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DUTIES OF THE OFFICER OF THE WATCH (OOW)

1. MASTERS REPRESENTATIVE

The OOW is the Master's representative and is primarily responsible for navigating the ship during his/her period of duty in a safe and prudent manner at all times and in strict compliance with the COLREGS, STCW, SOLAS and any other applicable laws.

2. DUTIES

2.1. The **OOW** is to carry out his duties in accordance with COLREGS, STCW, SOLAS, this manual, Company **Standing Orders**, and the **Master's** orders given verbally and in writing.

2.2. In order to maintain a safe navigational watch, the primary duties of the **OOW** will involve watch keeping, navigation and GMDSS radio watch keeping.

2.3. Secondary duties include controlling the speed and direction of the ship; general pollution prevention surveillance in accordance with STCW and MARPOL; general safety surveillance of the weather deck.

2.4. The **OOW** may also have additional duties to undertake while on watch. However, these duties **should under no circumstances interfere with the safe navigation of the ship and maintaining a proper lookout.**

3. TAKING OVER THE WATCH

3.1. The **OOW** shall not hand over the watch if there is reason to believe the relieving officer is unfit to carry out his/her watch keeping duties effectively. If in any doubt, the **OOW** shall call the **Master.**

3.2. The **Relieving Officer** shall not take over the watch until his/her vision is fully adjusted to the light conditions and has personally satisfied himself/herself regarding:

a. Thorough understanding of Standing orders, night orders and other special instructions of the **Master** relating to the navigation of the ship.

b. Passage plan details.

c. Position, course, speed and draught of the ship.

d. Prevailing and predicted tides, currents, weather, visibility and the effect of these factors upon course and speed.

e. Status of main engine when on bridge control.

f. Operational condition of all navigation and safety equipment being used or likely to be used during the watch.

g. Mode of steering.

h. The errors of gyro and magnetic compasses.

i. The presence and movements of ships in sight or known to be in the vicinity.

j. The weather conditions and navigational hazards likely to be encountered during the watch with reference to Maritime Safety Information (MSI) received.

k. The possible effects of heel, trim, water density and squat on the under-keel clearance; any shallow water effect

l. Any special deck work in progress.

m. Determine if the Engine Room is manned or in UMS mode.

n. Setting and alarms of ECDIS.

o. Radar / ARPA controls.

p. Reporting requirements for VTS.

q. Any distress / urgency or safety message in vicinity.

r. Change of watch checklist NAV B16.

3.3. The Relieving Officer shall ensure that the members of the relieving watch are fit for duty, particularly as regards their adjustment to night vision.

3.4. If a manoeuvre or other action to avoid any hazard is taking place, the relief of the officer shall be deferred until such action has been completed.

3.5. The OOW shall remain responsible for the watch until the Relieving Officer has given a clear instruction that he/she is taking over responsibility for the watch.

4. MAINTAINING A LOOK-OUT

4.1. In compliance with COLREGS and STCW it is of **special importance** that at all times the **OOW** ensures that a proper lookout is maintained.

4.2. The **OOW** may visit the chartroom, chart table area or GMDSS station, when essential, for a **short period** for the necessary performance of navigation and GMDSS duties but shall first ensure that it is safe to do so and that a proper lookout is maintained.

4.3. The **OOW** shall ensure that during the day curtains or blinds are opened to provide maximum visibility all around. At night, the chart area lights should be kept turned down to protect night vision, and the chart table curtains left open.

4.4. To perform lookout duties effectively the **Lookout** should maintain a lookout outside of the wheelhouse on the bridge wing unless the weather conditions are extreme. The **Lookout** shall have access to the bridge facilities (tea, toilet).

4.5. The look-out must be able to give his full attention to the keeping of a proper look-out and no other duties shall be undertaken or assigned which could interfere with that task. (STCW A-VIII/2- Part 4/Lookout 14, 15, 16, 17)[1]

5. PERFORMING THE NAVIGATIONAL WATCH

5.1. The OOW shall:

5.1.1. Keep watch on the bridge.

5.1.2. In no circumstances leave the bridge until properly relieved.

5.1.3. Call the **Master** if in any doubt as to what actions to take in the interests of safety.

5.1.4. At sufficiently frequent intervals and in compliance with the passage plan check the course steered, position and speed, using any available navigational aids necessary, to ensure that the ship follows the planned course.

5.1.5. The **OOW** shall make the most effective use of all navigational equipment at his/her disposal.

5.1.6. When necessary, the **OOW** shall not hesitate to use the helm, engines and sound signalling apparatus. In most cases the use of helm is quicker and more effective than use of the engines. Where possible timely notice of intended variations in engine speed shall be given to the duty **Engineer Officer**, and engine load reduced, or increased gradually to protect the engine.

5.1.7. Keep a proper record during the watch of the movements and activities relating to the navigation of the ship.

5.1.8. Make regular checks to ensure that:

a. The helmsman or the automatic pilot is steering the correct course.

b. The **gyro and magnetic compass error is determined in compliance with STCW at least once per watch**, where possible and after any major alteration of course. If unable to determine the error due to poor visibility an entry to that effect must be made in the logbook.

c. The standard and gyro compasses are frequently compared, and repeaters are synchronised with their master compass.

d. Manual steering is tested at least once per watch when automatic pilot is in use.

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e. Navigation lights, emergency navigation lights[2], signalling lights and shapes like ball, diamond, cylinder and sound signalling appliances like whistle, bell, gong are functioning properly and ready for immediate use at all times. The forward and aft whistle shall be tested on manual mode as well as the electrical mode daily around noon time.[3]

f. Electronic equipment is functioning properly and that it is successfully communicating to any other bridge system to which it is connected.

g. GMDSS, radio equipment is functioning properly.

h. UMS controls, alarms and indicators are functioning properly; The Engineer Officer will contact the bridge and inform that they intend to engage the UMS mode. When acknowledgement has been received from the bridge, the switch over can be made engine room may be left unattended. Engineers entering the Engine room to answer alarms will engage the deadman alarm system.

i. Safety (fire) alarm systems and indicators are functioning properly.

j. ECDIS checks conducted at least once during watch using ECDIS periodic checklist Nav B18

6. FIRE ROUNDS

The OOW must ensure that fire/safety and security rounds are taken in all common spaces in the accommodation like laundries, drying rooms, galley, pantry, smoke rooms, mess rooms, gymnasium, ships office etc and satisfy himself that all is in order.[4]

The OOW or lookout should not leave the bridge during the watch as this contravenes the requirements of SOLAS and STCW.[5]

The rounds shall be carried out by 2 personnel (OOW and rating) after the end of their watch during the hours of darkness (i.e. after 2000, 0000 and 0400 hrs.)[6]

Rounds shall include a physical check to ensure that no immediate fire or security risks to the vessel exists. This must include inspection of main weather tight closures, locking mechanisms and sealing arrangements as appropriate. The OOW shall ensure there is no oil leak, fire, unusual noise or smell, all electrical appliances are switched off, any freshwater leaks are reported, all loose equipment/movable object securing checked, particularly if heavy weather is forecast. Any matter requiring attention must be dealt with at once.[7]

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No inspection may be made without the watch members carrying a radio in contact with the bridge. At no time are they to enter an enclosed space or enter an unmanned engine room.[8]

Once the rounds are completed and all are in order, this shall be reported to bridge.[9]

An entry to the effect that rounds have been completed is to be made in the deck logbook.[10]

7. UMS OPERATIONS

Duty engineers that are carrying out final evening checks during unattended periods should, inform the bridge prior to entry, then activate the dead man alarm upon entry and advise the bridge once he has returned safely back to the accommodation. The dead man alarm is set for 15 minutes intervals once activated.

When responding to an alarm within the machinery space, the dead man alarm will be automatically activated and there is no requirement for the duty engineer to call the bridge prior entry. He should however advise the bridge once he is safely out of the machinery space. Should the response to the alarm require extended work to be carried out, a second person is to be summoned to the engine room and status of the machinery space changed to manned.

During UMS operations, except for the duty engineer no other person should enter the engine room during unattended periods.

OOW to make suitable entries in the deck log to record times of entry and when machinery space is clear of personal.

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