

ARTICLE

Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers - 2026 Edition

Number: 6.65.0011



Code of Safe Working Practices
for Merchant Seafarers
2026 Edition

SPECIFICATIONS

Made in: United Kingdom

HS Code: 49011000



DESCRIPTION

The code has undergone a comprehensive redesign and modernisation process aimed at improving its structure, ensure consistency, and simplify its language. The use of recurring design features will facilitate quicker reference and enhance overall clarity and ease of understanding.

One notable change is the transition of the physical format from loose-leaf to bound. This shift is intended to enhance the end-user experience, eliminate the need for annual manual updates, and provide a more cost-effective and sustainable solution.

Industry played a central role throughout the review process. Industry focus groups, representing diverse user groups, were convened to assess concepts of design and address feedback. Further engagement on the proposed adaptation was made with industry through holding a stakeholder engagement exercise. This collaboration between MCA and industry effort led to collective agreement on actions required to reform the code into a new edition.

Key features

COSWP is a comprehensive set of guidelines and best practices designed to ensure the safety and health of seafarers working on merchant vessels. It provides practical guidance on safe working practices and procedures to be followed on board ships to minimise risks and prevent accidents.

It is a statutory requirement for the current edition of the code to be carried on board all UK ships, other than fishing vessels and pleasure craft. The code contains essential health and safety information, and it must be made available to any seafarer on board the ship who requests it.

Key updates in the 2026 Edition include:

- NEW Chapter 34: Safety considerations for seafarers while a ship is being repaired in a shipyard
- Updated Chapter 22 (Annex 22.1): Enhanced standards for means of access
- Revised Chapter 11: Guidance on safe movement on board during extreme weather conditions
- Chapters 9, 10, 12 and 15: Improvements including a new illustration of a hammer suspension system (Chapter 12)
- Updated references to current legislation across the code