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Marine Circular No. 05/2026

To: Owners, Managers, Operators, Masters and Crew Members of (a) Virgin Islands ships and (b) non-Virgin Islands ships in Virgin Islands waters

SUMMARY

This Circular sets out VISMA's requirements for implementing the amendments to the STCW Code adopted by IMO Resolution MSC.560(108). The amendments added mandatory competence on contributing to the prevention of and response to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, to table A-VI/1-4 on Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities (PSSR). They entered into force on 1 January 2026.

This document should be read in conjunction with Marine Circular 03/2024 "The STCW Convention and the Issue of Endorsements Attesting To The Recognition Of A Certificate Of Competency" published on 16 September 2024.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

This Circular was created in accordance with:

STCW Convention, 1978, as amended, regulation VI/1;
STCW Code, section A-VI/1 and table A-VI/1-4;
IMO Resolution MSC.560(108); and
UK MCA MGN 718 (M+F), 2026 IMO Amendment to PSSR.

1. Application

The requirements apply to every seafarer who is required under STCW regulation VI/1 to receive basic training or instruction in PSSR. They apply regardless of rank to seafarers employed or engaged as part of a ship's complement with designated safety or pollution-prevention duties.

2. New PSSR training from 1 January 2026

PSSR training completed on or after 1 January 2026 must include the competence and learning outcomes introduced by MSC.560(108). A PSSR certificate issued on or after that date should therefore provide evidence that the seafarer completed training incorporating the amended table A-VI/1-4.

3. Seafarers who completed PSSR before 1 January 2026

A pre-2026 PSSR certificate remains valid and does not need to be reissued. However, the holder must complete supplementary training covering the new competence no later than 30 June 2027. Full repetition of the PSSR course is not required where the supplementary training has been completed and suitable evidence is available.

4. Acceptable training routes

A PSSR course completed on or after 1 January 2026 that incorporates the amended table A-VI/1-4.

A supplementary course or e-learning module clearly identified as covering MSC.560(108) and the amended table A-VI/1-4.

A company-developed supplementary training programme covering all the learning outcomes in section 6 and supported by the records described in section 7.

Company familiarisation, policy briefings or human-resources training may be used for supplementary training where they address all the required learning outcomes, and the company can demonstrate that each affected seafarer completed the training.

5. Minimum learning outcomes

Training used to demonstrate compliance must address, at a minimum:

- the meaning and continuum of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault;
- consequences for victims, perpetrators, bystanders and stakeholders, and effects on safety, health and well-being;
- contributing factors, including abuse of power, discrimination, stress, isolation, fatigue, drugs and alcohol;
- identification of violence and harassment;
- appropriate intervention and reporting action; and
- basic trauma-informed response and appropriate support for a victim, bystanders and self.

6. Evidence and company records

The seafarer should retain the original or verifiable digital evidence of completion. The company should maintain a training record for each affected seafarer. Evidence should state the seafarer's name, provider or company, course or module title, completion date, delivery method, and a reference to MSC.560(108) or the amended STCW table A-VI/1-4.

Evidence must be available on request during Flag State surveys or inspections, Port State Control, ISM audits, and applications for the issue or revalidation of relevant certificates. The company's records should include the syllabus or module description, the seafarer's name, completion date, delivery method and evidence that understanding was checked. Training records should be retained for the duration of the seafarer's service with the company and for at least five years thereafter, without prejudice to any longer period required by law or company policy.

7. Responsibilities

Companies must identify affected seafarers, arrange suitable training by the applicable deadline, maintain records and ensure onboard procedures support reporting and response.

Masters must promote awareness of onboard reporting routes and ensure allegations are handled promptly, confidentially and without retaliation, consistent with applicable law and company procedures.

Seafarers must complete the required training, retain evidence and apply the practices and procedures taught.

Issued by the Virgin Islands Shipping and Maritime Authority.

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