



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

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## MCA-issued Watch Rating Certificates

**Notice to Owners, Masters, Deck and Engineer Officers and Ratings of Merchant Vessels and those concerned with Maritime Training.**

*This Note should be read with MGN 97 and expires 31 October 2010.*

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### **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**

This Note supplements MGN 97 'Ratings' which is Part 10 of the Training and Certification guidance series.

Many UK-flagged shipping companies issue Watch Rating Certificates on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (**MCA**). Ratings serving with companies who are not authorised can now apply directly to MCA for a Watch Rating Certificate.

The responsibilities of ship owners or operators are emphasised.

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Training and Certification series gives guidance regarding the application of the Merchant Shipping (Training and Certification) Regulations 1997, as amended<sup>1</sup>, (**the Regulations**). The Regulations implement in the United Kingdom the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping 1978, as amended<sup>2</sup>, (**referred to in this document as STCW 95**) and its associated code (**STCW Code**).

1.2 Watch Rating Certificates are issued under STCW and the STCW Code.

1.3 UK shipping companies may apply to the MCA for approval to issue Watch Rating Certificates on its behalf. Many companies carry out this function, however, there are companies that do not.

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<sup>1</sup> SI 1997/348 as amended by SI 1997/1911, SI 2000/836 and SI 2006/89 or any subsequent amendment

<sup>2</sup> Available from the Publications Department, International Maritime Organization, 4 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7SR

This can cause problems for seafarers serving on these vessels who wish to gain Watch Rating status. The following procedures are intended to resolve this problem.

## **2. STCW Watch Rating Certificates**

2.1 This is the only qualification required to work as a Watch Rating on board a vessel. Further experience and training distinguishes the grades of Rating (see MGN 97).

### **2.2 Navigational Watch Rating**

To qualify for a Navigational Watch Rating Certificate STCW Code A-II/4 you must:

- be at least 17 years old
- have completed approved sea-going service in the deck department of:
  - at least six months, or
  - if you have completed a MCA-approved special training programme then this may be reduced to two months (see paragraph 3)
- have completed the basic safety training (see paragraph 4)
- have been assessed as meeting the requirements and performance standards specified in STCW Code A-II/4 (see paragraph 5)
- hold a valid medical fitness certificate (see paragraph 6)

### **2.3 Engine Room Watch Rating**

To qualify for an Engine Room Watch Rating Certificate STCW Code A-III/4 you must:

- be at least 17 years old
- have completed approved sea-going service in the engine room of:
  - at least six months, or
  - if you have completed a MCA-approved special training programme then this may be reduced to two months (see paragraph 3)
- have completed the basic safety training (see paragraph 4)
- have been assessed as meeting the requirements and performance standards specified in STCW Code A-III/4 (see paragraph 5)
- hold a valid medical fitness certificate (see paragraph 6)

## **3. Special Training**

3.1 Two National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (**N/SVQ**) Level 2 are recognised as special training:

- Marine Vessel Support – Deck (MN)
- Marine Vessel Support – Engine Room (MN)

Other courses that can demonstrate delivery of the required competencies and experience in a reduced time scale may be approved by the MCA on a case by case basis.

#### 4. Basic Safety Training

4.1 The basic safety training is made up of five elements:

- Shipboard Familiarisation Training
- STCW basic training - Personal survival techniques
- STCW basic training - Personal safety and social responsibilities
- STCW basic training - Elementary first aid
- STCW basic training - Fire prevention and fire-fighting

4.2 This table summarises the safety training which must be completed by:

- trainee Ratings before they start training, and
- experienced Ratings who need a Watch Rating Certificate

Safety Training Description	STCW 95 Reference	Trainee	Watch Rating Certificate
Shipboard Familiarisation Training	Chapter A-VI/1-1	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>
STCW basic training - Personal survival techniques	Table A-VI/1-1	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes
STCW basic training - Personal safety and social responsibilities	Table A-VI/1-4	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes
STCW basic training - Elementary first aid	Table A-VI/1-3	No	Yes
STCW basic training - Fire prevention and fire-fighting	Table A-VI/1-2	No	Yes

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> If you are a young person sponsored by Job Centres in the UK and are not employed as part of the vessel's normal crew and do not accumulate more than one month service in total on board the vessel, you are not required to take STCW basic training in Personal survival techniques or Personal safety and social responsibilities

<sup>2</sup> You do not need to send any certificates for Shipboard Familiarisation Training when you apply for a Watch Rating Certificate

## 5. Training for Watch Rating Certificates

5.1 **If you do not hold a STCW 78 Watch Rating Certificate** you must be assessed as meeting the requirements and performance standards specified in the STCW Code. Training record sheets must be completed for:

- Navigational Watch Rating STCW Code A-II/4 (see Annex 1), and
- Engine Room Watch Rating STCW Code A-III/4 (see Annex 2)

5.2 Training may only be carried out on UK-flagged vessels.

5.3 Each task should be signed off by an officer holding an appropriate UK Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Equivalent Competency. Any officer signing off a task must record their details in the 'List of Competent Officers' (see Annex 3). Tasks will not be considered to be complete if the signing off signature cannot be matched with a name in the list.

5.4 **If you hold a STCW 78 Watch Rating Certificate** and have sea service in the relevant department, either:

- six months within the last five years, or
- three months within the last year

you may complete the basic safety training to upgrade to a STCW 95 Watch Rating Certificate. No further training is needed.

## 6. Medical Fitness Standards

6.1 You must hold a valid medical fitness certificate, which is either:

- The UK medical fitness certificate, known as an ENG 1, issued by a MCA-approved medical practitioner, or
- A certificate issued by the Administration of any country whose medical fitness certificate is recognised as equivalent to the UK ENG 1

Lists of approved medical practitioners and countries whose seafarer medical standards and medical certificates are considered equivalent are both available in Merchant Shipping Notices (**MSNs**) which are updated annually<sup>3</sup>. Live lists are available from the MCA website.

6.2 The medical fitness standards are required by the Merchant Shipping (Medical Examination) Regulations 2002, as amended<sup>4</sup>. Detail on the application of those regulations is found in a MSN, Seafarer Medical Examination System and Medical and Eyesight Standards<sup>5</sup>. Both MSNs are available from the MCA website.

## 7. Responsibilities of Ship Owners and Operators

7.1 **Shipboard Familiarisation Training:** The ship owner or operator must ensure that all those engaged on the vessel are given Shipboard Familiarisation Training on joining. This will include emergency duties as well as routine duties for safe vessel operation and protection of the marine environment.

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<sup>3</sup> MSN 1814 (M) Approved Medical Practitioners (Approved Doctors) with effect from 1 June 2007 and MSN 1815 (M) Countries whose Seafarer Medical Certificates are Accepted as equivalent to the UK Medical Certificate (ENG1) from 1 July 2007, and subsequent amendments

<sup>4</sup> SI 2002/2055 amended by SI 2005/1919 or any subsequent amendment

<sup>5</sup> MSN 1765 (M) or any subsequent amendment

7.2 The following is taken directly from the STCW Code:

“Before being assigned to shipboard duties, all persons employed or engaged on a seagoing ship other than passengers, shall receive approved familiarisation training in personal survival techniques or receive sufficient information and instruction to be able to:

- .1 communicate with other persons on board on elementary safety matters and understand safety information symbols, signs and alarm signals;
- .2 know what to do if:
  - .2.1 a person falls overboard,
  - .2.2 fire or smoke is detected, or
  - .2.3 the fire or abandon ship alarm is sounded;
- .3 identify muster and embarkation stations and emergency escape routes;
- .4 locate and don lifejackets;
- .5 raise the alarm and have basic knowledge of the use of portable fire extinguishers;
- .6 take immediate action upon encountering an accident or other medical emergency before seeking further medical assistance on board; and
- .7 close and open the fire, weathertight and watertight doors fitted in the particular ship other than those for hull openings.”

7.3 **Common Language Requirement:** The ship owner or operator must ensure that all seafarers are able to communicate in an agreed common working language for the vessel.

## 8. Application and Issue Procedures

8.1 An application form is available for download from the MCA website. You should return this with the relevant documents, two passport photographs and the fee for a Watch Rating Certificate. The fee is as given in the current Merchant Shipping (Fees) Regulations (a summary of this is available alongside the forms on the MCA website).

## More Information

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**RECORD OF TRAINING  
FOR NAVIGATIONAL WATCH RATING CERTIFICATES UNDER STCW 95**

Name..... Date of Birth.....

Discharge Book Number or Other National I.D. ....

**To be completed by a Competent Officer**

Action or Task (ref STCW 95 A II/4)		Competent Officer Number	Signature	Date
<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Steer the ship and comply with helm orders in the English language</b>			
a)	Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and proficiency in the use of Magnetic and Gyro compasses, the changeover from Automatic Pilot to hand steering and vice versa			
b)	Demonstrate ability to maintain a steady course (within acceptable limits) having regard to the area of navigation and prevailing sea state			
c)	Alterations of course are smooth and controlled			
d)	Communications are clear and concise at all times and orders are acknowledged in a seaman-like manner			
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Keep a proper lookout by sight and hearing</b>			
a)	Promptly detecting and reporting the approximate bearing of a sound signal, light or other object in degrees or points to the O.O.W.			
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Contribute to monitoring and controlling a safe watch</b>			
a)	Demonstrate knowledge of Shipboard terms and definitions			
b)	Demonstrate use of appropriate internal communication and alarm systems			
c)	Demonstrate ability to understand orders and to communicate with the O.O.W. in matters relevant to watchkeeping duties in a clear and concise manner			

<b>Action or Task</b> (ref STCW 95 A II/4)		Competent Officer Number	Signature	Date
d)	Demonstrate knowledge of the procedures for the relief, maintenance and handover of a watch			
e)	Demonstrate knowledge of the information required to maintain a safe watch			
f)	Understand basic environmental protection procedures			
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Operate Emergency Equipment and Apply Emergency Procedures</b>			
a)	Demonstrate knowledge of Emergency duties and alarm signals			
b)	Demonstrate knowledge of pyrotechnics distress signals; satellite EPIRBs and SARTs			
c)	Demonstrate knowledge of the avoidance of false distress alerts and actions to be taken in the event of accidental activation			
d)	Demonstrate knowledge of the initial action required on becoming aware of an emergency or abnormal situation and this action is in conformity with established practices and procedures			
e)	Demonstrate how to communicate in a clear and concise manner at all times and orders are acknowledged in a seaman-like manner			
f)	Ensure that the integrity of emergency and distress alerting systems are maintained at all times			



Testimonial (Ability and Conduct)

Vessel 1 Name		Ship's Stamp
Comment		
Master's Signature		

Vessel 2 Name		Ship's Stamp
Comment		
Master's Signature		

Vessel 3 Name		Ship's Stamp
Comment		
Master's Signature		



**RECORD OF TRAINING  
FOR ENGINE ROOM WATCH RATING CERTIFICATES UNDER STCW 95**

Name..... Date of Birth.....

Discharge Book Number or Other National I.D. ....

**To be completed by a Competent Officer**

<b>Action or Task</b> (ref STCW 95 A III/4)		<b>Competent Officer Number</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Undertake engine room watch and comply with orders in the English language</b>			
a)	Understand terms used in the machinery spaces and the names of the various machinery and equipment			
b)	Demonstrate knowledge of Engine Room Watchkeeping procedures			
c)	Demonstrate knowledge of safe working practices relating to Engine Room operations and use of equipment provided			
d)	Demonstrate use of appropriate internal communication procedures			
e)	Understand Engine Room alarm systems and be able to distinguish between the various alarms, especially with regard to fire extinguishing gas alarms			
f)	Demonstrate maintenance, handover and relief of watch in accordance with accepted principles and procedures			
g)	Demonstrate clear and concise communications and acknowledgement of orders			
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Emergency Equipment</b>			
a)	Demonstrate knowledge of emergency systems			
b)	Demonstrate knowledge of Machinery Spaces escape routes			
c)	Demonstrate familiarity with location and use of fire fighting appliances			
d)	Demonstrate clear concise communications and acknowledgement of orders			

<b>Action or Task</b> (ref STCW 95 A III/4)		Competent Officer Number	Signature	Date
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities</b>			
a)	Demonstrate knowledge of the type of emergency that may occur. eg fire, collision, foundering etc duties and alarm signals			
b)	Demonstrate knowledge of shipboard contingency plans for emergency response (proved through drills)			
c)	Demonstrate knowledge of various emergency signals and actions to take, duties under Muster List, location of Muster / Assembly stations and the correct use of Personal Safety Equipment			
d)	Understand the actions to take on discovering potential emergency situations, including fire and ingress of water into the ship			
e)	Understand the value of training and drills			
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Prevention of Pollution</b>			
a)	Understand the effects of pollution of the marine environment			
b)	Demonstrate knowledge of basic environmental protection procedures			

Testimonial (Ability and Conduct)

Vessel 1 Name		Ship's Stamp
Comment		
Master's / Chief Engineer's Signature		

Vessel 2 Name		Ship's Stamp
Comment		
Master's / Chief Engineer's Signature		

Vessel 3 Name		Ship's Stamp
Comment		
Master's / Chief Engineer's Signature		



List of competent Officers signing training record sheet

Competent Officer Number	1			Rank	
Name		Signature		Date of Birth	
UK Certificate CoC / CEC Number			Capacity		
Vessel Name		IMO Number		Ship's Stamp	
Competent Officer Number	2			Rank	
Name		Signature		Date of Birth	
UK Certificate CoC / CEC Number			Capacity		
Vessel Name		IMO Number		Ship's Stamp	
Competent Officer Number	3			Rank	
Name		Signature		Date of Birth	
UK Certificate CoC / CEC Number			Capacity		
Vessel Name		IMO Number		Ship's Stamp	
Competent Officer Number	4			Rank	
Name		Signature		Date of Birth	
UK Certificate CoC / CEC Number			Capacity		
Vessel Name		IMO Number		Ship's Stamp	

Competent Officer Number		5		Rank	
Name		Signature		Date of Birth	
UK Certificate CoC / CEC Number			Capacity		
Vessel Name		IMO Number		Ship's Stamp	

Competent Officer Number		6		Rank	
Name		Signature		Date of Birth	
UK Certificate CoC / CEC Number			Capacity		
Vessel Name		IMO Number		Ship's Stamp	