\)](#) in respect of safe movement risk assessment.

4. GOV.UK digital version

4.1 Changes in respect to the presentation of the code on GOV.UK, will occur from 2024, in order to improve accessibility and comply with central government policy. To date (including this year), an illustrated version of the code has been available on GOV.UK.

4.2 From 2024, text-only summarised content from the code will be made available on GOV.UK in an accessible format. The full code including illustrations and diagrams (intended for ship owners and operators) will continue to be available to order in print from The Stationary Office ([TSO](#)).

4.3 The MCA propose to produce chapter summaries with useful information, which would include when content was last updated and links to the most current MCA marine notices and governmental legislation referenced. Comments are welcomed on this proposal, please email seafarersafety@mcga.gov.uk.

5. COSWP review 2023

5.1 COSWP has developed since its publication in 2015 to become an internationally recognised maritime industry standard of best practice. Through industry consultation it has been indicated that the manual requires more clarity in language and presentation. Therefore, MCA has commenced a review, aiming to redesign and modernise COSWP. This will improve the structure, ensure consistency and simplify its language and use recurring design features.

5.2 Several stages of consultation with representatives of industry and seafarers have been undertaken over the last 18 months. A public consultation is planned for 2023 on the new design of the code and notification to industry will be made nearer the time. For further information, please contact seafarersafety@mcga.gov.uk.

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