Sjøfartsdirektoratet
Norwegian Maritime Authority

Circular - Series R

Number: RSR 16-2025

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Case number: 2025/80342

Regulation concerning amendments to the Regulations on qualifications and certificates for seafarers

I. General

1. Introduction

The Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has adopted amendments to the Regulations of 22 December 2011 No. 1523 on qualifications and certificates for seafarers (the Qualification Regulations), following amendments to Part A of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW).

The amended Regulations will enter into force on 1 January 2026.

The IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) has adopted amendments to Part A of the STCW Code through resolution MSC.560(108). The amendments concern Chapter VI "Standards regarding emergency, occupational safety, security, medical care and survival functions", more specifically table A-VI/1-4 "Specification of minimum standard of competence in personal safety and social responsibilities".

Table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code has been incorporated into Norwegian legislation in appendix II to the Qualifications Regulations, table A-VI/1-4. This table is now being amended.

2. Public consultation

The proposed amendments were circulated for public consultation from 20 October to 15 December 2025. The consultation period was somewhat shorter than a standard consultation period and was considered consistent with the Instructions for Official Studies and Reports.

The NMA received nine consultation responses, of which three contained no comments. Those who provided comments were generally positive regarding the amendments, but raised questions concerning the implications of the new competence requirement for seafarers who have already completed valid safety training. This issue is addressed under section II, item 2 below. Reference is otherwise made to the attached consultation matrix (in Norwegian only).

II. Further details on the regulatory amendments

1. Introduction of a new competence requirement in basic safety training

Appendix II table A-VI/1-4 and the subjects covered by this table form part of the content of basic safety training, cf. section 9 first paragraph of the Qualifications Regulations. Basic safety training constitutes part of the basis for certificates of competency pursuant to the Qualifications Regulations. As mentioned above, table A-VI/1-4 is set out in appendix II to the Qualifications Regulations. The table is divided into four columns with the following headings:

1. Competence
2. Knowledge, understanding and proficiency
3. Methods for demonstrating competence

The amendments mainly consist of additions to the existing table, with one new competence requirement introduced in column 1. The new competence requirement reads: "Contribute to the prevention of and response to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault". In column 2, this competence requirement is further elaborated through detailed requirements relating to knowledge, understanding and proficiency. This includes, inter alia, requirements for basic knowledge and understanding of such violence and harassment, the potential harm of such acts and a more detailed understanding of the consequences they may entail. Furthermore, requirements are laid down concerning the ability to identify violence and harassment and knowledge of appropriate measures to be implemented. The methods for demonstrating such competence are set out in column 3, while the evaluation criteria are specified in column 4.

In addition to the new competence requirement, some minor linguistic adjustments have been made to the table content that do not entail any substantive changes.

2. Entry into force and practical implementation

Seafarers who have already completed basic safety training or refresher training may rely on the validity period stated in their issued course documentation, of up to five years. The NMA has considered it sufficient that the new competence requirement concerning the prevention of and response to violence and harassment is addressed at the next mandatory refresher training.

Accordingly, the regulatory amendment will primarily have practical implications for institutions providing basic safety training pursuant to section 9 of the Qualification Regulations, as these institutions must update their course content accordingly. Guidance on this matter was issued to the relevant training providers in autumn 2025.

It has been noted in the consultation responses that there may be a need for approval of equivalent training pathways provided by companies or based on prior learning and experience. In this regard, the NMA points out that there are currently no such alternatives that may substitute for the requirement for basic safety training, and that the NMA does not consider the regulatory amendments adopted through this Circular to give rise to a need for alternative or equivalent arrangements.

III. Administrative and financial implications

The regulatory amendments entail new requirements relating to knowledge of violence and harassment for seafarers required to complete basic safety training pursuant to the Qualification Regulations. This means that training providers must update their course content accordingly. The amendments are assumed to have limited administrative and financial consequences.

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This document has been electronically approved and therefore does not contain handwritten signatures.

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Attachment:
Consultation matrix