

ECDIS training concern

ECDIS training needs to be more robust, according to the International Chamber of Shipping's (ICS's) director (marine), John Murray. Speaking at the ICS conference in London in September, he said that the chamber would like to see a requirement for at least a 40-hour "robust" generic course before type-specific training.

Murray told delegates that ICS fully supports a review of the IMO ECDIS Model Course 1.27. In part, this is made necessary because the STCW Manila amendments will have to be changed and updated to take into account the bigger role ECDIS now plays on board, plus technological advances and integration with other bridge equipment. The USA has led on the revision of the model course, which will be considered by IMO's Standards, Training and Watchkeeping (STW) Sub-Committee at its meeting in May 2012.

ICS intends to submit a paper to STW on ECDIS training in general and argues that a gap exists in mandatory training provision. It says that, although mandatory carriage requirement is being phased in from 2012, the ECDIS parts of the Manila amendments will not be in full force until 2017. ICS considers a best practice approach would fill the gap.

Speaking to *SASI*, ICS's senior adviser (marine operations), James Langley, said: "The main message that ICS wish to get across is that the ICS considered best practice to be a strong generic ECDIS training course based on the IMO model course, supported by type-specific familiarisation training on board. There is a role for ECDIS equipment manufacturers to play in developing material for onboard familiarisation and/or integrating familiarisation into the ECDIS itself."

ICS has expressed concern over the precedent that is being set by some flag states in requiring additional shore-based equipment-specific training on top of the generic training and onboard type-specific familiarisation. Operators might, of course, choose this option, but they should not be compelled to do so, Langley added.

Meanwhile, ClassNK has issued its first approval for maritime training programmes to an ECDIS course offered by NYK Shipmanagement. The Japanese classification society said its approval of the course, to IMO standards, follows its entry into the training programme certification field as part of the broader expansion of its activities that it announced earlier this year.

Basic maths for seafarers

UK-based seafarers' charity the Marine Society has launched a new web-based maths development programme, aimed at helping ratings who are studying for STCW officer-of-the-watch certificates under the Slater Awards scheme. The charity says that *Mathsatsea.com*, designed by specialists in nautical education, will address the needs of ratings who seek career advancement. South Tyneside Marine College identified common areas of weakness, while specialist maritime eLearning provider CoracleOnline.com created the content and manages online registration and assessment.

About 200 Slater Awards students are at various stages in their training. The Slater Fund, administered by the Marine Society in association with trade union Nautilus International, offers scholarships to help ratings study for a first certificate of competency.

The programme is open to anyone on payment of a £15 fee, while a demonstration version is available as a taster. "As expected, actual take-up has

mainly been by Slater students, but quite a few merchant navy officer trainees have enrolled and found it beneficial," the society's education manager, Wendy Monaghan, told *SASI*. She stressed that the course was open to seafarers and shore-based maritime professionals of all nationalities and that interest had been expressed from crew-providing countries in the developing world.

The charity recognised that for many ratings the prospect of returning to a classroom is daunting. It noted that lack of self-confidence – particularly in tackling maths – can be a formidable barrier to making progress in their careers.

"There is a clearly identified need for this programme that will do much to help individuals, colleges and sponsoring companies," Marine Society director Brian Thomas said. "Feedback from those who have road-tested the programme is overwhelmingly positive. Whilst this project is intended to be primarily for ratings returning to formal learn-



Brian Thomas: Marine Society's maths course adds up
[photo: IHS Fairplay]

ing after years away, it might be that we go forward and develop a complementary programme that supports merchant navy officer trainees as a pre-joining course to nautical college."

The programme uses examples and language to which seafarers can relate and includes advice on study methods. For example, it notes that calculators are useful but also advises users to work out the answers with a pen and paper, "because it will help you later on in the course and you'll start to get a feel for numbers".

Hygiene training approved

The UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Liberian International Ship & Corporate Registry (LISCR) have both given their formal approval to Videotel Training Services' hygiene training programmes for ships' cooks and galley staff.

According to Videotel, the courses comply with paragraph 2 (C) of Standard A3.2 of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006.

"There are many hazards on board ship, but hazardous food is one of the easiest to avoid," said Videotel chief executive Nigel Cleave. "Food hygiene standards constitute an important part of the MLC 2006 regulations. A vessel's crew is often made up of a number of different nationalities with a wide range of demands and food cultures – but good hygiene practices must always be at the heart of any galley."

Now approved for ships' cooks and galley staff, the four-part *Food Safety at Sea Series* considers the risks food poses to seafarers and how best to avoid them. Poor food hygiene during preparation and storage can also affect the health of passengers on cruise ships and ferries. Topics covered include hazards and controls; delivery, storage, preparation and cooking; personal hygiene; pest control and cleaning.

In addition, two modules specifically for cooks have also received approval. 'A Guide to Good Housekeeping – Accommodation and the Galley' raises awareness of the importance of good housekeeping in this area and shows how to make it a vital part of everyday ship-board life. 'Personal Safety in the Galley' looks at the significance of safe working practices and good hygiene.