

## Hours of Work and Rest.

The STCW Code has been amended regarding hours of rest so it is now in line with International Labour Organisation (ILO) and United Kingdom Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) requirements.

Known as the 2010 Manila Amendments to the STCW Code, which entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2012, for all parties to the Convention, (except Denmark, Finland, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Portugal), the regulations now require a minimum of 10 hours rest in any 24 hour period and 77 hours in any 7 day period.

Hours of rest may be summarised as follows:-

1. A minimum of 10 hours rest is required to be provided in any 24 hour period;
2. The periods of rest may be divided into no more than two periods, one of which shall be at least six hours in length.
3. Intervals between consecutive periods of rest shall not exceed 14 hours;
4. A minimum of 77 hours rest is required in any seven day period.

Seafarers should be reminded that rest periods are stipulated in 24 hour periods and seven day periods, not one day and one week. In other words, the clock does not start ticking at 0001 hours and/or Monday. A Port State Control or Flag surveyor can check the hours in **ANY** 24 hour and/or seven day period.

The above requirements do not apply in the case of emergency or in other overriding operational conditions. Musters and drill shall be conducted in a manner that causes minimum disruption to rest periods and does not induce fatigue.

When a watchkeeper is on call, e.g. an engineer officer on UMS duty, adequate and compensatory rest period shall be provided if the normal period of rest is disturbed by call-outs to work.

Parties may allow exceptions from the required hours of rest provided that the rest period is not less than 70 hours in any 7 day period and on certain conditions, namely:-

- i. Such exceptional arrangements shall not be extended for more than two consecutive weeks. The intervals between two periods of exceptions shall not be less than twice the duration of the exception;
- ii. The hours of rest may be divided into no more than three periods, one of which shall be at least 6 hours and none of the other two periods shall be less than one hour in length;

- iii. The intervals between consecutive periods of rest shall not exceed 14 hours; and
- iv. Exceptions shall not extend beyond two 24-hour periods in any 7-day period.

Exceptions shall, as far as possible, take into account the guidance regarding prevention of fatigue in section B-VIII/1.

**Six hours on/Six hours off.**

Working 'sixes' may, in theory, appear to meet the criteria under STCW 2010, thus avoiding infringements of the Hours of Work and Rest regulations. However, there are other factors which need to be considered.

STCW sets out appropriate guidance for taking over the watch such the procedures will need to be carried out before the relieving watchkeeper takes over the watch.

Hence, the relieving officer will need to be at their place of work (bridge, engine control room, etc.) before the commencement of their watch and the officer to be relieved cannot leave until the handover is complete.

Therefore, when watchkeepers are working 'sixes', the Master and/or owners will need to be able to demonstrate that the handover period is successfully carried out without reducing the 6 hours rest time.

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