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BRIDGE ORGANISATION

1. POLICY

At all times, the ship shall be navigated safely in compliance with the COLREGS, SOLAS, STCW Codes, local regulations and also to ensure that protection of the environment is not compromised. Safety of life and safety of the ship take precedence over all other considerations.

2. WATCH ARRANGEMENTS - COMPOSITION – FITNESS

- 2.1. The Master is responsible for the safety of navigation, and for setting the watches so as to be adequate and fit at all times to meet the prevailing circumstances in compliance with SOLAS, STCW, local regulations and COLREGS.
- 2.2. The minimum bridge manning levels to be complied with **as per form 3.NAV B2 (BRIDGE MANNING MATRIX)**.¹ The Master can enhance manning levels as per his discretion having given due consideration to Section 2.3.
- 2.3. The following factors shall be taken into account in deciding the composition and arrangement of the watch:
 - a. Visibility, weather conditions, daylight or darkness, and state of the sea.
 - b. Traffic density including presence of fishing vessels or expected fishing traffic based on sailing directions and other information, including past experiences and any other activities conducted in the area.
 - c. The attention required when navigating in or near restricted waters, traffic separation schemes or routing measures, close quarters or the proximity of navigational hazards e.g. shallow waters, islands, oil rigs, unlit small craft etc.
 - d. The additional workload caused by the nature of the ship's functions, immediate operating requirements and anticipated manoeuvres.
 - e. The fitness for duty of any crewmembers on call who are assigned as members of the bridge team including compliance with applicable work hour regulations. (Fatigue and compliance with mandatory rest periods)
 - f. The experience of each Officer of the Watch (OOW), Knowledge and confidence in the professional competence of the officers and crew and the familiarity of the OOW with the ship's equipment, procedures, manoeuvring characteristics, and capabilities.
 - g. Activities taking place on board the ship at any particular time, including radio communication activities, and the availability of assistance to be summoned immediately to the bridge when necessary.

¹ W 39 / 2023

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- h. The operational status of the bridge equipment, instrumentation and controls, including the alarm systems.
- i. Rudder and propeller control and related manoeuvring characteristics.
- j. The size of the ship and the field of vision available from the conning position.
- k. The layout of the bridge, if it inhibits any member of the watch from detecting by sight or hearing any external development.
- l. Whether the vessel is on automatic steering or manual steering including sensitivity of automatic steering.
- m. Alarms and indicators provided on the bridge, procedures and / or limitations for their use.
- n. Any unusual demands on the navigational watch that may arise as a result of special operational circumstances, anticipated manoeuvres, VTS communications, etc.
- o. Any other relevant standard, procedure or guidance relating to watch keeping arrangements and fitness for duty.

The composition of the bridge watch shall be such that a proper lookout and continuous monitoring of the ship's progress is possible. At no time, the bridge shall be left unattended during Navigation.

- 2.4. The Master will ensure the Chief Officer is able to deputise for him to ensure he is sufficiently rested, as per regulations, to be available to difficult sections of long pilotages, manoeuvring, heavy weather and restricted visibility passages.
- 2.5. The Company defines the following passages as heavy traffic areas, and the bridge is to be manned as such:
 - a. Torres Straits
 - b. One fathom bank in Malacca Strait²
 - c. The Dardanelles
 - d. Straits of Hormuz
 - e. Danish Bight
 - f. Dover Strait
 - g. Singapore Straits
 - h. Straits of Gibraltar
- 2.6. Bridge team members shall be sufficiently rested in compliance with STCW mandatory rest periods, so as to adequately perform his/her duties. Each OOW shall maintain a record of their watch keeping hours in the required format.

² W 32 / 2018

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3. THE BRIDGE TEAM

All ship's personnel who have bridge navigational watch duties will be part of the bridge watch team, which will comprise of the OOW, a Helmsman and Lookout as required. Refer to [3.NAV B2³](#) for guidance on bridge manning levels.

The OOW is in charge of the bridge and the bridge team for the watch, until relieved.

4. THE BRIDGE TEAM AND THE MASTER

The Master has overriding authority and responsibility in respect of safety, pollution prevention, and the safe navigation of his/her vessel.

The Master shall ensure that the bridge team has a clear understanding on:

- a. when to call the Master.
- b. what information is to be routinely reported.
- c. the requirement to keep the Master fully informed.

The OOW continues to be responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel, despite the presence of the Master on the Bridge, until the Master informs him/her specifically that he/she has assumed responsibility. When the Master so informs the OOW, the OOW shall verbally confirm the transfer of responsibility to the Master.

Such change shall be recorded in the [Deck Logbook⁴](#) or bell book (when maneuvering).

See **BRIDGE PROCEDURES GUIDE**

5. BRIDGE TEAM MANAGEMENT

For a bridge team to work effectively, each member of the team must know precisely what duties are expected of them. The Master should hold a short departure/arrival briefing and instruct each member of the team the plan for the departure/arrival, and their role in it. This has the added advantage that everyone is clear about everybody else's responsibilities.

When bridge team members are from different nationalities or from different cultural backgrounds care should be taken to ensure all briefings or instructions are clear and precise, and that their understanding is tested. For example, eastern European cultures show a far greater deference to superiors than most western cultures, and subordinates may be reluctant to question their superiors' authority or competence. Another example is Far Eastern cultures because of their reluctance to displease their superiors, nearly always answer in the affirmative even when they do

³ W 08 / 2024

⁴ W 08 / 2024

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not understand or agree with a question or instruction. Junior members of the bridge team should be encouraged to question decisions if they think the outcome might endanger the vessel.

6. THE BRIDGE TEAM AND THE PILOT

When a pilot is on board, he will temporarily join the bridge team and should be supported accordingly. The Master or his deputy remains responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel.

7. DOUBLE WATCHES

- 7.1. The Master, when circumstances make it necessary, shall set double watches, i.e. 2 Navigating Officers on duty on the Bridge.
- 7.2. One will be the Conning Officer responsible for the actual navigation of the vessel and complying with COLREGS and maintains all bridge logs and records.
- 7.3. The other will be primarily concerned with radar-plotting of surrounding ships (collision avoidance) and own ship's position on the chart. This other OOW operates the engine / bridge control and observes the rev. counter and speed-log.

8. SOLE LOOK-OUT

The STCW Code makes provision for the OOW to be the sole look-out in daylight conditions.

Under certain conditions the OOW may be the only person actively engaged in the navigation of the ship. The steering may be in automatic, and lookout engaged in duties around the bridge area. The OOW will be personally responsible for all aspects of safe navigation. Nevertheless, he will be required to work within a framework of standing and specific orders so that the Master will be confident that the watch is being kept to his, and the company's standards.

- 8.1. The master may permit the OOW of the navigational watch as the sole lookout only during daylight hours provided the following criteria are met:
 - a. The situation has been carefully assessed and it has been established without doubt that it is safe to do so.
 - b. Visibility is good. Wheelhouse curtains are open providing maximum all round visibility.
 - c. There is no traffic including fishing vessels.
 - d. The OOW is sufficiently rested prior to commencing watch and workload is well within his capacity to maintain a proper look out and remain in full control of the prevailing circumstances.

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- e. There are no navigational hazards in the vicinity demanding his constant attention to navigation.
- f. Vessel is not in congested or restricted waters and not navigating in or near traffic separation schemes.
- g. Weather conditions are satisfactory.
- h. Navigational or other duties does not distract the OOW from keeping a continuous lookout.
- i. There shall be no distraction that may lessen the OOW's overall awareness.
- j. All bridge equipment and alarms including BNWAS are properly functioning.
- k. Vessel is not transiting in piracy risk area.
- l. Where the demands of communications do not impede him
- m. A certified rating is assigned and readily available for keeping lookout duties if required. He should have a walkie talkie and he should proceed to the bridge on immediate notice. The OOW must be fully aware of his location and should be in constant communication with him. Accordingly, the rating allocated to be the lookout must be either on stand-by or working within the vicinity of the bridge. He should not be assigned to work inside enclosed spaces or as a standby man for enclosed space entry or to perform work that requires ear protection whereby, he cannot hear communication from the duty officer. Designated back-up personnel shall be aware of response times, any limitations on their movements, and be able to hear alarm or communication calls from the bridge.
- n. The OOW must also be aware of the circumstances under which the lookout is to be summoned to the bridge when any change in situation so requires.
- o. Should the OOW be unable to contact the lookout, he should not hesitate to use all available means to summon the lookout or another suitably qualified individual to the bridge to act in the capacity of lookout.
- p. Sole look out shall be suspended if at any time, the above conditions are not met.

9. THE USE OF ENGLISH

English is the working language on board⁵.

Refer to PERSONNEL MANUAL – **3.0 CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT⁶** – Working language on board

⁵ W 08 / 2024

⁶ W 08 / 2024

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10. COMPANY AND MASTERS STANDING ORDERS

- 10.1. The company has issued standing orders for bridge watch keeping officers, which shall be readily available on the bridge. Bridge Watch Officers, when joining a vessel and prior to standing the watch, shall read the standing orders and sign their names to acknowledge that they have read the standing orders, and are familiar with them.
- 10.2. In addition to the company standing orders, on taking over command the Master must add his own standing orders to reflect his own particular requirements and circumstances particular to the ship, the trade and the experience of the bridge team. Bridge Watch Officers shall read the Masters standing orders and sign acknowledgement as per 10.1 above. New joining watch-keeping officers should read and sign Master's Standing Orders before commencing a navigation watch. When an amendment, addition or deletion is recorded by the Master the same shall be acknowledged by every navigating officer.
- 10.3. Masters standing orders shall not conflict with company's safety management system.

See Section 5 COMPANY STANDING ORDERS FOR BRIDGE WATCHKEEPERS

11. MASTER'S DAY AND NIGHT BRIDGE ORDERS

- 11.1. These orders are in addition to Masters standing orders.
- 11.2. At daily intervals, AT SEA OR AT ANCHOR, the master should write in the night order book what is expected of the OOW, with particular reference to his requirements during the hours of darkness and under special circumstances.
- 11.3. Master must also mention the date and time when orders are written.
- 11.4. These orders must be read and signed by each OOW before taking over a watch.
- 11.5. Orders are to include the course to be steered with errors allowed, distance to be maintained off the land, calling master, keeping clear of traffic and fishing vessels, maintaining proper lookout, heavy weather precautions, restricted visibility precautions, security precautions, Use of ECDIS and other bridge equipment, speed and such other instructions as the Master considers necessary and applicable.
- 11.6. The Book must be used also for recording the Master's instructions when he requires to rest during the day (Night order book can and should also be used for day orders.)
- 11.7. Night Orders must be explicit, and if the Officer of the watch does not understand them, he must call the Master for further instructions before taking over the watch.

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11.8. Masters are reminded that noncompliance with the important instructions relating to the use of the night Order Book would count against the master in the event of an enquiry into an accident.

For further guidance see the I.C.S. Publication BRIDGE PROCEDURES GUIDE.