
Guidance to Operators on the Code of Safe Working Practice for the Construction and Use of 15m length overall (LOA) to Less Than 24m registered length (L) Fishing Vessels

Note to Owners, Operators, Builders, Employers, Skippers and Crews of Fishing Vessels.

Summary

This Guidance outlines to operators their main responsibilities under the Code of Safe Working Practice for the Construction and Use of 15m (LOA) to 24m (L) Fishing Vessels. This document merely outlines statutory requirements and is guidance not a statutory document.

Key Points

- the code enters into force on 23 November 2002.
- the Guidance highlights new responsibilities for operators.
- the Guidance identifies operator's responsibilities for all vessels, with separate sections outlining responsibilities in respect of new and existing vessels.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The primary aim of the Code of Safe Working Practice for the Construction and Use of 15m length overall (LOA) to Less Than 24m registered length (L) Fishing Vessels (**the Code**) is to consolidate safety standards contained in previous regulations.

1.2 As part of the development of the Code, the previous regulations were reviewed with the aim of identifying both outdated and new responsibilities.

1.3 New responsibilities have only been introduced where a need has been demonstrated. These are highlighted in *italics* in this document for ease of identification.

1.4 The new Code is therefore intended to establish a new safety regime in which

safety equipment requirements are in line with best practice and risk assessments are further encouraged.

1.5 This guidance document outlines operator's main responsibilities under the Code which are contained in 5 sections, set out as follows:

- applicable to all vessels;
- applicable to new vessels only;
- applicable to existing vessels only;
- applicable to new and existing vessels in implementing EU Directive 93/103/EC;
- existing vessels flagging in.

1.6 The Code and this Guidance have been developed in co-operation with Industry representatives on the 15-24 metre Safety Group, which is responsible to the Fishing Industry Safety Group and have been subject to the full consultation process.

1.7 The Code is made statutory by the Fishing Vessels (Safety of 15-24 Metre Vessels) Regulations SI 2201 2002.

2.0 OPERATORS RESPONSIBILITIES: ALL VESSELS, NEW AND EXISTING

2.1 Application and Interpretation (Code Chapter 1)

- The vessel should be surveyed, *inspected*, certified, maintained and operated in accordance with the relevant provisions of Code Chapter 1 (see section 1.3);
- The vessel should also comply with any supplementary legislation that is not covered by the Code (see Chapter 1, Foreword);
- The Radio installation should conform with the requirements of The Merchant Shipping (Radio)(Fishing Vessels) Regulations SI 3210 1999 and the vessel's installation should be periodically surveyed in conjunction with the vessel's Fishing Vessel Certification;
- *The vessel and its equipment should be subjected to annual self-certification inspections in accordance with section 1.3.7 of the Code;*
- The vessel should be operated by suitably qualified crew.

2.2 Construction, Watertight and Weathertight Integrity (Code Chapter 2)

- The vessel's hull and equipment should be maintained such that corrosion, damage and wear do not adversely affect compliance with the code;
- Doors and hatches that contribute to the weathertight integrity of the vessel should be maintained in efficient condition and kept closed when not in use;
- Freeing ports should be kept free of gear and any hinged flaps maintained in an operational condition.

2.3 Stability and Freeboard (Code Chapter 3)

- Stability information should be available on board at all times and the vessel should be operated in accordance with this information;
- The vessel's lightship particulars should be verified periodically in service and any

significant modifications to the vessel should be examined by the Certifying Authority to confirm that the vessel's stability has not been adversely affected by the change.

2.4 Mechanical and Electrical installations (Code Chapter 4)

- The vessel's machinery and equipment should be operated correctly and servicing and repairs should be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- *Sea inlet and discharge valves should be operated regularly during monthly drills;*
- The integrity and efficiency of pumping, piping and electrical systems should be verified regularly;
- Emergency sources of power including accumulator batteries should be verified frequently;
- Emergency lighting systems should be function-tested frequently;
- Bilge pumping services to the machinery space and the fish hold should be checked frequently;
- Bilge alarms should be tested prior to and during each voyage;
- The main and auxiliary steering gear and means of control should be periodically tested and maintained to ensure their continued efficiency.

2.5 Fire Protection, Detection & Extinction (Code Chapter 5)

- Fire extinguishing equipment should be serviced in accordance with the manufacturers instructions, kept in their assigned locations and be available for immediate use. Fire pumps, hoses etc should be checked regularly to confirm their continued efficiency;
- Fire doors, fire dampers and similar closures should be maintained in an operational condition;
- Fire detection and alarm systems should be tested frequently;

- Escape hatches and doors should be readily operable from both sides and escape routes kept clear of obstructions;
- Remote stops for machinery, oil fuel systems and ventilation should be tested periodically;
- Gas sensors and alarms (cooking and heating fuels) should be tested periodically;
- Flammable liquids and gas bottles should be stored in appropriate locations;
- The vessel, particularly the machinery spaces should be kept clear of rubbish and combustible wastes.

2.6 Protection of the Crew (Code Chapter 6)

- The owners or operators should ensure that the vessel and its equipment may be operated satisfactorily without undue hazards to the crew;
- A health and safety risk assessment should be carried out for the vessel, its equipment and the crew;
- Suitable protective clothing and equipment should be provided for the crew;
- Working spaces should be adequately lit, well ventilated and maintained at a suitable temperature;
- First aid equipment and medical stores should be carried and maintained up to date.

2.7 Lifesaving Appliances (Code Chapter 7)

- Lifesaving appliances and equipment should be serviced periodically in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- Lifesaving appliances and equipment should be correctly stowed in their assigned locations and be checked before the vessel leaves port and whilst at sea.

2.8 Emergency Procedures (Code Chapter 8)

- The skipper should ensure that the crew are adequately trained in the use and operation of all lifesaving and fire-fighting equipment and monthly drills should be carried out to ensure that the crew understand and are exercised in the duties they have to perform in the event of an emergency.

2.9 Communications and Navigation (Code Chapter 9)

- Lights, shapes and sound-signalling equipment should be provided and maintained for compliance with the collision regulations. The skipper should be familiar with the 'Rules of the Road';
- The skipper should ensure that navigational equipment and up to date nautical publications, as detailed in section 9.4 of the Code, are carried on board the vessel.

2.10 Crew Accommodation (Code Chapter 10)

- The requirements of Chapter 10 relating to crew accommodation arrangements should be maintained e.g. requirements for light, ventilation, water, sanitary facilities, cooking areas, refrigerator and sleeping and locker arrangements.

2.11 Clean Seas (Code Chapter 11)

- The owners and skipper should ensure that pollution prevention measures, appropriate to the vessel's area of operation, are applied;
- Oily waste should be collected and properly disposed of ashore.

3.0 ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NEW VESSELS:

Application and interpretation (Code Chapter 1)

- *The owner should ensure that the vessel is built in accordance with the requirements of the Code, in its entirety, and be surveyed and certified during build by the Certifying Authority. The Certifying Authority should be chosen from the organisations that are identified as a Certifying Authority in section 1.2.5. (See also 1.3.11 of the Code) and all drawings and information, including stability information, should be submitted to the Certifying Authority for review and approval prior to the commencement of build.*

4.0 ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EXISTING VESSELS:

- *The owner should ensure that the vessel is equipped and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Code, as applicable to an existing vessel and be periodically surveyed, inspected and certified by the Certifying Authority.*

5.0 ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF EU DIRECTIVE 93/103/EC FOR:

- new vessels;
- all existing vessels exceeding 15m in length constructed after 1 May 1998; and
- all existing vessels exceeding 18m in length (requirements come into force on 23 November 2002).

5.1 Stability and Freeboard

- The skipper should take precautions to ensure that the vessel maintains adequate stability during all operating conditions and instructions concerning the vessel's stability should be strictly observed.

5.2 Machinery and electrical installations

- When refrigeration plants and compressed air systems are installed they should be well maintained and examined at regular intervals.

5.3 Fire protection, detection and extinction

- Means of escape should be marked appropriately.

5.4 Protection of the crew

- Guard rails, and similar protective arrangements including non-slip working decks and safety lines should be provided to prevent slips, falls or similar accidents

occurring to the crew whilst working or moving around onboard the vessel;

- Lifting equipment should be maintained, tested and examined at regular intervals;
- Hauling gear, winches and related equipment should be maintained and examined at regular intervals and any emergency stops tested regularly;
- *Communications systems should be regularly tested;*
- A lookout should be maintained to warn the crew of heavy oncoming seas;

5.5 Lifesaving appliances

- Means should be provided to recover persons from the water.

5.6 Communications and navigating equipment

- Electronic aids to navigation should be tested frequently and well maintained.

5.7 Crew accommodation

- Measures should be taken to protect non-smokers from tobacco smoke.

6.0 EXISTING VESSELS FLAGGING IN

- *In general terms a vessel wishing to "flag in" should comply with the requirements of the Code applicable to a new vessel (however see section 1.3.13 of the Code)*

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