

98035.GEN - STCW rest provisions and human fatigue on board ships



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Although many of the provisions of the 1995 Amendments to the STCW Convention phase in between now and 1 February 2002, the hours of rest provisions have been in force since 1 February 1997. See Vanuatu Maritime Bulletin 109 for more details. As a reminder, the rest provisions are:

1. All persons who are assigned duty as officer in charge of a watch or as a rating forming part of the watch shall be provided a minimum of 10 hours of rest in any 24 hour period.
2. The hours of rest may be divided into no more than two periods, one of which shall be at least 6 hours in length.
3. The requirements for rest periods laid down in paragraphs 1 and 2 need not be maintained in the case of an emergency or drill or in other overriding operational conditions.
4. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2, the minimum period of ten hours may be reduced to not less than 6 consecutive hours provided that any such reduction shall not extend beyond two days and not less than 70 hours of rest are provided each seven day period.
5. Administrations shall require that watch schedules be posted where they are easily accessible.

These requirements have been necessitated by the fact that human fatigue plays an important part in a large percentage of casualties and injuries on board ship, whether at sea or in port.

A Marine Accident Investigators International Forum (MAIIF) friend and colleague, and the co-Deputy Chairman of MAIIF, Captain Kit Filor, of the Australian Marine Incident Investigation Unit, recently presented a paper on human fatigue to the Third International Conference on Fatigue and Transportation in Fremantle, Australia, which I believe you will find not only insightful, but truly readable. Captain Filor has kindly granted me permission to copy and distribute that paper which you will find enclosed.

Once you have read Captain Filor's paper, I would encourage you to send it to your vessels. I would be pleased to hear from you on how you are implementing the STCW rest rules aboard your vessels, and what changes in procedures you have had to make to comply. I would also be extremely interested to hear if, or how, human fatigue has contributed to accidents, injuries, casualties or other incidents on your vessels.

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