

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SHIPPING		
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This is to bring forth some ideas, considerations of which have become essential with the changing scenario in the shipping industry. You are very well aware that the examinations under the MEO 1998 rules have already been commenced and are in the process of changing over from the old examination system to the new examination system. There has been a paradigm shift in philosophy regarding the importance and methodology of each grade of certificate of competency vis--vis the Indian and the world shipping manning scenario. Since you are aware of the change in terminology for the grades and the complexity with which the examinations were conducted earlier, the following should be of interest to you and compliance after a generous thought:

(1) The Class IV examinations (new) are now devised in a way whereby the candidate should be able to touch the topic with logic and knowledge. He is not expected to either give an exhaustive and learned answer to the questions, or an accurate and saturated in detailed technical contents. With the limited experience that the candidate has, and taking into consideration his academic background it would be futile to test his academic and technical in-depth knowledge. The questions are so devised as to test his logic, comprehension, ability to think of an alternative practical solution and basically to spell out a thinking process. The questions are hence so devised that there is no scope for exhaustive literary pursuits.

(2) For years the passing rate for Class IV oral under the (old) examination system has been around 70%. These candidates generally filled up the bulk of manning in Indian and foreign companies, since they were duly certificated people. The present exercise of conducting the Class IV (new) would also be on the same line as they would have had the necessary academic background a structured workshop and on board training, a mandatory preparatory course and a necessary screen test or assessment in the form of a MEO examination.

(3) The entire process of conducting the examination now is in the form of a screen test whereas in statistical terms, the "mesh size" has to be determined by the examiner. If the "mesh size" is increased and the stringency reduced then the objective of passing more number of candidates will be achieved. However, the mesh also has boundaries of quality and competency. It is thus very necessary to ensure that the levels of quality and competency are maintained even while increasing the mesh size. In other words even if the objective to pass more number of candidates is set forth, the levels of quality are not to be compromised with. To that extent the present examination system for Class IV (new) which should be on par with the Class IV (old) in terms of levels of competency, has now been

modified in a manner in which the levels of competency required are as those under STCW 95 and yet would not require a recourse to voluminous theoretical inputs as under the (old) examination system. It is for this reason that the candidate now has to write all 10 questions compulsorily, along with a functional approach with additional subjects.

This whole exercise has been to bring in objectivity in the examination system and transparency in the methods of practice. It also goes without saying that the passing rate must be commensurate with all the additional efforts put in. This objective factor, thinking and philosophy must be brought to the notice of all the examiners so that they have a pragmatic approach to this entire examination process and are more pro-active in their work. If at any time there is a need for better understanding of this philosophy then we would have no hesitation in explaining the new direction for the examination system. In months to come, this entire process will take its final shape and by 2001 it would have undergone a dramatic change. We would thus request that there should be close interaction between the examiner of engineers, the local examiners and the chief examiner of engineers at the Directorate to be able to succeed.