



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

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## Radio Survey Service: Authorisation

**Notice to all Shipowners, Agents, Classification Societies, Builders, Masters, Skippers and Officers**

*This notice replaces MGN 373 (M+F)*

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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**

- There are new arrangements for radio surveys on United Kingdom (UK) vessels.
- Vessels in class (except passenger ships and fishing vessels) will be surveyed and certificated by UK recognised classification societies.
- Unclassed vessels, passenger ships and fishing vessels will be surveyed by persons authorised by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).
- Procedures for persons wishing to obtain authorisation to carry out radio surveys are explained.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The authorisation of SELEX Communications came to an end on 31 March 2009. From 1 April 2009 new arrangements apply.

## **2. Authorised Persons**

2.1 Where reference is made to "authorised persons" in this note, it shall include an individual or company conducting surveys for an organization so authorised, for example a Classification Society.

2.2 From 1 April 2009, the following persons are authorised to conduct Radio Surveys:

- For vessels which are classed (except passenger ships and fishing vessels), the appropriate UK-recognised Classification Society.
- For unclassified vessels and for passenger ships and fishing vessels, persons authorised by MCA on behalf of the Secretary of State.
- For the radio installation of an emergency response and rescue vessel (ERRV) in accordance with the United Kingdom Offshore Operations Association (UKOOA) ERV Survey Guidelines persons authorised by the MCA on behalf of the Secretary of State.

### **3. Procedure for arranging Radio Surveys**

- 3.1 For classed vessels (except passenger ships and fishing vessels), radio surveys must be arranged through the classification society for the vessel.
- 3.2 For unclassified vessels, passenger ships and fishing vessels, the survey must be arranged with a person who has been authorised by the MCA. A list of those persons is available on the MCA web-site at <http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga07-home/shipsandcargoes/mcga-shipsurveysandinspects/dopssurvradiosurveys-auth-pers.htm>

### **4. Procedure for authorisation**

- 4.1 The UK-recognised classification societies are authorised for cargo vessels in their class.
- 4.2 Other persons or organisations seeking authorisation must apply to the MCA. This requires the completion of a questionnaire, evidence of having a request for a radio survey from a UK vessel operator, evidence of a current approval by one of the UK-recognised classification societies and acceptance of conditions. Request should be made through the Survey Operations Branch contact detailed at the end of this notice. The quality of such persons is controlled through the MCA's monitoring of the classification societies' own approval procedures.
- 4.3 Most surveys of unclassified vessels will be conducted in the UK, but in exceptional cases, persons overseas may be authorised. For passenger ships and fishing vessels a number of persons overseas may be authorised to reflect trading patterns and demand from the operators. They must still satisfy the requirements detailed in 4.2 above.
- 4.4 Authorisations may be withdrawn by MCA at any time as a result of complaints, inadequate quality application, internal controls or lack of demand from UK ship owners.

### **5. Fees**

- 5.1 Survey fees will be charged by the authorised person direct to the ship owner or their agent. The fees are not regulated by the Secretary of State.
- 5.2 The administration costs for the issue of certificates will normally be included in the survey fee charged by the Classification Society, or in the case of passenger ships or fishing vessels the fee will be included within the fee for completion of the appropriate surveys carried out by the MCA.
- 5.3 For initial or renewal surveys of unclassified vessels the authorised person's fee will include an administration charge of £75 to cover MCA's checking of the radio technician's survey report and for the preparation of the radio certificate for issuing by the radio technician.

### **6. Conduct of Surveys**

- 6.1 In all cases, requests for survey must be made in good time prior to the date of entry into service of the vessel or expiry of a current certificate or within the range dates for a periodical survey.
- 6.2 The statutory requirements for the survey of the radio installations on UK vessels are in the Merchant Shipping (Survey and Certification) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995/1210) and for UK fishing vessels in the Fishing Vessels (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975 and the Fishing Vessels (EC Directive on Harmonised Safety Regime) Regulations 1999, each as amended.
- 6.3 The Harmonized System of Survey and Certification is implemented by the Merchant Shipping (Survey and Certification) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/1334). This regime standardises the period of validity and intervals between surveys for the nine main Convention certificates, including radio.
- 6.4 The carriage requirements for equipment are contained in the appropriate regulations, for example, Merchant Shipping (Radio Installation) Regulations; Merchant Shipping

(Radio)(Fishing Vessels) Rules or Regulations; and the appropriate Life Saving Appliance Regulations (All regulations apply in their up-to-date amended form). Authorised persons should ensure they are familiar with the regulations appropriate to the vessel concerned.

- 6.5 Surveys should be carried out in accordance with the appropriate guidance. For example, for vessels coming under the International Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention reference is made to the “IMO Resolution A997(25)- Survey Guidelines Under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification, 2007”. Guidance is also issued by MCA on “Radio Installations on GMDSS Ships - MSIS 5, available at <http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga07-home/shipsandcargoes/mcga-shipsregsandguidance/mcga-dqs-ssguidancetosurveyors/radioinstallations.htm>. Guidance on equivalent radio requirements for large yachts is included in MCA's Large Commercial Yacht Code available at <http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga07-home/leisureandtheseaside/mcga-sealeisure/mcga-mcga-ensign/dops-east-ensign-guidance/dops-eastensignly2-2.htm>
- 6.6 Plan approval for new building should be included as part of the initial survey process carried out by the authorised person.
- 6.7 For surveys in remote locations where there are no local authorised persons, such as the Falkland Islands, owners of vessels are recommended to coordinate the surveyors visits to reduce travel costs. In the past many such visits have been arranged annually.

## **7. Certification and Endorsement**

- 7.1 For cargo vessels, a Cargo Ship Safety Radio Certificate will be issued every five years with a periodic survey conducted annually, in accordance with the relevant regulations. The certificate may then be endorsed accordingly.
- 7.2 For classed vessels, on completion of a satisfactory survey the Classification Society will issue the Cargo Ship Safety Radio Certificate or endorse the certificate on board, as appropriate.
- 7.3 For all passenger ships or fishing vessels, the authorised person should inform the MCA surveyor responsible for the issue of the appropriate certification that they will be conducting the survey and following the survey will forward the relevant Declaration of Survey to the MCA surveyor. Where a Fishing Vessel Safety Certificate requires separate endorsement for the annual radio survey only, the authorised person will endorse that certificate and send a copy of the signed endorsement to the MCA Marine Office which issued the certificate.
- 7.4 For an unclassified cargo vessel, the authorised person will forward the relevant Declaration of Survey to the MCA Survey Operations Branch who will prepare a new certificate which will then be issued by the authorised person. Where a periodical radio survey is completed the surveyor will endorse the certificate on board and send a copy of the signed endorsement to MCA Survey Operations Branch accordingly.
- 7.5 For unclassified “Large Yachts”<sup>1</sup> (length over 24 metres) the authorised person will forward the relevant Declaration of Survey to MCA ENSIGN (see contact details at end of this notice) who will prepare a new certificate which will then be issued by the authorised person. Where a periodical radio survey is completed the surveyor will endorse the certificate on board and send a copy of the signed endorsement to MCA ENSIGN accordingly.
- 7.6 When it is impossible to arrange for survey prior to the expiry of the certificate, it may be extended in exceptional circumstances in compliance with the relevant regulations and

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<sup>1</sup> A “Large Yacht” is as defined in the Merchant Shipping (Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure) Regulations 1998.

only when approved beforehand by the MCA. Requests for extension must be made in good time before the date of expiry and be supported by the following information:

- 'the reason for the request;
- 'the period of extension requested (maximum three months);
- 'copy of the current Safety Radio Certificate;
- 'confirmation from the Master that the radio equipment is in good order;
- 'the next port of call and expected date of arrival and sailing;
- 'the port where the survey is intended;
- 'the expected date of arrival there; and
- 'by whom the survey is to be carried out.

7.7 Applications should be made in good time in writing to Survey Operations Branch at the address at the end of this note.

7.8 In urgent cases, MCA may be contacted outside normal working hours using the MCA Infoline facility at <http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga07-home> or email [Infoline@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:Infoline@mcga.gov.uk)

## **8. Deficiencies**

- 8.1 When an authorised person finds a radio installation is non-compliant during a survey the master of the vessel (or responsible person) must be advised in writing of the fault.
- 8.2 It is the responsibility of the master (or responsible person) to make the necessary arrangements to correct the deficiency noted by the authorised person. If a deficiency which significantly affects safety cannot be rectified in the port of survey, a certificate should not be issued or endorsed or a declaration completed until deficiencies have been rectified, or a timescale agreed with the MCA through Survey Operations Branch or the MCA Infoline at <http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga07-home>

## **9. Independence**

- 9.1 The surveyor attending a vessel must not become personally involved in any repairs needed in connection with that survey. If the master chooses to use the same authorised person for repairs a separate technician must attend the vessel. The vessel will be re-inspected following the repair by the original surveyor or a surveyor other than the person who performed the repair.
- 9.2 Whilst performing surveys on behalf of the MCA, the surveyor must not undertake any sales activity whatsoever or advise on possible sources of supply of goods or services in connection with any radio survey work with which they are personally involved.

## **10. Exemptions**

- 10.1 Where an owner considers any statutory requirement of the regulations to be unnecessary or unreasonable an application for exemption should be sent in good time prior to the survey direct to Survey Operations Branch at the address at the end of this note.
- 10.2 All applications must be supported by detailed reasons why the regulations should not be applied in full. Granting of an exemption may include conditions in order to provide an acceptable level of safety. Exemption certificates will only be issued after the payment of a fee to cover administration costs.

**Ensign (main office)**

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MCA Website Address: [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)

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