



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

The new Boatmaster's Licence – Guidance on the Application provisions for Existing Masters of Vessels

Notice to Masters and owners of all vessels operating commercially on inland waterways, and in limited coastal areas

This notice should be read in conjunction with MSN 1808 "The Merchant Shipping (Inland Waterways and Limited Coastal Operations) (Boatmasters' Qualifications and Hours of Work) Regulations 2006 – Structure and Requirements", and MGN 334 "New National Boatmaster's Licence – Local Information and Local Knowledge"

PLEASE NOTE:-

Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel and you should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

Summary

- New Regulations governing Boatmasters' Licences come into force in early 2007 and introduce new requirements for those operating commercial vessels on inland waterways and in limited coastal areas].
- "Inland Waterways" means categorised waters A to D as defined and listed in Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) 1776, and any non-categorised inland waters.
- "Limited coastal areas" means not more than 3 miles from land, nor more than 15 miles from the point of departure, exclusive of any categorised waters.
- This MGN gives information about how existing masters/skippers should apply for the new Boatmasters' Licence within the transitional period. It applies to:-
 - passenger ship operators holding an MCA (passenger) boatmasters' licence issued under the Merchant Shipping (Local Passenger Vessels)(Masters' Licences and Hours, Manning and Training) Regulations 1993;
 - non-passenger vessel operators who do not hold a current licence;
 - operators of small, non-seagoing passenger vessels who do not hold a current licence.

(Cont)

- Arrangements for Watermen and Lightermen on the River Thames have been notified separately.
- The new Boatmasters' Licence does not apply to pleasure vessels or self-drive hire boats.

1 Introduction/ Background

1.1 A new Boatmaster's Licence is being introduced for those operating vessels within inland waterways, and to sea within specified limits. The regulations for the new licence come into force in early 2007. The structure, requirements and application procedures for new entrants to the inland waterways industry are explained in Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) 1808. This Marine Guidance Note (MGN) explains the application provisions for established boatmasters/skippers who:-

- hold a valid old-style MCA (passenger) boatmasters' licence;
- hold a higher qualification (such as an STCW command certificate of competency);
- hold a valid local licence issued by a harbour or navigation authority (eg a "boatman's licence"), and want to apply for a Boatmaster's Licence under these provisions ;
- do not hold a licence but have been operating as a master for at least **6 months** in water categories A or B, and at least **12 months** in categories C or D.

1.2 The new Boatmasters' Licence (BML) replaces the previous passenger boatmasters' licence that was introduced in 1993.

1.3 MCA's policy is that no-one who has been serving as a master for a reasonable period before the coming into force of the 2006 BML regulations, should be disadvantaged by the new requirements. Serving masters will normally be able to obtain a BML that enables them to continue in their current type, and area of, operation.

1.4 All existing boatmasters/skippers must complete the application form for existing boatmasters/masters of vessels (**MSF 4362**). This is available via the MCA website (www.mcga.gov.uk) under Guidance and Regulations/Inland Waterways, or on request from MCA.

2 Definitions

2.1 For the purpose of this MGN, the following definitions apply:-

"inland waterways" means categorised waters A to D as defined and listed in Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) 1776, and any non-categorised inland waters.

"limited coastal areas" means not more than 3 miles from land, nor more than 15 miles from the point of departure, exclusive of any categorised waters.

"existing masters" means

- passenger ship operators holding an MCA (passenger) boatmasters' licence issued under the Merchant Shipping (Local Passenger Vessels)(Masters' Licences and Hours, Manning and Training) Regulations 1993;
- non-passenger vessel operators who do not hold a current licence;
- operators of small, non-seagoing passenger vessels who do not hold a current licence.

"in service" means working in a deck capacity on board a relevant vessel in inland waterways;

“**a day**” means at least the duration of an average working day for the type of vessel and operation, spent working onboard a vessel in service, in any 24 hour period”.

“**qualifying service**” means service as the master of a vessel.

“**small passenger vessel**” means a vessel that carries not more than 12 passengers, and does not go to sea.

“**transitional period**” means one of the transitional periods set out in Section 12 below.

3 Existing Boatmasters/Skippers holding a valid old-style MCA boatmasters’ licence, or a locally issued licence

3.1 Candidates holding a valid old style MCA boatmasters' licence either for passenger operations, or in compliance with the MCA Code rules, will be issued with the new licence when they next apply to revalidate their existing licence. Assuming that the revalidation criteria for their existing licence are met, the application process will normally be a purely paper exercise, and a new licence will be issued which will enable the holder to continue their current operations in their current area, as entitled by their existing licence. That licence must be submitted with the completed application form **(MSF 4362)**.

3.2 Some navigation and statutory harbour authorities have traditionally issued local licences or certificates for operating non-seagoing vessels. For vessels carrying no more than 12 passengers and under 24m load line length, such licences remain valid for the specified area of operation. Alternatively, those holding such certificates will be able to apply to convert them to a new Boatmasters’ Licence. Applications for recognition of these local qualifications should be supported by a covering letter from the issuing authority, detailing the limitations of the qualifications and area(s) of operation. These applications must be made by the end of the relevant transitional period shown in paragraph 12.2 below.

3.3 If an applicant wishes to change, or extend, his/her area or/and type of operation, beyond that authorised by their old licence, an on-board assessment by an MCA, or MCA-approved, examiner may be required.

4 Candidates holding alternative, or higher, qualifications, licences or certificates

4.1 Candidates entering the inland waterways industry with alternative, or higher (eg STCW), relevant qualifications and/or experience, or prior professional/academic achievement or technical training, may be allowed a reduction in the service requirements for an appropriate boatmasters licence, or exemption from all or part of the assessment. These candidates will be considered on their merits upon application, on a case by case basis.

5 Existing masters/skippers with no current licence

5.1 Many skippers of non-passenger vessels, and small passenger vessels, on inland waterways have operated with no licence because they have not been required to have one before. However, under the 2006 Boatmasters’ Licence Regulations, these operators must hold a valid Boatmasters’ Licence, or an acceptable alternative listed in Annex 1 of MSN 1808.

5.2 Until the end of the relevant transitional period (see section 12 of this notice), established inland waterways masters with no licence can apply for a new BML, on the basis of their existing skills and experience.

Section 6 below sets out the criteria for applying on this basis. Licences issued under these arrangements will allow individuals to continue to work in their current capacity and operating area.

6 Criteria for previously unlicensed operators to get a Boatmaster's Licence

6.1 In order to obtain a BML under the arrangements in this MGN, candidates who have not previously held a licence must be able to demonstrate knowledge about the type and operation of vessel for which the licence is required, and the practical skills needed. Additionally a candidate will be required to:

- provide evidence of qualifying service in a relevant vessel;
- complete basic safety training in Personal Survival, First Aid and Fire Safety; and
- provide evidence of medical fitness.

6.2 A practical and oral onboard assessment (as detailed in MSN 1808 "...Structure and Requirements") may be required. However, candidates who can provide evidence of substantial experience may not have to undergo any assessment before issue of their Licence, unless they wish to change or extend the scope of the licence beyond the range of that experience.

6.3 In addition to the above, a candidate may be required to demonstrate local knowledge (for example of specific operating conditions, navigational features) where required for an area of operation, as well as awareness of local navigational rules. Details of those areas requiring specific local knowledge are published in MGN 334 "New National Boatmaster's Licence - Local Information and Local Knowledge".

6.4 Applicants must provide evidence of experience in the industry, in the form of testimonials where possible. These may be supplemented by a statement of service validated by the master of the vessel/s served on, or by a responsible person who should hold a managerial position within the company served.

6.5 Testimonials should be submitted in the format shown at Annex 1, and will be accepted from:-

- a representatives of the navigation or port authority(ies) for the area in which the individual has worked;
- a shipper or other customer of the individual who can verify that the applicant has the relevant experience;
- other operators who have been supported in their own application by one of the above, at the discretion of the MCA;
- trade associations;
- any other responsible person with who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of MCA that they can verify that the applicant has the relevant experience;

6.6 The name/s and detail/s of the vessel/s served on must be entered in Section 5 of the application form (MSF 4362) This should reflect the entries in the candidate's record of service (where available).

6.7 Each application made under these provisions will be considered on its merits. Candidates who have substantial difficulty in providing testimonials should contact MCA.

7 Qualifying service

7.1 The following table shows the level of qualifying service required to obtain a BML under the conditions described in sections 5 and 6 above, possibly without the need for an on-board assessment. This is reflected in the fact that the qualifying service requirements are higher than for new entrants.

CATEGORIES A and B		CATEGORIES C and D	
Licence for Generic Skills			
At least 12 months in service overall including at least 120 working days	Vessels >24m in length	At least 36 months in service overall, including at least 360 working days	
	Vessels < 24m in length	At least 24 months in service overall, including at least 240 working days	
Towing and Pushing Operations			
At least 9 of the overall 12 months, including 90 working days, to have been in towing/pushing operations	Vessels >24m in length	At least 18 of the overall 36 months, including 180 working days, to have been in towing/pushing operations	
	Vessels < 24m in length	At least 12 of the overall 24 months, including 120 working days, to have been in towing/pushing operations.	
Cargo Operations (Including Dangerous Goods) and Dredging Operations			
The whole 12 months, including 120 working days, to have been in dry, or fluid, cargo operations, or dredging operations.	Vessels >24m in length	At least 30 of the overall 36 months, including 300 working days, to have been in dry cargo, fluid cargo, or dredging operations.	
	Vessels < 24m in length	At least 18 of the overall 24 months, including 240 working days, to have been in dry or fluid cargo, or dredging, operations.	
Small Passenger Vessels			
The whole 12 months, including 120 working days, to have been spent as master of a small passenger vessel.	-	At least 30 of the overall 36 months, including 300 working days, to have been spent as master of a small passenger vessel.	

7.2 Candidates with qualifying service/experience of less than shown in 7.1 above, but within the following limits, will be considered on a case by case basis. They will have to undergo at least a partial practical and oral assessment. An MCA examiner will determine the extent of the assessment.

CATEGORY A and B	CATEGORY C/D	
Licence for Generic Skills		
More than 6 but less than 12 months in overall service, including 60 to 120 working days.	Vessels > 24m in length	More than 18 but less than 36 months in overall in service, including 180 – 360 working days.
	Vessels < 24m in length	More than 12 months but less than 24 months in overall service, including 120 to 240 working days.
Towing and Pushing		
More than 3 months but less than 9 months of overall service, including 30 to 90, working days have been in towing/pushing operations	Vessels > 24m in length	More than 12 but less than 18 months of overall service, including 120 to 180 working days have been in towing/pushing operations
	Vessels < 24m in length	More than 6 but less than 12 months of overall service, including 60 to 120 working days have been in towing/pushing operations
Cargo Operations (including Dangerous Goods) Dredging Operations		
More than 6 but less than 12 months of overall service, including 60 to 120 working days have been in dry cargo, fluid cargo, or dredging operations	Vessels > 24m in length	More than 24 but less than 30 months of overall service, including 240 to 300 working days, have been in dry cargo, fluid cargo, or dredging operations.
	Vessels < 24m in length	More than 12 but less than 24 months of overall service, including 120 to 240 working days, have been in dry cargo, fluid cargo, or dredging operations.
Small Passenger Vessel		
More than 6 but less than 12 months of overall service, including 60 to 120 working days, to have been spent as master of a small passenger vessel.	-	More than 24 but less than 30 months of overall service, including 240 to 300 working days, to have been spent as master of a small passenger vessel.

7.3 Candidates with less qualifying service than shown in the table above will count as new entrants, and have to comply with the full requirements for a new BML, as laid down in MSN 1808. Any appropriate training already done will be taken into account.

7.4 However, for those who operate:-

- small passenger vessels that do not go to sea; or,
- other commercial, non-passenger, vessels under 24m in length that do not go to sea,

the qualifications listed in Section 26 of the Inland Waters Small Passenger Boat Code may be accepted as alternatives to a BML. They will be valid **only** for these types of operation. Operators who choose the option of one of these alternative qualifications must meet its full requirements. (eg 12 months experience.)

7.5 Operators of vessels certificated under the MCA Codes (shortly to be superseded under the Small Commercial Vessel and Pilot Boat (SCV) Code) are not affected by new BML regulations.

8 Ancillary Safety Training

8.1 Ancillary safety training is an integral part of the competency requirements for the new Boatmasters Licence, and must be undertaken by **all candidates** who have not previously held one. There are three elements:

1. Personal Survival/Water Safety
2. First Aid;
3. Fire Safety.

8.2 Safety training in all three topics should be completed before applying for a new Boatmasters' Licence. However, where the candidate has not previously attended any training in one or more of the above, but otherwise fulfils the criteria for issue of a licence, an **interim** licence will be issued, valid for 12 months. Once the appropriate safety training courses have been completed, a full licence will be issued on submission of certificates of attendance and successful completion of the training.

8.3 If the safety training has not been completed within the 12 months validity of the interim licence, a candidate may apply for one further 12 month interim licence. In **all** cases, safety training must be completed within 24 months of issue of the first provisional licence. If not, the licence will be withdrawn and the candidate will have to undertake a full assessment, in addition to completing the relevant safety training before a full licence will be issued.

8.4 All ancillary safety training required for issue of an MCA Boatmaster's Licence must be completed at an MCA approved training centre or other organisation accredited by the MCA for delivery of the relevant course. Information about safety training will be available on the MCA website (or on request for those who do not have access to the internet).

8.5 Appropriate safety training courses already undertaken by a candidate will be taken into account. In these cases, candidates may be required to demonstrate at the assessment, a satisfactory practical knowledge of action to be taken in relevant emergency situations that could arise on their vessel. Details of previous safety training should be specified on the BML application form for existing masters of vessels (MSF 4362).

9 Medical Fitness

9.1 All candidates for the new Boatmasters' Licence must meet statutory medical standards, and submit an **ML5 medical certificate and report form**, completed by their General Practitioner. A Seafarers medical fitness certificate (ENG 1), or non-UK certificate recognised as equivalent, is also acceptable.

9.2 The ML5 medical report form is available from the MCA website (www.mcga.gov.uk) under Seafarer Information/Health and Safety/Seafarer Medical Information. Alternatively, it can be issued on request from any MCA Marine Office. Notes on the form explain the procedure if any medical condition is indicated

9.3 During the transitional period, for issue of the first licence only, the following will be accepted as equivalent to an ML5 for evidence of medical fitness:

- .1 Civil Aviation Authority Commercial Pilot's Licence;
- .2 Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Diving Medical Certificate;
- .3 DVLA Group 2 Driver's Licence;
- .4 PLA medical report.

For .1 to .4 above, the following will also apply:

- The validity of the evidence of medical fitness would be that of the "parent" licence – e.g. one year in the case of a CAA commercial pilot's licence.
- In the case of the HSE diving medical and the DVLA Group 2 licence, evidence of satisfactory colour vision checked by an optician will be required.
- A declaration will be required, signed by the applicant confirming the following:
 1. the contact details of the examining doctor, their consent for the MCA to obtain further medical information if required, and the date of the examination; and
 2. that they have not had any medical conditions requiring hospital admission, regular prescribed medication, or continuing medical surveillance, since the alternative medical was carried out; and
 3. that they have no conditions limiting strength, stamina, or flexibility, such that they could not cope with emergencies on board, such as recovering someone who has fallen overboard or fighting a fire; and
 4. that they will seek revised medical fitness certification and submit this to the MCA issuing office if the licence or certificate accepted as evidence of medical fitness is revoked for any reason, or if they suffer any illness or accident affecting their fitness to operate the vessel, during the period of the licence/certificate.

10 Application procedure

10.1 Existing boatmasters/skippers must complete the relevant application form (MSF4362) which is available from the MCA website under Guidance and Regulations/Inland Waterways/New Boatmaster's Licence. It can also be obtained on request from the Registry of Shipping and Seamen (see below), or any MCA Marine Office. Completed forms must be sent to:-

Registry of Shipping and Seamen at Cardiff (address shown on the application form), together with:-

- the applicant's current licence (if held);
- evidence of identity
- testimonials;
- evidence of ancillary safety training (if applicable);
- evidence of medical fitness;
- the appropriate fee; and
- two passport sized photographs.

Full instructions about what documents to send are on the form.

10.2 Applicants required to undergo a practical assessment will be issued with a 'notice of assessment' together with contact details for arranging the assessment.

11 Practical and Oral Assessment

11.1 As stated in Section 7, some candidates will be required to undergo an assessment by an MCA, or MCA-appointed, examiner. A full assessment may not always be necessary, and the examiner will determine what aspects of a candidate's skills and knowledge need to be assessed. This assessment will take place on board the candidate's usual vessel or a vessel of similar type and size.

11.2 The syllabus is the same as for new entrants, and will be tested by demonstration of practical skills and oral assessment of underpinning knowledge. The oral assessment may include questions on practical skills for which there is no opportunity to demonstrate during the practical assessment, and elements of basic safety included in the ancillary safety training courses, with an emphasis on practical application of the underpinning knowledge.

11.3 The full syllabus is available on the MCA website (www.mcga.gov.uk) under Guidance and Regulations/Inland Waterways/New Boatmaster's Licence. However, the assessment will be tailored to the candidates type of vessel and area of operation.

11.4 The assessment will be conducted by an MCA examiner from the applicant's nearest MCA Marine Office, or an MCA-approved examiner. A list of local MCA Marine Offices is at Annex 2 for information.

12 Transitional periods and time limits

Operators who hold current (old-style) MCA boatmaster's licences

12.1 Pre-2007 MCA (passenger) boatmaster's licences will remain valid until their next revalidation. Before that date, they must be submitted with application form MSF 4362, in order to be converted to a new BML. The new licence will entitle the holder to continue operating as authorised by his/her previous licence. (The last of the pre-2007 boatmaster's licences to be issued will cease to be valid in December 2011).

Operators who hold licences issued by local harbour or navigation authorities (Other than the Port of London Authority)

12.2 Operators who have an existing local licence that is valid on 1 January 2007 must apply for a new BML, if they wish to obtain one under transitional arrangements, by the following dates:-

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| (a) freight-carrying vessels of 24 metres or more load line length | 30th September 2007 |
| (b) workboats of 24 metres or more load line length | 31st March 2008 |
| (c) small passenger vessels* | 31st December 2008 |
| (d) freight-carrying vessels and workboats of less than 24 metres load line length* | 31st March 2009 |

* Alternative qualifications are accepted for operation of these vessels – see MSN 1808, Annex 1.

Operators who do not hold a current licence

12.3 Masters who do not hold a licence (and are covered by Sections 5, 6 and 7 above), and wish to take advantage of these arrangements to apply for a new BML, must apply by the following dates:-

Freight-carrying vessels of 24 metres or more load line length	30th September 2007
Workboats of 24 metres or more load line length	31st March 2008
Small passenger vessels*	30th September 2008
Freight-carrying vessels and workboats of less than 24 metres load line length*	31st March 2009

* Alternative qualifications are accepted for operation of these vessels – see MSN 1808, Annex 1.

13 Further Information

13.1 Further information about the contents of this Notice can be obtained as follows:-

- Merchant Shipping Notice 1808 The Merchant Shipping (Inland Waterways and Limited Sea Operations)(Boatmaster' Qualifications and Hours of Work) Regulations 2006 - Structure and Requirements;
- Marine Guidance Note 334 New National Boatmasters' Licence - Local Information and Local Knowledge; and
- from the MCA at the address given below.

More Information

Inland Waterways Team
Shipping Safety Branch
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/16
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel : +44 (0) 23 8032 9209/507
Fax : +44 (0) 23 8032 9251
e-mail: inlandwatersstds@mcga.gov.uk

General Inquiries: 24 Hour Infoline
infoline@mcga.gov.uk
0870 600 6505

MCA Website Address: www.mcga.gov.uk

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*An executive agency of the
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Annex 1

BOATMASTER LICENCE TESTIMONIAL

To be submitted on the headed paper of the organization represented.

This is to certify that:

Full NameDate of Birth

Place of Birth

has been known to me, or my organization, as a commercial operator of inland waterway vessels, as specified below between __/__/__ and __/__/__.

During this period of service, Mr/Ms..... has served in the following capacity(s):

Master for ____ months/years;

Mate with duties as helmsman for _____ months/years

Other relevant duties (please specify)

_____ for _____ months/years

_____ for _____ months/years

Vessel Name:

Registered (or Identification Number)

Overall Length (in m)

Breadth (in m)

Tonnage: (dwt)

Type of operation:

Passenger

Dry cargo

Bulk liquids

Hazardous Cargoes

Tugs/Pusher craft

Other

Area(s) of operation:

SignedName (Print)

Master or position in Company

Name of Company

Company Stamp

Date.....

Annex 2

List of MCA Marine Offices

<p>Aberdeen Marine Office Marine House Blaikies Quay Aberdeen AB11 5EZ</p>	<p>Tel: 01224 597 900 Fax: 01224 571 920</p>
<p>Belfast Marine Office Bregenz House Quay Street, Bangor BT20 5ED</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9147 5310 Fax: 028 9147 5321</p>
<p>Hull Marine Office (Beverley) Crosskill House Mill Lane Beverley North Humberside HU17 9JB</p>	<p>Tel: 01482 866 606 Fax: 01482 869 989</p>
<p>Cardiff Marine Office Anchor Court Keen Road Cardiff CF 24 5JW</p>	<p>Tel: 02920 448829 Fax: 02920 448810</p>
<p>Dover Marine Office Eastern Region Langdon Battery Swingate Dover CT15 5NA</p>	<p>Tel: 01304 218509 Fax: 01304 218505</p>
<p>Glasgow Marine Office Navy Buildings Eldon Street Inverclyde PA16 7QY</p>	<p>Tel: 01475 553370 Fax: 01475 553357</p>
<p>Great Yarmouth Marine Office Eastern Region 5th Floor, Havenbridge House Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR30 2HZ</p>	<p>Tel: 01493 841300 Fax: 01493 841333</p>

Leith Marine Office Suite 3 Waterside House Leith Edinburgh EH6 6QV	Tel: 0131 554 5488 Fax: 0131 554 7689
Liverpool Marine Office Hall Road West Crosby Liverpool L23 8SY	Tel: 0151 931 6600 Fax: 0151 931 6615
Milford Haven Marine Office Gorsewood Drive Hakin Milford Haven Pembrokeshire SA73 3HB	Tel: 01646 699604 or 01646 697938 Fax: 01646 699606
Orpington Marine Office Central Court, 1B Knoll Rise Orpington Kent BR6 0JA	Tel: 01689 890 400 Fax: 01689 890 446
Newcastle Marine Office Compass House Unit 1, Tyne Dock South Shields Tyne and Wear NE34 9PY	Tel: 0191 496 9900 Fax: 0191 496 9901
Plymouth Marine Office New Fish Market Baylys Wharf, Fish Quay Plymouth PL4 0LH	Tel: 01752 266 211 Fax: 01752 225 826
Shetland Marine Office The Knab Knab Road Lerwick Shetland ZE1 0AX	Tel: 01595 743514 Fax: 01595 696816
Southampton Marine Office Spring Place 105 Commercial Road Southampton SO15 1EG	Tel: 023 8032 9329 Fax: 023 8032 9351

Stockton on Tees Marine Office 3rd Floor, Victoria House Pearson Court Pearson Way Teesdale Park Stockton On Tees TS17 6PT	Tel: 01642 611040 Fax: 01642 614048
Thames (Harwich Marine Office) Hall Lane East Terrace Walton on the Naze Essex CO14 8PY	Tel: 01255 682107 Fax 01255 682108