भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

DGS CIRCULAR 13 of 2026

File No. 25-104/4/2026-NT – DGS Comp no. 38720	Date: 09.03.2026
Authorised By: Chief Examiner of Master & Mates	**Subject:** Implementation of Amendments to the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended, related to Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Regulation V/4) (MSC.416(97) & MSC.417(97)) reg.
Issued By: Nautical Wing EAC Branch.	**DGS STCW CIRCULAR 03 of 2026**

1. The Directorate General of Shipping remains firmly committed to upholding maritime safety and promoting professional excellence in the maritime sector. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) periodically amends the STCW Convention to address emerging challenges and evolving requirements in the maritime sector. As a proactive member state, India places a high priority on the timely implementation of these instruments.
2. The purpose of this Circular is to notify implementation of the 2016 amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the IMO via Resolutions MSC.416(97) and MSC.417(97). These resolutions explicitly prescribe the basic and advanced training requirements under Regulation V/4 paragraphs 2 and 4 of the STCW Conventions.
3. In pursuance of the above, a new Section A-V/4 has been added to the STCW Code. Consequently, the following competency tables are hereby notified:
   (a) **Annexure-A:** Specification of minimum standard of competence in basic training for ships operating in polar waters (Table A-V/4-1).
   (b) **Annexure-B:** Specification of minimum standard of competence in advanced training for ships operating in polar waters (Table A-V/4-2).
4. Every Master, Chief mate and officer in charge of a navigational watchkeeping serving on ships operating in polar waters shall successfully complete Basic Training for Ships Operating in Polar Waters as specified in **Annexure A.**

5. Masters and Chief Mates serving on ships operating in polar waters shall successfully complete Advanced Training for Ships Operating in Polar Waters as specified in **Annexure B.**

6. Every candidate for a certificate in basic training for ships operating in polar waters shall have completed an approved basic training for ships operating in polar waters and meet the standard of competence specified in section A-V/4, paragraph 1, of the STCW Code.

7. Every candidate for a certificate in advanced training for ships operating in polar waters shall:

   (a) Meet the requirements for certification in basic training for ships operating in polar waters;

   (b) Have at least two (2) months of approved seagoing service in the deck department, at management level or while performing watchkeeping duties at the operational level, within polar waters or other equivalent approved seagoing service; and

   (c) Have completed approved advanced training for ships operating in polar waters and meet the standard of competence specified in section A-V/4, paragraph 2 of the STCW Code.

8. This Circular supplement and clarifies NT/EXAM Circular No. 02 of 2018 and shall be read in conjunction with DGS (NT/ENG) Circular No. 18 of 2025. The transitional provisions for candidates shall be in accordance with NT/EXAM Circular No. 02 of 2018.

This issues with the approval of Chief Examiner of Master and Mates.

09/03/26

Capt. Ravi Singh Sikarwar
Nautical Surveyor-cum-DDG(Tech.)

Enclosures:-

Annexure-A- Specification of minimum standard of competence in basic training for ships operating in polar waters.

Annexure-B- Specification of minimum standard of competence in advanced training for ships operating in polar waters.

Copy to:

1. DGS Secretariat
2. Nautical Advisor to the Government of India
3. All Maritime Training Institutes (MTIs)
4. All RPSL Companies
5. INSA / MASSA / FOSMA / ICCSA
6. Computer Cell – for uploading on the DGS website.

Annexure-A

Specification of minimum standard of competence in basic training for ships operating in polar waters

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
Contribute to safe operation of vessels operating in polar waters	*Basic knowledge of ice characteristics and areas where different types of ice can be expected in the area of operation:* .1 ice physics, terms, formation, growth, ageing and stage of melt .2 ice types and concentrations .3 ice pressure and distribution .4 friction from snow covered ice .5 implications of spray-icing; danger of icing up; precautions to avoid icing up and options during icing up .6 ice regimes in different regions; significant differences between the Arctic and the Antarctic, first year and multiyear ice, sea ice and land ice .7 use of ice imagery to recognize consequences of rapid change in ice and weather conditions .8 knowledge of ice blink and water sky .9 knowledge of differential movement of icebergs and pack ice	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following: .1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	Identification of ice properties and their characteristics of relevance for safe vessel operation Information obtained from ice information and publications is interpreted correctly and properly applied Use of visible and infrared satellite images Use of egg charts Coordination of meteorological and oceanographic data with ice data Measurements and observations of weather and ice conditions are accurate and appropriate for safe passage planning

	.10 knowledge of tides and currents in ice		

Column 1 Competence	Column 2 Knowledge, understanding and proficiency	Column 3 Methods for demonstrating competence	Column 4 Criteria for evaluating competence
	.11 knowledge of effect of wind and current on ice		
	Basic knowledge of vessel performance in ice and low air temperature: .1 vessel characteristics .2 vessel types, hull designs .3 engineering requirements for operating in ice .4 Ice strengthening requirements .5 limitations of ice-classes .6 winterization and preparedness of vessel, including deck and engine .7 low-temperature system performance .8 equipment and machinery limitation in ice condition and low air temperature .9 monitoring of ice pressure on hull .10 sea suction, water intake, superstructure insulation and special systems	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following: .1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	Identification of vessel characteristics and limitations under different ice conditions and cold environmental impact Procedures are made for risk assessment before entering ice Awareness of fresh water ballast freezing in ballast tanks Actions are carried out in accordance with accepted principles and procedures to prepare the vessel and the crew for operations in ice and low air temperature Communications are clear, concise and effective at all times in a seamanlike manner

	Basic knowledge and ability to operate and manoeuvre a vessel in ice: .1 safe speed in the presence of ice and icebergs .2 ballast tank monitoring .3 cargo operations in polar waters	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following:	Use Polar Code and Polar Water Operations Manual to correctly determine the recommended procedures to load/unload cargo and/or embark/disembark passengers in low temperatures, monitor ballast water

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
	.4 awareness of engine loads and cooling problems .5 safety procedures during ice transit	.1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	for icing, monitor engine temperatures, anchor watch concerns in ice, and transit near ice Interpretation and analysis of information from radar is in accordance with lookout procedures with special caution regarding identification of dangerous ice features Information obtained from navigational charts, including electronic charts, and publications is relevant, assessed, interpreted correctly and properly applied The primary method of position fixing is frequent and the most appropriate for the prevailing conditions and routing through ice Performance checks and tests of navigation and communication systems comply with recommendations for high latitude and low air temperature operation

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
Monitor and ensure compliance with legislative requirements	*Basic knowledge of regulatory considerations:* .1 Antarctic Treaty and the Polar Code .2 accident reports concerning vessels in polar waters .3 IMO standards for operation in remote areas	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following: .1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	Locate and apply relevant parts of the Polar Water Operations Manual Communication is in accordance with local/regional and international standard procedures Legislative requirements related to relevant regulations, codes and practices are identified
Apply safe working practices, respond to emergencies	*Basic knowledge of crew preparation, working conditions and safety:* .1 recognize limitations of search and rescue readiness and responsibility, including sea area A4 and its SAR communication facility limitation .2 awareness of contingency planning .3 how to establish and implement safe working procedures for crew specific to polar environments such as low temperatures, ice-covered surfaces, personal protective equipment, use of buddy system, and working time limitations .4 recognize dangers when crews are exposed to low temperatures	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following: .1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	Identification and initial actions on becoming aware of hazardous situations for vessel and individual crew members Actions are carried out in accordance with Polar Water Operations Manual, accepted principles and procedures to ensure safety of operations and to avoid pollution of the marine environment Safe working practices are observed and appropriate safety and protective equipment is correctly used at all times Response actions are in accordance with established plans and are appropriate to the situation and nature of the emergency

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
	.5 human factors including cold fatigue, medical-first aid aspects, crew welfare .6 survival requirements including the use of personal survival equipment and group survival equipment .7 awareness of the most common hull and equipment damages and how to avoid these .8 superstructure-deck icing, including effect on stability and trim .9 prevention and removal of ice including the factors of accretion .10 recognize fatigue problems due to noise and vibrations .11 identify need for extra resources, such as bunker, food and extra clothing		Correctly identifies and applies legislative requirements related to relevant regulations, codes and practices Appropriate safety and protective equipment is correctly used Defects and damages are detected and properly reported

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
Ensure compliance with pollution-prevention requirements and prevent environmental hazards	*Basic knowledge of environmental factors and regulations:* .1 identify particularly sensitive sea areas regarding discharge .2 identify areas where shipping is prohibited or should be avoided .3 special areas defined in MARPOL .4 recognize limitations of oil-spill equipment .5 plan for coping with increased volumes of garbage, bilge water, sewage, etc. .6 lack of infrastructure .7 oil spill and pollution in ice, including consequences	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following: .1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	Legislative requirements related to relevant regulations, codes and practices are identified Correctly identify/select the limitations on vessel discharges contained in the Polar Code Correctly apply Polar Water Operations Manual/Waste Management Plan to determine limitations on vessel discharges and plans for storing waste Identify references that provide details of areas to be avoided, such as wildlife refuges, ecological heritage parks, migratory pathways, etc. (MARPOL, Antarctic Treaty, etc.) Identify factors that must be considered to manage waste stream during polar voyages

Annexure-B

Specification of minimum standard of competence in advanced training for ships operating in polar waters

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
Plan and conduct a voyage in polar waters	*Knowledge of voyage planning and reporting:* .1 information sources .2 reporting regimes in polar waters .3 development of safe routeing and passage planning to avoid ice where possible .4 ability to recognize the limitations of hydrographic information and charts in polar regions and whether the information is suitable for safe navigation .5 passage planning deviation and modification for dynamic ice conditions *Knowledge of equipment limitations:* .1 understand and identify hazards associated with limited terrestrial navigational aids in polar regions .2 understand and recognize high latitude errors on compasses .3 understand and identify limitations in discrimination of radar targets	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following: .1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	The equipment, charts and nautical publications required for the voyage are enumerated and appropriate to the safe conduct of the voyage The reasons for the planned route are supported by facts obtained from relevant sources and publications, statistical data and limitations of communication and navigational systems Voyage plan correctly identified relevant polar regulatory regimes and need for ice-pilotage and/or icebreaker assistance All potential navigational hazards are accurately identified Positions, courses, distances and time calculations are correct within accepted accuracy standards for navigational equipment

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
	and ice features in ice-clutter .4 understand and recognize limitations of electronic positioning systems at high latitude .5 understand and recognize limitations in nautical charts and pilot descriptions .6 understand and recognize limitations in communication systems		
Manage the safe operation of vessels operating in polar waters	*Knowledge and ability to operate and manoeuvre a vessel in ice:* .1 preparation and risk assessment before approaching ice, including presence of icebergs, and taking into account wind, darkness, swell, fog and pressure ice .2 conduct communications with an icebreaker and other vessels in the area and with Rescue Coordination Centres .3 understand and describe the conditions for the safe entry and exit to and from ice or open water, such as leads or cracks, avoiding icebergs and dangerous ice conditions and maintaining safe distance to icebergs	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following: .1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	All decisions concerning navigating in ice are based on a proper assessment of the ship's manoeuvring and engine characteristics and the forces to be expected while navigating within polar waters Demonstrate communication skills, request ice routeing, plot and commence voyage through ice All potential ice hazards are correctly identified All decisions concerning berthing anchoring, cargo and ballast operations are based on a proper assessment of the ship's manoeuvring and engine

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
	.4 understand and describe ice-ramming procedures including double and single ramming passage .5 recognize and determine the need for bridge watch team augmentation based upon environmental conditions, vessel equipment and vessel ice class .6 recognize the presentations of the various ice conditions as they appear on radar .7 understand icebreaker convoy terminology, and communications, and take icebreaker direction and move in convoy .8 understand methods to avoid besetment and to free beset vessel, and consequences of besetment .9 understand towing and rescue in ice, including risks associated with operation .10 handling ship in various ice concentration and coverage, including risks associated with navigation in ice, e.g. avoid turning and		characteristics and the forces to be expected and in accordance with the Polar Code guidelines and applicable international agreements Safely demonstrate progression of a vessel through ice, manoeuvring vessel through moderate ice concentration (range of 1/10 to 5/10) Safely demonstrate progression of a vessel through ice, manoeuvring vessel through dense ice concentration (range of 6/10 to 10/10) Operations are planned and carried out in accordance with established rules and procedures to ensure safety of operation and to avoid pollution of the marine environment Safety of navigation is maintained through navigation strategy and adjustment of ship's speed and heading through different types of ice Actions are understood to permit use of anchoring system

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
	backing simultaneously .11 use of different type of propulsion and rudder systems, including limitations to avoid damage when operating in ice .12 use of heeling and trim systems, hazards in connection with ballast and trim in relation with ice .13 docking and undocking in ice-covered waters, including hazards associated with operation and the various techniques to safely dock and undock in ice-covered waters .14 anchoring in ice, including the dangers to anchoring system – ice accretion to hawse pipe and ground tackle .15 recognize conditions which impact polar visibility and may give indication of local ice and water conditions, including sea smoke, water sky, ice blink and refraction		in cold temperatures Actions are carried out in accordance with accepted principles and procedures to prepare for icebreaker towing, including notch towing
Maintain safety of the ship's crew and passengers and the operational	*Knowledge of safety:* .1 understand the procedures and techniques for	Examination and assessment of evidence obtained from one or more of the following:	Response measures are in accordance with established plans and procedures, and are

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	**Knowledge, understanding and proficiency**	**Methods for demonstrating competence**	**Criteria for evaluating competence**
condition of life-saving, firefighting and other safety systems	abandoning the ship and survival on ice and in ice-covered waters .2 recognize limitations of fire-fighting systems and life-saving appliances due to low air temperatures .3 understand unique concerns in conducting emergency drills in ice and low temperatures .4 understand unique concerns in conducting emergency response in ice and low air and water temperatures	.1 approved in-service experience .2 approved training ship experience .3 approved simulator training, where appropriate .4 approved training programme	appropriate to the situation and nature of the emergency

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