

Commonwealth of Dominica



Office of the Maritime Administrator

TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS

SUBJECT: MANDATORY LOOKOUTS AND WATCHKEEPING

REFERENCE: (a) Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, (COLREG) 1972, as amended;
(b) International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), as amended – Code Part A/Chapter VIII: Watchkeeping Arrangements and principles to be observed

APPLICABILITY: All Dominica registered vessels

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Circular is to bring to the attention of all concerned the requirements regarding watchkeeping, specifically the requirement to maintain a proper lookout at sea on board Commonwealth of Dominica flagged vessels.

BACKGROUND:

The requirement for a look-out is established in Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (“COLREG”), as amended, in Rule 5 which states:

“Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.”

This requirement is also reinforced in the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, as amended (“STCW Convention”) and multiple circulars that have been published by both the Maritime Safety Committee and

the Maritime Environmental Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization following the investigations of marine casualties leading to loss of property, life, and/or environmental damage.

Following an investigation of a collision involving a Dominica flagged vessel which led to the complete loss of the ship, it was determined that the absence of dedicated lookouts on both ships largely contributed to the collision.

REQUIREMENTS:

General

All ships are required to ensure safe navigation in all conditions taking into account traffic, weather, visibility etc. A look-out must be a designated individual able to give full attention to their duties and shall not undertake other tasks while maintaining a lookout. The requirements in the STCW Code Section A-VIII/2, Part 4-1 stipulate the conditions on which a lookout may be combined with the duties of a watchkeeper.

Applicability

These requirements are applicable to all ships in all waters in order to ensure the safe navigation of vessels and to avoid collision.

Required Action by Owners/Operators

The owners/operators of DMRI registered vessels shall ensure that the masters and watch keepers of their vessel(s) maintain a proper lookout at all times when underway and ensure manning meets the standards of STCW Code Section A-VIII. During the hours of darkness and in restricted visibility a vessel’s Officer in Charge of Navigation Watch shall be assisted by a dedicated lookout.

This circular must be presented to the master of all vessels registered with Dominica Maritime Registry and the subject discussed internally to evaluate how effective look-outs will be kept.

Any questions can be directed to:

Technical Department

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Marine Safety Circular

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