



ECSCA

European Community Shipowners' Associations

Brussels, June 2014

To: Whom it may concern

HIGH SPEED CRAFT (HSC) CODE – SAFE MANNING INTERPRETATION IN THE EU

The International Maritime Organisation IMO adopted the International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft (HSC Code) in 1994 introducing a new SOLAS chapter X - Safety measures for high-speed craft, which made the HSC Code mandatory for high-speed craft built on or after 1 January 1996. In paragraph 18.1.3.6, the HSC Code stipulates that *"The crew complement should be such that two officers are on duty in the operating compartment when the craft is underway, one of whom may be the master"*.

The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSCA) received a request for clarification from its national shipowners association membership as regards to the interpretation of these "two officers on duty" among EU Member States. The inquiries made by ECSCA show that this provision has been interpreted in various ways in the EU. The responses vary from few strict obligation of having two deck officers to a much more - and sometimes clearly framed - flexible interpretation of the Code. The flexible approach appears to have been adopted in a majority of Member States.

Given the particular features of high-speed crafts, the term "officer" can be interpreted as any holder of an STCW Certificate of Competency. Therefore, one of the two officers requested can be a deck officer and the second one can be an engineer officer, since on this type of craft the engine control room is located next to the operating compartment. Obviously, the HSC Code paragraph 18.1.3.6 refers to the Operating Compartment (and not the Operating Station) which is not only for navigational function. The manning arrangements should however be addressed by the operators and Flag State when looking at the individual operational characteristics of the high-speed craft when developing and agreeing the Permit to Operate.

In this regards the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) approach appears to be a pragmatic and safe interpretation since it cannot always be possible to have two deck officers in the Operating Compartment in order to comply with the national minimum hours of rest legislation. The MCA does not specify the two officers on duty, allowing high-speed craft operators to comprise of one engineer and one deck officer at times when required. However, if one of the two officers is an engineer, the Operating Compartment is supplement with a lookout. In addition, the MCA requires that the Master and all officers having an operational role of an HSC vessel must complete detailed training with respect to wake wash generation in order to gain Type Rating. This training should enable them to fully understand the possible impact of inappropriately operating at speed in shallow water, of operating at a course and speed different from the approved risk assessment, of the passage plan, the possible hazards caused by turns and operating under asymmetric powering.

The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSCA), formed in 1965, comprises the national shipowners' associations of the EU and Norway. ECSCA aims at promoting the interests of European shipping so that industry can best serve European and international trade and commerce in a competitive and free business environment, to the benefit of both shippers and consumers. The European Economic Area maintains its very prominent position with a controlled fleet of 40% of the global commercial fleet.

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