

GOMO Chapter 5

Certification, Training, Competency & Manning

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Revision History

Revision Number	Date	Section	Changes
2	May 2026	All	Seamen changed with seafarers
		All	Minor wordings been changed
		All	Sections been moved
		5.4.2.1	Transit deleted from Level A. It is a given as a part of the vessel's operations.
		5.4.2.2	Towing operations – For long distance towing it should be risk assessed what is required on the bridge.
		5.4.2.2 Manning Bridge	Text changed to: For all operations inside the safety zone there must be two appropriately certified STCW Officers.
		5.4.2.2	Simple anchor handling operations changed to Anchor handling operations.
		5.4.2.2 Manning Engine	Added: As for the bridge a risk assessment can be done to utilize the UMS mode for operations outside Safety zone and operations not involving live subsea infrastructure.
		5.4.2.3	Complex anchor handling operations, typically piggybacking, pre-laying or in deep water removed. Anchor handling is covered in level B.
		5.4.2.3	If required, winch operator as described in vessels SMS removed.
		5.4.2.3	Wind Farm Support/Gangway/Walk to Work – operations added as Operational Level C operation.
		5.4.2.3 Manning Bridge	Text changed: There must be two appropriately certified STCW Officers.
		5.4.2.3 Manning Engine	As for the bridge a risk assessment can be done to utilize the UMS mode for operations outside Safety zone and operations not involving live subsea infrastructure.
		5.4.3. Vessel Competency Matrix	Notes b) Junior DPO added as a term for restricted DPO.

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5 Certification, Training, Competency & Manning

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to ensure that offshore marine operations are performed to the highest standard and in a controlled manner. The competency framework within the industry is based on both international and national regulatory bodies, in addition to Good Practices and Guidelines.

This means that while Seafarers must adhere to the Flag State requirements for their general Maritime Competence, certain marine functions training and competency of personnel could be required to meet Good Practices and Guidelines out with Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW). This Chapter focuses on the competencies likely to be required on mobile units and vessels supporting offshore operations.

5.1.1 KATE

Competency is defined as “acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities at a level of expertise sufficient to be able to perform a task to a required standard”.

It can be summarised in the acronym “KATE”:

- **Knowledge**
- **Ability**
- **Training**
- **Experience**

5.2 Certification & Competency Requirements

5.2.1 General Maritime Personnel Certification

Meet Flag State requirements concerning all mandatory training and certification requirements to serve as a Seafarer, e.g., Certificates of Competency, Safety Courses, Medical Certificates and similar.

Compliance with STCW requirements will be sufficient for these purposes.

5.2.2 Other Maritime Personnel Certification

In some instances, certification relating to specialist functions may fall outwith STCW requirements and may be managed by industry bodies other than the vessel’s flag state.

5.2.3 Functional Competence

This includes personnel having the required level of competency to support specialist functions that may not be regulated by the Flag State.

Typically, these would include banking cranes, rigging and slinging, winch operations, advanced first aid training on stand-by vessels and other similar functions.

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5.2.4 Training, Experience Levels & Record Keeping

It is the responsibility of the owners or managers of facilities and vessels to ensure that personnel have the necessary competency and experience to undertake any tasks to which they may be assigned as addressed through the provisions of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code Chapter 6.

In many cases, attending a course will not be sufficient to acquire those skills which also require practical experience.

These records should be in a form that can easily be transferred between employers, if required. Individuals should ensure that their records are updated and verified as new skills are acquired.

In addition to normal operations, any training and experience records should also record any emergency situations which might arise as the task progresses.

Courses relating to any task may be arranged within the employer's organisation, including recorded "on the job" training, or by a competent external service provider. These may include crew resource management and other training courses in a simulated environment.

5.3 Team Competencies

To accommodate training and personal development, the competency of the overall marine team involved in a particular operation should also be considered.

To promote training and sharing of expertise, inexperienced personnel should be teamed up with experienced personnel.

As part of the personal development of a seafarer, owners and operators should ensure that the individual concerned can work as part of an experienced team. This is equally important on offshore facilities as it is on vessels.

Bridge Resource Management (BRM) or Marine Resource Management (MRM) type specific training is encouraged.

5.4 Marine Personnel Competence Overview

5.4.1 General Competence

The owners should assess the proposed manning level to ensure that it is suitable for the intended activities and, if necessary, make appropriate arrangements to ensure that all operations can be safely undertaken. Therefore, a thorough assessment of intended operations should be undertaken.

The Master must ensure that all personnel comply with STCW and Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) regulations. The Master must ensure that all personnel always comply with current STCW Hours of Rest regulations.

Minimum Safety and Security requirements are governed by Flag State requirements and therefore are not addressed in these Guidelines.

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It is the Owners' responsibility to man the vessel in such a way that the crew are able to conduct the required operation in a safe manner in all circumstances. Charterers shall provide Owners with sufficient information in a timely manner to allow these requirements to be met.

5.4.2 Operational Levels

The introduction of Operational Levels is meant to draw focus from vessel capabilities to the complexity of the operation itself. This means that competence requirements should reflect the complexity of the operations within the contract scope of work, instead of, for example, the DP Class of the vessel. It also means that if an Anchor Handling Tug Supply (AHTS) vessel performs cargo runs, it is the cargo run that is the industrial mission, and the competence requirement should reflect that.

These Operational Levels relate ONLY to Vessel Crew.

To set the right operational level, it is essential that the Charterer specifies in the scope of work what kind of operations are to be expected during the contract period.

It is not desirable to "up man" and "down man" during the operation.

For longer term charters, the intended scope of work for the vessel, together with the process for managing any changes to the scope throughout the charter period, should normally be included as part of the charter party.

5.4.2.1. **Operational Level A**

Basic operations - Not linked to vessel type Function/Typical Operations

1. Operations outside any safety zone.
2. All response and rescue support.

Manning: Safe Manning Levels

In order to conduct ANY JOB, the vessel must be staffed as per the vessel's safety management system and the Safe Manning Certificate (SMC), as the SMC is a Flag State requirement.

5.4.2.2. **Operational Level B**

Standard Operations - Medium Complexity Function, for example:

1. Cargo operations within safety zone, including those supported by dual-role stand-by vessels.
2. Anchor handling operations.
3. ROV operations outside any safety zone.
4. Towing Operations – Needs to be risk assessed to ensure that the correct manning levels and competencies are maintained, dependent up on type of towing and length.

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Bridge Manning

For all operations inside the safety zone, there must be two appropriately certified STCW Officers.

If operating on dynamic positioning, bridge manning should consist of one fully qualified DPO with the appropriate experience and competence with the industrial mission and a second who, as a minimum, has attended the basic DP Induction course. Dependent on the qualifications and previous experience of the second operator, a period of equipment familiarisation in accordance with International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA), Marine Technology Society (MTS) or equivalent recommendations may also be desirable.

Engine Room Manning

Not in Unmanned Machinery Space (UMS) mode (active monitoring) whilst inside safety zone.

During these operations, all machinery functions are to be actively monitored by the current watch-keeping engineer from a location adjacent to the machinery space to minimise the response time, should physical intervention be required.

A risk assessment can be done to utilize the UMS mode for operations outside safety zone when not in DP mode and operations not involving live subsea infrastructure.

Deck Manning

Subject to a Risk Assessment.

Cargo or anchor handling operations will normally require two qualified seafarers with appropriate operational experience.

5.4.2.3. Operational Level C

Advanced Operations - High Complexity Function/Typical Operations, for example:

1. Close approach/inter-ship operations.
2. Subsea construction.
3. Diving Support.
4. Complex ROV operations, in close proximity to surface assets.
5. Simultaneous / multi-vessel operations.
6. Wind Farm Support / Gangway / Walk to Work operations.
7. Vessel supported lifting operations within a Safety Zone.

Bridge Manning

There must be two appropriately certified STCW Officers.

If operating on dynamic positioning two fully certified DPOs, one of whom should be a SDPO and the other a DPO, in accordance with IMCA, MTS or equivalent requirements.

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Engine Room Manning

Not in UMS mode during these types of operations.

During these operations all machinery functions are to be actively monitored by the current watch-keeping engineer from a location adjacent to the machinery space to minimise the response time, should physical intervention be required.

A risk assessment can be done to utilize the UMS mode for operations outside safety zone when not in DP mode and operations not involving live subsea infrastructure.

Deck Manning

Subject to Risk Assessment.

Anchor handling and other operations will normally require two qualified seafarers with appropriate operational experience.

5.4.3 Vessel Competency Matrix

The requirements of Operational Levels A, B and C in relation to bridge and engine room personnel are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Vessel competency matrix

MANNING		OPERATIONAL LEVEL		
		A	B	C
2*WATCH KEEPING	Bridge	As per SMC and SMS	2 x STCW	
	Engine Room	UMS (if so classed)	Not UMS (active monitoring) in safety zone	
DYNAMIC POSITIONING (if used)		1 Unlimited DPO (a) and 1 Restricted DPO (b)		2 x unlimited DPO

Notes

(a) Unlimited SDPO or DPO as defined by IMCA, MTS or similar.

(b) Restricted DPO (Junior DPO) to have attended basic DP induction course and, if necessary, to have had appropriate equipment familiarization

5.4.4 Application

The above recommendations relate to most vessels supporting offshore operations.

However, it is recognised that, in certain circumstances, particularly in relation to smaller vessels (typically less than 500 GRT) with restricted accommodation, compliance with these recommendations may not be possible. For these vessel types, additional recommendations and guidelines exist, largely determined by regional requirements.

In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of the vessel owner or manager to ensure that the vessel is adequately manned with appropriate procedures for the function it is required to support.

Relevant flag state and local requirements should always be complied with.

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5.4.5 Mobile Offshore Unit (MOU) Moving Operations

Due to the nature of MOU moving operations, all participating personnel must additionally be familiar with the aspects of such operations as outlined below:

5.4.5.1. **Senior Watch Keepers in Charge of Anchor Handling (AH) Operations**

Senior watch keepers in charge of AH operations must have relevant experience and competency.

Watch keepers with no previous AH experience should perform at least 5 MOU moving operations accompanied by an AH experienced Master, or a suitable combination of rig moves and simulator training in accordance with training matrix and experience log, before they may command an AH assignment. AH experience gained in a chief officer role is acceptable.

5.4.5.2. **Officers**

Officers involved in AH operations must have relevant experience and competency. Officers must have a full understanding of all safety aspects of anchor-handling, especially regarding safe use and limitations of equipment.

If supervising AH work on deck, the officer must have AH experience and be competent in AH procedures and guidelines, AH equipment set-up and function, and be familiar with associated hazards and risks.

Officers working on the bridge during AH and who may have tasks affecting the safety of those working on deck shall be familiar with AH deck work operations and the associated hazards and risks.

5.4.5.3. **Vessel Winch Operators**

The Vessel winch operators should be familiar and competent with winch-controls, operations, safety systems, functions and limitations.

The Ship Owner should be able to document that appropriate on the job training or a course has been given. A training certificate should be issued by Ship Owner or a course centre.

5.4.5.4. **Deck Crew**

Personnel assigned independent work on deck during AH operations must be familiar with current guidelines and procedures for this, and for AH safety. The “clear deck policy” must be complied with. They should also be familiar with the use of UHF/VHF radio.

Able seafarers with no previous AH experience must be trained in guidelines, procedures and safe equipment use before assignment to independent AH work on deck. All training is to be documented.

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5.4.5.5. **Tow Master**

The organisation providing or employing a person to undertake the function of Tow Master is responsible for ensuring that the individual has the competency and experience to fulfil this function.

It is recommended that persons supporting this function should have participated in the moving of mobile offshore units in the following capacities:

1. In relation to semi-submersible units, acted as a stand-alone Barge Supervisor on such units for a minimum of three rig moves or as assistant Tow Master for a minimum of five rig moves. Both roles should be supervised by an experienced Tow Master.
2. In relation to self-elevating units, acted as a stand-alone Barge Supervisor on such units for a minimum of three rig moves or as an assistant Tow Master for a minimum of five rig moves. Both roles should be supervised by an experienced Tow Master.

Recent experience gained as Master or Senior Watch Keeper on vessels which have been engaged in anchor handling operations of a similar nature should also be considered when assessing the competency of a Tow Master. In this context “recent experience” should be taken as being within the previous three years, though earlier experience may also be considered if particularly relevant.

In addition, persons acting as Tow Master should have:

1. Relevant marine knowledge & experience.
2. Where necessary, appropriate qualifications which may include STCW certification.
3. Full understanding of the proposed operation, including any particular risks which might be involved.
4. Appropriate knowledge of Geotechnical/Soil Conditions.
5. Knowledge of Offshore Meteorology and Forecasting.
6. Knowledge of DP Operations, if relevant.
7. Knowledge of relevant international and local rules and regulations.
8. Ability to communicate effectively in English and/or local working language.

5.4.5.6. **Marine Representative**

The organisation providing or employing a person to undertake the function of Marine Representative is responsible for ensuring that:

1. The individual has the competency and experience to fulfil the function as it relates to the particular operation.
2. The terms of reference for the role are fully understood.
3. The individual has been adequately briefed and has been provided with all relevant information.

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5.4.5.7. **Dual Responsibilities & Reporting Functions**

Dual Responsibilities & Reporting lines must be clarified and a single line of communication to be established. The Master has overall responsibility for the safety of their crew and vessel in all operations conducted on the vessel, including simultaneous operations.

5.4.5.8. **MOU Winch Operator**

MOU Winch Operators must be competent in the winch operation, safety systems, functions and limitations of the system. MOU Owner shall be able to document that appropriate on the job training or a course has been provided.

5.4.5.9. **Crane Operators (including Subsea Functions)**

Crane Operators must be certified according to current regulations and competent in safety systems, functions and limitations of the crane.

Operational experience with cranes installed on the vessel or MOU shall be logged, including operation of any heave compensation or other particular features provided.

Vessel or MOU Owner shall be able to document that appropriate training has been given. For examples of training requirements refer to Offshore Mechanical Handling Equipment Committee (OMHEC) standard or local equivalent.

5.5 Dangerous & Noxious Liquid Cargoes

The carriage and handling of dangerous and noxious liquid cargoes by ship is governed by IMO and implemented by the different Flag States and Coastal States.

There are no specified competence standards covering the freight of dangerous and noxious liquid cargoes on Offshore Supply Vessels.

Recommended competency levels for handling these cargoes are as follows:

5.5.1 Vessel Personnel

Masters, Chief Engineers and certain other Officers should have received suitable training relating to Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) requirements which includes the relevant parts of the IBC Code as referred to in A.673 (16) (Guidelines for the transport and handling of limited amounts of hazardous and noxious liquid substances on offshore support vessels) appropriate to the vessels to which they are assigned, the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG) Code and the OSV (Code for the Transport and Handling of Hazardous and Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk on Offshore Support Vessels) Code where relevant.

5.5.2 On Shore Personnel

Personnel working at the onshore base or on the offshore facility with responsibility for declaration and shipment of dangerous or noxious liquid cargoes should have received similar training so that they have a full knowledge and understanding of the requirements that vessels must comply with when carrying such cargoes.

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5.5.3 Table 2. Competence Requirements

Role	Adequate English	IMDG Code	Lifting Equipment	Slinger Course	Cargo Handling	Bulk Materials Handling	Materials Management	Industrial Personnel - Shore	Industrial Personnel	Notes and Additional Requirements
Operations Managers Shipping Managers Sailing Managers Vessel Coordinators Logistics Coordinators		X	X		X					1. Shall preferably have a maritime background (nautical studies, mate, Master) 2. The defined operation manager, shipping manager, sailing manager, vessel coordinator or logistics coordinator is responsible for coordination and follow-up of all loading or offloading operations involving offshore service vessels at a base, quay or tank installation.
Quay Foremen	X	X	X			X	X			
Personnel packing goods in containers		X*	X		X					*IMDG required if handling goods classified as dangerous goods.
Crane Operators			X	X						
Personnel involved in cargo handling		X		X						
Personnel involved in bulk cargo handling					X					1. Familiar with identification of hazardous chemicals and requirements for testing. 2. Safe handling of bulk cargo and hazardous chemicals. 3. Handling and containment of spills, and familiar with related external notification procedures.
Installation Maritime Coordinator					X					Training shall include vessel types, functioning of manoeuvring and/or positioning systems, vessel's characteristics and limitations (including weather restrictions and vessel load capacity) and maritime terminology.
Installation cargo handling		X								
Personnel involved in tank cleaning								X	X	1. Familiar with identification of hazardous chemicals and requirements for testing. 2. Safe operation in tanks and confined areas 3. Handling and containment of spills, and familiar with related external notification procedures.
Other industrial personnel									X	As identified by coordinators of their operation and their requirements for the service they perform.

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