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Ref. T2/4.1

MSC/Circ.1088
6 June 2003

QUESTIONNAIRE ON NATIONAL DATABASE STANDARDS, RECORD SYSTEMS AND ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES

1   The Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW), at its thirty-fourth session (24 to 28 February 2003), in considering the use of central databases to maintain information on certificates and endorsements, supported proposals to review current measures being implemented by flag State administrations to restrict the proliferation of counterfeit and fraudulently-issued certificates in order to inform future discussions on the issue.

2   The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-seventh session (28 May to 6 June 2003), instructed the Secretariat to prepare a questionnaire for circulation to STCW Parties to collect information on current national database standards, record systems and anti-fraud measures. The Committee also instructed the Secretariat to collate the information received in response to the questionnaire and to report the results to   STW 35.

3   Member Governments are requested to provide the information requested in the questionnaire at annex to this circular and to forward complete questionnaires to the Secretariat by **30 September 2003.**

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ANNEX

QUESTIONNAIRE

National database standards, record systems and anti-fraud measures

Background

1   The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, requires each Party to maintain a register or registers of all certificates and endorsements for masters and officers and, as appropriate, ratings, which have been issued, have expired or have been revalidated, suspended, cancelled or reported lost or destroyed and of dispensations issued. In addition, Parties are required to make available information on the status of such certificates, endorsements and dispensations to other Parties and companies which request verification of the authenticity and validity of certificates produced to them by seafarers seeking recognition of their certificates under STCW regulation I/10 or employment on board ship.

2   In order to investigate the feasibility of making information on seafarers' certificates readily accessible internationally, the Organization, with financial support provided by the Government of Norway, undertook a study to determine the practicability of the proposal and the best way of taking it forward, the results of which were considered by STW 31 in January 2000. Since the study, many STCW Parties have developed and enhanced databases making full use of information and communication technology.

Central Databases

3   In considering central databases (STW 34/5/2, paragraphs 4 to 6 and STW 34/14, paragraphs 5.25 to 5.27), the STW Sub-Committee supported proposals to review current measures being implemented by flag State administrations to restrict the proliferation of counterfeit and fraudulently issued certificates. The Sub-Committee invited the Committee to instruct the Secretariat to prepare a questionnaire for circulation to STCW Parties to collect information on current national databases' standards, records systems and anti-fraud measures and to report the results to STW 35 in January 2004. The Maritime Safety Committee at its seventy-seventh session endorsed the Sub-Committee's request.

4   Member Governments are requested to provide the information requested in the questionnaire at annex to this circular and to forward complete questionnaires to the Secretariat by **30 September 2003.**

Questionnaire

Please complete as many questions as possible and forward completed forms to:

STCW and Human Element Section
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7SR
Tel: 020 7735 7611
Fax: 020 7587 3210
Email: awinbow@imo.org

1. How is information on certificates, endorsements etc. stored by your organization? (e.g. card index, ledgers, database electronic)
   ……………………………………………………………………………….

2. How often is your database updated? (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly)

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3. What is the number of seafarers stored in your register/database?

   Masters and officers: ……………………….

   Ratings: ……………………………………………

4. Please indicate what information is maintained by ticking (√) the appropriate boxes below:

   .1 **Status of certificate**

Valid	☐
Suspended	☐
Cancelled	☐
Reported lost	☐
Destroyed	☐

   .2 **Certificate details**

Seafarer's name	☐
Date of birth	☐
Nationality	☐
Sex	☐
Photograph	☐
Document number	☐
Date of issue	☐
Date of expiry	☐
Last revalidation date	☐
Details of dispensation(s)	☐

     .3   **Competency details**

         STCW competency standard (e.g. regulation II/1) ☐
         Capacity ☐
         Function ☐
         Level of responsibility ☐
         Endorsements ☐
         Limitations ☐

     .4   **Medical details**

         Date of issue ☐
         Limitations ☐

5.   As the database contains personal information, do any limitations exist regarding publication of information in any national laws on privacy?

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If so, please indicate briefly what limitations exist.

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6.   Please indicate, by ticking (√) the relevant boxes, which of the following security measures are adopted in certificates:

    .1   the use of special inks; ☐

    .2   the use of gradient colours;

    .3   the use of special security paper or of paper containing watermarks visible when the document is held at an angle against the light; ☐

    .4   the use of fluorescent ink visible with ultraviolet light; ☐

    .5   the use of digitized photographs and/or signatures; ☐

    .6   the use of smart chips or bar codes; ☐

    .7   special thermal coverage of the seafarer's photograph; ☐

    .8   the use of heat sealed laminates*;* ☐

    .9   the use of features, such as redundant data, which are carried over in digital images or other copies. ☐

7.   Please indicate, by ticking (√) the relevant boxes, which of the following procedures are currently in place

    .1   procedures to control the printing, storage, handling and distribution of blank certificates; ☐

    .2   procedures to be followed when issuing certificates; ☐

.3   procedures for handling (or condemning) defective or damaged blank certificates or certificates which have been identified as containing errors after they have been prepared for issue; ☐

.4   procedures for maintaining and updating records of certificates issued; ☐

.5   procedures for the issue of certificates to replace lost or damaged ones; ☐

.6   procedures or measures to prevent unauthorized access to database containing information relating to certificates and related records; ☐

.7   procedures for reporting alleged frauds or forgeries; ☐

.8   procedures for investigating alleged frauds or forgeries. ☐

8.   In accordance with MSC/Circ.900, how does your Administration provide the Organization and the authority identified on the certificate or endorsement as the issuing authority, with any relevant information on fraudulent certificates and endorsements which are encountered in the course of flag state and port state activities?

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9.   What exchanges of information have you had with other Maritime Administrations on fraudulent certification?

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10.   Please indicate the number of prosecutions initiated in response to fraudulent practices associated with certificates of competency

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11.   Please indicate the number of recognition endorsements refused due to concerns about the veracity and validity of certificates of competency.

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