

STCW-F (Fishing) Chapter IV

Watchkeeping

Basic principles to be observed in keeping a navigational watch on board fishing vessels

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Regulation 1 - Basic principles to be observed in keeping a navigational watch on board fishing vessels

1. Administrations shall direct the attention of owners and operators of fishing vessels, skippers and watchkeeping personnel to the following principles, which shall be observed to ensure that a safe navigational watch is maintained at all times.
 2. The skipper of every fishing vessel shall ensure that watchkeeping arrangements are adequate for maintaining a safe navigational watch. Under the skipper's general direction, the officers of the watch are responsible for navigating the fishing vessel safely during their periods of duty, when they will be particularly concerned with avoiding collision and stranding.
 3. The basic principles, including but not limited to the following, shall be taken into account on all fishing vessels. However, a Party may exclude very small fishing vessels operating in limited waters from fully observing the basic principles.
- 4. En route to or from fishing grounds**
- 4.1 Arrangements of the navigational watch
 - 4.1.1 The composition of the watch shall at all times be adequate and appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions, and shall take into account the need for maintaining a proper look-out.
 - 4.1.2 When deciding the composition of the watch the following factors, inter alia, shall be taken into account:
 - 4.1.2.1 at no time shall the wheelhouse be left unattended;
 - 4.1.2.2 weather conditions, visibility and whether there is daylight or darkness;

- 4.1.2.3 proximity of navigational hazards which may make it necessary for the officer in charge of the watch to carry out additional navigational duties;
- 4.1.2.4 use and operational condition of navigational aids such as radar or electronic position-indicating devices and of any other equipment affecting the safe navigation of the vessel;
- 4.1.2.5 whether the vessel is fitted with automatic steering; and
- 4.1.2.6 any unusual demands on the navigational watch that may arise as a result of special operational circumstances.

4.2 Fitness for duty

The watch system shall be such that the efficiency of watchkeeping personnel is not impaired by fatigue. Duties shall be so organized that the first watch at the commencement of a voyage and the subsequent relieving watches are sufficiently rested and otherwise fit for duty.

4.3 Navigation

- 4.3.1 The intended voyage shall, as far as practicable, be planned in advance taking into consideration all pertinent information, and any course laid down shall be checked before the voyage commences.
- 4.3.2 During the watch the course steered, position and speed shall be checked at sufficiently frequent intervals, using any available navigational aids necessary, to ensure that the vessel follows the planned course.
- 4.3.3 The officer in charge of the watch shall have full knowledge of the location and operation of all safety and navigational equipment on board the vessel, and shall be aware and take account of the operating limitations of such equipment.
- 4.3.4 The officer in charge of a navigational watch shall not be assigned or undertake any duties which would interfere with the safe navigation of the vessel.

4.4 Navigational equipment

- 4.4.1 The officers in charge of the watch shall make the most effective use of all navigational equipment at their disposal.
- 4.4.2 When using radar the officer in charge of the watch shall bear in mind the necessity to comply at all times with the provisions on the use of radar contained in the applicable regulations for preventing collisions at sea.

4.4.3 In cases of need the officer of the watch shall not hesitate to use the helm, engines, sound and light signalling apparatus.

4.5 Navigational duties and responsibilities

4.5.1 The officer in charge of the watch shall:

4.5.1.1 keep watch in the wheelhouse;

4.5.1.2 in no circumstances leave the wheelhouse until properly relieved;

4.5.1.3 continue to be responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel despite the presence of the skipper in the wheelhouse until informed specifically that the skipper has assumed that responsibility and this is mutually understood;

4.5.1.4 notify the skipper when in any doubt as to what action to take in the interest of safety; and

4.5.1.5 not hand over the watch to a relieving officer if there is reason to believe that the latter is not capable of carrying out the watchkeeping duties effectively, in which case the skipper shall be notified.

4.5.2 On taking over the watch the relieving officer shall confirm and be satisfied as to the vessel's estimated or true position and confirm its intended track, course and speed, and shall note any dangers to navigation expected to be encountered during the watch.

4.5.3 Whenever practicable a proper record shall be kept of the movements and activities during the watch relating to the navigation of the vessel.

4.6 Look-out

4.6.1 A proper look-out shall be maintained in compliance with Rule 5 of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972. It shall serve the purpose of:

4.6.1.1 maintaining a continuous state of vigilance by sight and hearing as well as by all other available means, with regard to any significant changes in the operating environment;

4.6.1.2 fully appraising the situation and the risk of collision, stranding and other dangers to navigation; and

4.6.1.3 detecting ships or aircraft in distress, shipwrecked persons, wrecks and debris.

4.6.2 In determining that the composition of the navigational watch is adequate to ensure that a proper look-out can continuously be maintained, the skipper

shall take into account all relevant factors, including those described under paragraph 4.1 of this regulation, as well as the following factors:

- 4.6.2.1 visibility, state of weather and sea;
- 4.6.2.2 traffic density, and other activities occurring in the area in which the vessel is navigating;
- 4.6.2.3 the attention necessary when navigating in or near traffic separation schemes and other routeing measures;
- 4.6.2.4 the additional workload caused by the nature of the vessel's functions, immediate operating requirements and anticipated manoeuvres;
- 4.6.2.5 rudder and propeller control and vessel manoeuvring characteristics;
- 4.6.2.6 the fitness for duty of any crew members on call who may be assigned as members of the watch;
- 4.6.2.7 knowledge of and confidence in the professional competence of the vessel's officers and crew;
- 4.6.2.8 the experience of the officer of the navigational watch and the familiarity of that officer with the vessel's equipment, procedures, and manoeuvring capability;
- 4.6.2.9 activities taking place on board the vessel at any particular time, and the availability of assistance to be summoned immediately to the wheelhouse when necessary;
- 4.6.2.10 the operational status of instrumentation in the wheelhouse and controls, including alarm systems;
- 4.6.2.11 the size of the vessel and the field of vision available from the conning position;
- 4.6.2.12 the configuration of the wheelhouse, to the extent such configuration might inhibit a member of the watch from detecting by sight or hearing any external developments; and
- 4.6.2.13 any relevant standards, procedures and guidelines relating to watchkeeping arrangements and fitness for duty which have been adopted by the Organization.

4.7 Protection of the marine environment

The skipper and the officer in charge of the watch shall be aware of the serious effects of operational or accidental pollution of the marine environment, and shall take all possible precautions to prevent such pollution, particularly within the framework of relevant international and port regulations.

4.8 Weather conditions

The officer in charge of the watch shall take relevant measures and notify the skipper when adverse changes in weather could affect the safety of the vessel, including conditions leading to ice accretion.

5. Navigation with pilot embarked

The presence of a pilot on board does not relieve the skipper or officer in charge of the watch from their duties and obligations for the safety of the vessel. The skipper and the pilot shall exchange information regarding navigation procedures, local conditions and the vessel's characteristics. The skipper and the officer in charge of the watch shall co-operate closely with the pilot and maintain an accurate check of the vessel's position and movement.

6. Vessels engaged in fishing or searching for fish

6.1 In addition to the principles enumerated in paragraph 4, the following factors shall be considered and properly acted upon by the officer in charge of the watch:

- 6.1.1 other vessels engaged in fishing and their gear, own vessel's manoeuvring characteristics, particularly its stopping distance and the diameter of turning circle at sailing speed and with the fishing gear overboard;
- 6.1.2 safety of the crew on deck;
- 6.1.3 adverse effects on the safety of the vessel and its crew through reduction of stability and freeboard caused by exceptional forces resulting from fishing operations, catch handling and stowage, and unusual sea and weather conditions;
- 6.1.4 the proximity of offshore structures, with special regard to the safety zones; and
- 6.1.5 wrecks and other underwater obstacles which could be hazardous for fishing gear.

6.2 When stowing the catch, attention shall be given to the essential requirements for adequate freeboard, adequate stability and watertight integrity at all times during the voyage to the landing port, taking into consideration consumption of fuel and stores, risk of adverse weather conditions and, especially in winter, risk of ice accretion on or above exposed decks in areas where ice accretion is likely to occur.

7. Anchor watch

The skipper shall ensure, with a view to the safety of the vessel and the crew, that a proper watch is maintained at all times from the wheelhouse or deck on fishing vessels at anchor.

8. Radio watchkeeping

The skipper shall ensure that an adequate radio watch is maintained while the vessel is at sea, on appropriate frequencies, taking into account the requirements of the Radio Regulations.
