



SHIPOWNERS

SECURITY FOR SMALL & SPECIALIST VESSELS

▶ BULLETIN

Developing competent crew on board

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On 28 July 2015, the Club issued several case studies regarding incidents that call into question the competency of the vessel's crew. These cases highlighted a number of causes that contributed to the incidents with particular emphasis on failings of the bridge team management, watch keeping schedules and arrangement, maintaining a proper lookout (Rule 5 of the COLREGS), passage planning, execution and monitoring.

Crew Competence is an industry wide concern. Ascertaining that a crew member is efficiently able to carry out his role (competence) is harder than checking that they are duly qualified (certification) to the requirements of flag state. A certified crew member need not necessarily be a competent one. It is envisaged that a competent crew member is more efficient and hence operates at a reduced risk with shorter downtime and injuries. To assist the development of such a culture on board, competence schemes or frameworks can be implemented. These systems not only enable operators to assess the skill, experience and knowledge of their crew but also make provision for crews to plan their career development. An example of such a matrix is that offered by International Marine Contractors Association* (IMCA), an organisation that many of our Members who operate offshore vessels have joined. Their guidance assists operators to develop frameworks to:

- Specify minimum standards for qualifications and, where applicable, minimum experience required to ensure that personnel are competent to fulfil their safety-critical and other relevant responsibilities and fulfil their roles.
- Specify a competence assurance framework showing how proficiency can be developed, demonstrated, accepted and maintained.
- Provide a reference document detailing the procedures, criteria and recording system to be applied when assessing the competence of personnel engaged in all positions but especially safety-critical positions.

The development of competence schemes are seen as a way of trying to develop a more competent crew which can only assist our Members towards mitigating incidents in the future and enhancing operating standards, leading to improved operational reputation. If Members would like further details on this type of scheme please contact the Club.

*IMCA is an international trade association representing offshore, marine and underwater engineering companies which promotes improvements in quality, health, safety, environment and technical standards through publications of information notes, codes of practice and by other appropriate means. Further information can be found at www.imca-int.com.

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