



Code of Practice for Fishing Vessels of 24 metres and Over – Standards which can be used to prepare for your MCA Survey and Inspection

Notice to all Designers, Builders, Owners, Employers, Skippers and Crew of Fishing Vessels

This note replaces MGN 501 and should be read with the Fishing Vessels (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975 (S.I. 1975/330) as amended; The Fishing Vessels (Life-Saving Appliances) Regulations 1988 (S.I. 1988/38) as amended; and the Fishing Vessels (EC Directive on Harmonised Safety Regime) Regulations 1999 as amended..

Summary

This Note provides a Code of Practice for 24m Registered Length (L) Vessels and over and sets out in one document the requirements currently contained in the Fishing Vessels (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975, The Fishing Vessels (Life-Saving Appliances) Regulations 1988 and the Fishing Vessels (EC Directive on Harmonised Safety Regime) Regulations 1999.

This Code is voluntary but may be used as an alternative to these Rules and Regulations, which remain in force, for the purposes of having your vessel surveyed.

In agreement with Industry, the Code contains some additional requirements based on MAIB findings and discussion with Industry. These include measures to:

- prevent flooding or aid its early detection;
- aid man overboard recovery;
- ensure safe provision of shore power;
- reduce the risk of fire;
- aid evacuation of the vessel in an emergency;
- report structural modifications to the MCA prior to work taking place;
- shore power for when the crew are living on board whilst in port with fire detection and safety systems operable from shore power
- wear Personal Floatation Devices or Lifelines whilst working on the open deck of vessels that are underway

The change from MGN 501 is that this Note now clarifies that EPIRBs should be capable of transmitting the position obtained from a built-in GPS receiver to a satellite.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Marine Guidance Note is intended to allow owners and skippers to improve the safety of their vessels by complying with a revised but non mandatory 24m and Over Fishing Vessel Code of Practice.

2.0 Background

2.1 Currently, fishing vessels of 24m Registered Length (L) and Over must comply with:

- The Fishing Vessels (Safety Provisions) Rules (S.I. 1975/330) as amended;
- The Fishing Vessels (Life Saving Appliances) Regulations 1998 (S.I. 1988/38) as amended
- The Fishing Vessel (EC Directive on Harmonised Safety Regime) Regulations (S.I. 1999/2998) as amended which enact regulations annexed to the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977, as modified by the Torremolinos Protocol of 1993

2.2 To assist Industry in complying with the requirements the MCA, with the assistance of the Fishing Industry Safety Group, has developed a single Code which applies to both new and existing vessels and incorporates the requirements currently set out in the various Rules and Regulations.

2.3 The Code has been subject to a review by MCA and other interested bodies and this Note and the revised Code has been developed as a result of that review. This Note represents the final part of a review of the Fishing Vessels (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975. The aim of the review is to update existing requirements in order to improve the safety of fishing vessels in foreseeable operating conditions, and the survival of the crew in the event of an accident.

3.0 The Revised Code

3.1 The Code is not mandatory and the existing Rules and Regulations remain in force but owners and skippers may make use of this Code to prepare for their mandatory surveys and compliance with this Code will be treated as demonstrating compliance with the Rules and Regulations.

3.2 The Code has been subject to a review by MCA, industry and other interested bodies and this Note and the revised Code have been developed as a result of that review. The aim of the review is to update existing requirements in order to improve the safety of fishing vessels in foreseeable operating conditions, and the survival of the crew in the event of an accident.

3.2 It is the intention of the MCA to issue this Code as a Merchant Shipping Notice, subject to a formal consultation process, with the aim of making these requirements mandatory.

4.0 Changes applied to the revised Code

4.1 The Code also introduces some new requirements. These are based on either recommendations from the MAIB, investigations of past incidents or suggestions from the Fishing Industry Safety Group.

The new requirements are:

- New vessels shall be fitted with at least two main seawater cooling inlets, with one inlet fitted on each side of the vessel (except when fitted with 'keel cooling' arrangements).



- All vessels shall have emergency lighting fitted to all exits to allow emergency exit in event of lighting failure.
- All vessels, built as follows, shall have a lightning protection system:
 - Ships with wooden hulls
 - Ships with metal hull with wooden masts
- Vessels arranged to have a supply from a shore or other external supply should be fitted with a suitable connection box having an inlet socket or terminals suitably rated for the supply. The Code sets out how to ensure shore power is supplied safely.
- All vessels must now, in the propulsion machinery spaces and fish holds, be fitted with at least two bilge level sensors (one high and one low level) capable of indicating water ingress in those spaces at the control station by means of visual and audible alarm. Previously only a high level alarm was required
- Any unmanned spaces in all vessels, where ingress of water would seriously affect stability or essential equipment e.g. sonar rooms, no less than one bilge alarm is required. In all vessels, any auto-start bilge pump serving a clean compartment must be fitted with an audible and visual alarm at the control position(s) so that the reason for pumping may be investigated.
- In all vessels the Code will require each dry compartment provided with a bilge suction capability (built-in or portable) must be fitted with a bilge level alarm if the level of bilge water can not be readily checked visually without entering the compartment. Alternatively, spring loaded drain valves may be fitted outside the compartment as a means of checking the bilge level.
- In all vessels where the distance from sea level to the point of access to, or egress from, the vessel exceeds 9 metres and when it is intended to embark and disembark pilots by means of the accommodation ladder, or other equally safe and convenient means in conjunction with a pilot ladder, the vessel shall carry such equipment on each side.
- All vessels are now required to have:
 - two man-ropes of not less than 28 millimetres in diameter, properly secured to the vessel, if required by the pilot;
 - a lifebuoy equipped with a self-igniting light; and
 - a heaving line.
- All refrigerators must now contain thermometers.

4.2 Extensive repairs, modifications or alterations carried out to the structure or machinery of a vessel, shall only be undertaken after consultation and with the MCA's approval to ensure it complies with the requirements of the Code, as applicable to a new vessel, to the satisfaction of the MCA.



4.3 Due to the numbers of fishermen that have died after falling overboard, the Code also recommends that all crew whilst working on the open deck of a vessel that is underway wear a personal floatation device or a safety harness. Attention is also drawn to The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Personal Protective Equipment) Regulations 1999 which set out the general rule that Personal Protective Equipment must be used when risks cannot be avoided or reduced to an acceptable level. MSN 1731 (The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1999) says that for any work where there is reasonable foreseeable risk of going overboard then a lifejacket or Personal Floatation Device should be worn.

4.4 There is also a requirement for shore power when crew are living on board whilst in port and must be able to have fire detection and safety systems operable from shore power.

4.5 The Code also clarifies that EPIRBs should be capable of transmitting the position obtained from a built-in GPS receiver to a satellite.

5.0 Vessel Owners Responsibility

5.1 To comply with the Code, vessel owners will be required to:

- to meet the requirements for the construction and use of fishing vessels as set out in the Code;
- present new vessels for survey during and on completion of construction, or on transfer to the UK Register prior to issue of a UK certificate;
- present the vessel for renewal survey at intervals not exceeding 4 years;
- present the vessel for an intermediate survey;
- to present the vessel for survey prior to completing major repairs or modifications.

More Information

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