



The Rescue Boat Code (The Code of Practice for Open Rescue Boats of Less Than 15 Metres in Length)

Notice to all designers, builders, owners, operators, employers, crews and helmsmen of rescue boats.

Summary

This Marine Guidance Note introduces the MCA publication, The Rescue Boat Code (The Code of Practice for Open Rescue Boats of Less Than 15 Metres in Length), which offers a more appropriate standard, on a voluntary basis, to rescue boat organisations for their inshore rescue boats that might otherwise be subject to the Small Commercial Vessel and Pilot Boats Code (SCV Code, published as MGN 280).

HMCG Declared Facilities that are less than 15 m in length are required to meet this Code.

The Code does not apply to rescue boats carried on ships as part of their Life Saving Appliances required under SOLAS or national regulations.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Rescue Boat Code has been developed with representative stakeholders of the rescue boat industry as partners through a Technical Committee. This Code is published as being representative of industry best practice of those inshore rescue boats operating in United Kingdom waters.
- 1.2 Some activities of a rescue boat operation at sea may come within the scope of the SCV Code however the Rescue Boat Code provides a more appropriate standard during an operation as a rescue boat. The Rescue Boat Code covers both the use of the rescue boat for rescue purposes and also the work of the boat in support of those rescue boat activities, such as training, trials and ancillary publicity and fundraising for the rescue boat organisation. [If the rescue boat undertakes any commercial work, such as chartering for non rescue boat use, or providing safety boat cover for commercial activities, the SCV Code continues to apply.]



- 1.3 This is appropriate because rescue boats, unlike the SCV Code vessels, do not operate on a commercial basis, and their exposure to risk is limited by both the short distances over which they are operated, and the time over which they are in operation. It recognises that a rescue boat is intended to provide a rapid response platform for persons in distress in the most practical and appropriate fashion.
- 1.4 The Code applies to inshore rescue boats operated from a shore station; it does not apply to rescue boats carried on ships as part of the Life Saving Appliances required by SOLAS or national regulations.

2. The Rescue Boat Code

- 2.1 This Code has been published in response to requests from designers, builders and rescue boat organisations. It aims to provide a solution to the concerns of many rescue boat organisations over the status of their operations with regard to nationally recognised standards. The Code is published as a voluntary Code of Practice for those boats which are less than 15 metres in length and described in the Applications section of the Code. It is however a requirement of Her Majesty's Coastguard that rescue boats less than 15 metres in length operating as HMCG Declared Facilities should meet the standards stated within, and be certified and operated in accordance with the Rescue Boat Code.
- 2.2 The Rescue Boat Code is a self certificated standard that is supported by independent examinations and HMCG audits; this allows the Rescue Boat Organisations to safely manage the boats themselves. The Code provides sections not only on the hull design, but also on equipment, safety procedures, training and maintenance whilst also permitting the application of appropriate risk identification and mitigation practices.

3. Phase In

- 3.1 In 2004 the Agency notified Rescue Boat Organisations that they should meet the standards of the earlier draft of the Rescue Boat Code. This draft Code was a very similar standard to this new Code of Practice. For this reason Rescue Boat Organisations which are HMCG Declared Facilities should undertake their compliance examinations and complete their HMCG audits within 12 months of this MGN being published.

Further Information

1. Further information on the contents of this Notice can be obtained from the address at the end of this Notice. The text of the Rescue Boat Code can be found at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/mcga07-home/shipsandcargoes/mcga-shiptype/mcga-pleasurecraftandsmallships/mcga-dqs_st_cvs_code_vessel_safety.htm or on application to the address below.



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