



Maritime &  
Coastguard  
Agency

## MARINE GUIDANCE NOTE

---

# **MGN 630 Amendment No.3 (F)**

## **FISHING VESSELS: Pre-Registration surveys for Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall built before 16 July 2007 and existing vessels of 15m Length Overall to less than 24m Registered Length wishing to join the UK Register**

Notice to all Designers, Builders, Certifying Authorities, Classification Societies, Agents, Brokers, Owners, Employers, Skippers and Crew of Fishing Vessels

This notice should be read with:

- The Fishing Vessel (Code of Practice) Regulations 2017 No. 943;
- MSN1871 Amendment 2 (F) The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall;
- The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall
- MSN1872 (F) The Code of Safe Working Practice for the construction and use of Fishing Vessels of 15m Length Overall to less than 24m Registered Length;
- MGN628 (M+F) Construction Standards for Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall;
- MGN629 (M+F) Construction Standards for Fishing Vessels of 15m Length Overall to less than 24m Registered Length.

---

## **Summary**

MSN1871 Amendment No.1 allows vessels of less than 15m Length Overall (LOA) built before 16 July 2007 to be considered by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for Registration as fishing vessels. This Notice sets out the process in place to ensure the MCA is satisfied vessels are safe and suitable for commercial fishing. This Note also states that existing vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m Registered Length wishing to join the Register may also,

on a case-by-case basis, undergo the Pre-Registration Survey and the Note sets out the processes in place for this.

This Amendment sets out a revision to the process by which the Fishing Vessel Certifying Authority (FVCA) and Authorised Surveyors conducting Registration Surveys will provide the MCA with a report setting out where the vessel does not meet the Construction Standards. The MCA will either identify the corrective action necessary or refuse Registration. The FVCA will verify that any corrective action has been completed before Registration will be allowed.

## 1. Introduction/background

- 1.1 Fishing is a dangerous industry with the rate of fatalities being approximately 100 times higher than that of the UK's general workforce. MSN 1871 Amendment No.2, The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall (LOA) and MSN1872 Amendment No.1, The Code of Safe Working Practice for the Construction and Use of Fishing Vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m Registered Length (L), require that vessels must meet a minimum standard of construction and outfit if they wish to become a fishing vessel.
- 1.2 With Seafish ending their Marine Survey service, the MCA has now republished the Seafish Construction Standards as MGN 628 (M+F) – Fishing Vessel Construction Standards for Fishing Vessels of less than 15m LOA and MGN 629 (M+F) – Construction Standards for Fishing Vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m L.
- 1.3 The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall requires that all vessels built on or after 16 July 2007 must be constructed, surveyed and certificated to the approved Fishing Vessel Construction Standards of Certifying Authorities or the Construction Rules of the United Kingdom (UK) authorised Classification Societies (Class) as equivalent construction standards for fishing vessels. MGN 628 (M+F) meets the requirements of the approved Fishing Vessel Construction Standard of a Certifying Authority.
- 1.4 The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall allows vessels built before 16 July 2007 to be registered as commercial fishing vessels provided that applicants can demonstrate by survey that the construction standard and condition of the vessel is satisfactory. This requirement was previously supported by Seafish, and then subsequently by Authorised Surveyors appointed by the MCA who surveyed the vessel and produced a Survey Comparison Report which was then considered by the MCA and either rejected, accepted or accepted subject to specified modification, sometimes after requiring the applicant to address any areas of concern deemed necessary. A second report may also be required dependent on the level of modifications required.
- 1.5 This system is designed to ensure that older vessels seeking registration are suitable for commercial fishing and comply with an appropriate standard broadly equivalent to that of a newly constructed vessel as far as is practicable, to ensure they provide a similar level of safety and that there will not be any technical or commercial advantage from potential owners adopting a lesser standard.
- 1.6 From 31 December 2020, MCA Authorised Surveyors will no longer be able to take on new Registration Surveys using the process set out in Section 4 below.
- 1.7 Any outstanding work on vessels being conducted by MCA Authorised Surveyors on 31 December 2020 may continue to be overseen by the Authorised Surveyor until the vessel

is accepted on to the Register or rejected. MCA Authorised Surveyors set their own fees, forward Registration Survey Comparison Reports direct to MCA and oversee any additional work required by MCA.

## **2.0 Policy – Fishing Vessels of less than 15m LOA built before 16 July 2007**

- 2.1 From 21 July 2020, to ensure that vessels continue to comply with a suitable standard and do not gain any technical or commercial advantage, new arrangements have been put in place. Vessels of less than 15m LOA which are not currently registered as fishing vessels and which are verified as being built before 16 July 2007, seeking to register as such, will be surveyed, against the requirements of Section 1.6.7 of The Code of Practice for the Safety of Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall (LOA). The Pre-Registration Survey Comparison Report shall be supplied to the MCA for consideration. See Section 4 for details of the survey process.
- 2.2 Fishing vessels of less than 15m LOA which leave the Fishing Vessel Register for a period of six months or more will be treated as new registrations and it will be necessary to confirm compliance with the applicable standards as set out in sections Section 1.6.1, 1.6.4, 1.6.5 or 1.6.6 of The Code of Practice for the Safety of Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall (LOA), dependent on the date of build for the vessel, before these vessels can be re-registered and re-certificated by the MCA.
- 2.3 Before purchasing a vessel the potential applicant is recommended to assess the vessel using the Matrix at Annex 1. This matrix is a guide only. If you identify a vessel you wish to purchase, you can use the matrix to calculate a point score for the vessel before you make a purchase. This matrix gives an indication of the construction standard of the vessel. The lower the number of points your vessel scores more likely it is to be registered as meeting the necessary standard.
- 2.4 Please note the Matrix is **NOT** used by the MCA as part of the process of considering the vessel for Registration; the decision of the MCA is based solely upon the Pre-Registration Survey Comparison Report. The purpose of this Report is to establish that the vessel's construction standard is equivalent to the requirements of MGN 628 (M+F) and that it has been adequately maintained over time. The Matrix is therefore not a guarantee of either refusal or acceptance for Registration, it is solely for the potential purchaser to use as a guide for choosing a vessel.

## **3.0 Policy – Fishing Vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m (L)**

- 3.1 MCA have now also resumed survey work for new build fishing vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m RL. The standards applicable can be found in MGN 629 (F) The Construction and Outfit Standards for Fishing Vessels of 15m Length Overall to less than 24m Registered Length. New build work will be exclusively overseen by MCA, see MSIS27 Chapter 1 Annex 24 New Build Procedures for further details.
- 3.2 Section 1.3.13 of MSN1872 Amendment No.1 The Code of Safe Working Practice for the Construction and Use of Fishing Vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m L, as maybe amended, sets out the requirements for existing vessels wishing to flag in.

3.3 Fishing Vessels of 15m LOA and over, if they leave the Register, will be treated as new vessels if they apply for Registration and must comply with the applicable standards as set out in this MGN and MGN 629 (M+F).

3.4 With the Seafish Standards for fishing vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m RL now being republished as MGN 629 (M+F), MCA will, on a strictly case by case basis, allow for Pre-Registration Surveys of vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m L to be conducted by an FVCA.

## 4.0 Survey Process – All Vessels

4.1 Once the applicant has identified a vessel of less than 15m LOA they wish to Register, they should contact an FVCA to request a pre-registration survey. Applicants wishing to Register vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24 RL must contact MCA first and be subject to the process set out in section 1.13.13 of MSN1872 Amendment No.1 Pre-Registration Surveys of vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m RL by FVCAs must not commence without MCA approval. Failure to do so may lead to refusal of registration. A list of FVCAs that have signed agreements with the MCA is available from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fishing-vessel-classification-registration-andinspection> or by calling 0203 81 72452.

NOTE: Wooden hulls sheathed in GRP will not be accepted for Registration.

4.2 Vessels should be presented to the FVCA in accordance with the conditions set out in Annex 2.

4.3 Once the Pre-Registration Survey has been completed, the FVCA will forward a copy of the Pre-Registration Survey Comparison Report to the applicant and an MCA Consultant Surveyor. The Comparison Report will identify where the vessel does and does not meet the appropriate Standards.

4.4 The applicant must also sign a Declaration confirming that when presenting this vessel for MCA Inspection, they shall present the vessel in the same condition as it was presented for the Pre-Registration Survey, with the exception of addressing any deficiencies identified in the Pre-Registration Survey Comparison Report and that they will obtain prior approval from the MCA for any other modifications to the vessel before making those modifications.

4.5 The MCA will review the Report and the resultant action may follow three paths:

- .1 the MCA will accept the Report and, subject to an Inspection against the relevant Code of Practice, agree to Register the vessel
- .2 refuse to Register the vessel: or
- .3 require additional work to be undertaken on the vessel to bring the vessel up to the required standard to be Registered. When additional work is required and before accepting the vessel meets the required standard, the MCA may, depending on the nature of the required work, either:
  - .a accept the applicant's confirmation that the work has been undertaken; or
  - .b require the work to be overseen by an FVCA Surveyor and confirmation received that the work has been completed to the standard required.

- 4.6 The applicant (e.g. owner or builder) will be responsible for all costs associated with work undertaken to demonstrate compliance with the relevant construction and outfitting standards. Fees for Pre-Registration Survey work will be set by the FVCA.
- 4.7 Fees for MCA work reviewing the Comparison Report will be charged at the rate set out in the Merchant Shipping (Fees) Regulations 2018, as may be amended.
- 4.8 Based on the contents of the Report and whether the additional work identified can bring the vessel up to the required standards the MCA may either:
- .1 accept the Report and, subject to an Inspection against the relevant Code of Practice, agree to Register the vessel
  - .2 refuse to Register the vessel.

## 5.0 Survey Process – All Vessels

- 5.1 Once the Pre-Registration Survey Comparison Report has been accepted by the MCA, the vessel must still undergo the following:
- For fishing vessels of less than 15m LOA, an Inspection against The Code of Practice for the Safety of Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall (LOA) as may be amended, be issued a Small Fishing Vessel Certificate before it can be Registered as a Fishing Vessel; or
  - For fishing vessels of 15m LOA to less than 24m L, a survey against MSN1872 Amendment No.1, as may be amended, be issued a United Kingdom Fishing Vessel Certificate before it can be Registered as a Fishing Vessel.
- 5.2 The MCA, on Inspection or survey of the vessel against The Code of Practice for the Safety of Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall (LOA) or MSN1872 Amendment No.1, may refuse to Register the vessel if the vessel condition does not match the details set out in the submitted Report. In such circumstances, a new Pre-Registration Survey Comparison Report may be requested.
- 5.3 Any vessels that are presented for inspection or survey with modifications undertaken after the completion of the Pre-Registration Survey Comparison Report, may be refused Registration and requested to undergo a new Pre-Registration Survey.

## 6.0 Certification

- 6.1 Only vessels which are deemed to meet the equivalent standards will be accepted for registration. Vessels which fail to meet the equivalent standards will not be registered.
- 6.2 Section 1.9 of The Code of Practice for the Safety of Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall (LOA) sets out the requirements on an owner to notify the MCA of any modifications to the vessel its machinery or fishing gear to ensure that the vessel continues to meet any stability requirements and that any modifications, alterations or changes to any Vessel shall meet the requirements of MGN 628 (M+F) and only be carried out after consultation with, and approval from MCA:

6.3 Section 1.7.2.12 iii) of The Code of Practice for the Safety of Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length Overall (LOA) allows the MCA to cancel a Small Fishing Vessel Certificate if a vessel has been substantially modified or altered or changed its mode of fishing without due authorisation by the MCA.

6.4 Section 1.3.5.5 of MSN1872 Amendment No.1 also states that repairs, modifications or alterations to the structure or machinery of a vessel must be done in consultation and with MCA approval. Section 1.3.8.4.1 of MSN 1872 Amendment No.1 allows for a certificate to be cancelled if the repairs, modifications or alterations are done without authorisation.

6.5 With particular regard to Stability Section 3.1.5.1 of MSN1872 Amendment No.1 further specifies the modifications and alterations that must be notified to the MCA and that may only be undertaken following MCA approval.

6.6 Therefore for all vessels of less than 24m L undergoing the Pre-Registration Survey process, all applicants must not make any changes to the vessel's mode of fishing without the approval of the MCA. The Small Fishing Vessel Certificate or United Kingdom Fishing Vessel Certificate issued to the vessel may include any conditions considered necessary, such as restrictions on the type of fishing or area of operation.

## More information

Technical Services Ship Standards  
Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
Bay 2.23  
Spring Place  
105 Commercial Road  
Southampton  
SO15 1EG

Telephone: +44 (0)203 81 72453

Email: [fishing@mca.gov.uk](mailto:fishing@mca.gov.uk)

Website: [www.gov.uk/mca](http://www.gov.uk/mca)

General enquiries: [infoline@mca.gov.uk](mailto:infoline@mca.gov.uk)

Please note that all addresses and telephone numbers are correct at time of publishing.

Published: March 2022

© Crown Copyright 2021

## Annex 1

### Risk Assessment Matrix Scoring System – Fishing Vessels of less than 15m LOA

| Vessel Name               |  |          |       |
|---------------------------|--|----------|-------|
| Owner                     |  |          |       |
| Fishing No                |  |          |       |
| FACTOR                    | CRITERIA   | POINTS   | SCORE |
| Hull material             | Steel  | 0        |       |
|                           | Aluminium  | 20       |       |
|                           | FRP/GRP  | 30       |       |
|                           | Wood   | 30       |       |
|                           | Other  | 40       |       |
| Registered length         | Under 7m   | 10       |       |
|                           | 7m to 15m  | 5        |       |
| Year of build             | Built before 16 July 2007 and <20 years since build                | 10       |       |
|                           | Built before 16 July 2007 and between 20 and <25 years since build | 20       |       |
|                           | 25 years or more since build                                       | 100      |       |
| Mode of fishing Under 7m  | Potter/Netter/Lining   | 30       |       |
|                           | Trawler/dredger  | 100      |       |
| Mode of fishing 7m to 15m | Potter/Netter/Lining   | 30       |       |
|                           | Trawler/dredger  | 40       |       |
| Certification- Under 7m   | Seafish certificate  | 0        |       |
|                           | Class rules  | 0        |       |
|                           | CE recreational craft directive. A&B                               | 40       |       |
|                           | ISO 12215 and ISO 12217  | 40       |       |
|                           | CE recreational craft directive. C&D                               | 100      |       |
|                           | None of the above  | 100      |       |
| Certification- 7m to 15m  | Seafish certificate  | 0        |       |
|                           | Class rules  | 0        |       |
|                           | CE recreational craft directive A&B                                | 50       |       |
|                           | ISO 12215 and ISO 12217  | 50       |       |
|                           | CE recreational craft directive. C&D                               | 100      |       |
|                           | None of the above  | 100      |       |
| Stability                 | Full Stability   | Minus 50 |       |
|                           | Survivability  | Minus 20 |       |
|                           |  | Total    |       |

## ANNEX 2

### Conditions for presenting a vessel for a Pre-registration survey

All Vessels when presenting the vessel for a survey must comply with a number of Conditions. These include, but may not be limited to:

- The vessel is to be presented in a complete and operational state.
- Work or operations are not to be in progress during the survey unless requested (e.g. bilge alarms, hydraulic emergency stops etc.).
- The vessel is to be out of water. This can include:
  - On a slip way
  - Hard standing
  - On a trailer
  - On the beach (providing a reasonable survey of the hull is possible)
- Safe access is to be provided by the applicant or their representative.
- Prior to survey bilges are to be empty and clean.
- Prior to survey stores and equipment are to be removed from all areas restricting access to the internal hull structure.
- Prior to survey and where possible, linings are to be removed for access to the hull structure.
- Where ultrasonic tests are required (aluminium & steel vessels) the applicant or their representative is to provide adequate and safe means of access around the whole external perimeter of the vessel, including the provision of adequate and safe staging where necessary to assess hull plating to deck level.

**Note:** Where the attending surveyor deems the vessel unsafe/unfit for survey, or inadequate equipment/arrangements have been provided for access by the applicant or their representative, then the surveyor may decline to survey the vessel and further fees may be incurred for re-attendance.



## ANNEX 3

### FV FLAG-IN MATRIX- VESSELS OF 15M AND OVER

| FACTOR   | CRITERIA  | POINTS   | ALLOCATED SCORE |
|--|---|--|-----------------|
| Vessel name  |   |  |                 |
| IMO Number   |   |  |                 |
| Company/Applicant  |   |  |                 |
|  |   |  |                 |
| <b>Losing flag<br/>White - Grey – Black;<br/>taken from the Paris<br/>MOU List</b> | White Listed<br>Grey Listed<br>Black Listed   | 0<br>20<br>60                                      |                 |
|  |   |  |                 |
| <b><sup>1</sup>Class society</b><br><br><b>See also Note A:</b>                    | (a) UK authorised society (built and maintained to class)<br>(b) other IACS member<br>(c) non IACS member (i.e. NSI Standard)<br>(d) vessel not classed<br>(e) For 15-24m vessels only – Meets Flag in requirements of 15 – 24 metre Code (Equivalent build standard to Seafish or MGN629)  | 0<br>20<br>30<br>100<br>30                         |                 |
|  |   |  |                 |
| <b>Vessel Type</b>   | Long Liner<br>Seiner<br>Pelagic Trawler/Seiner<br>Potter<br>Mussel Dredger<br>Bottom Trawler<br>Scalloper (outriggers only)<br>Beam Trawler/Scalloper   | 0<br>5<br>5<br>5<br>10<br>10<br>15<br>20           |                 |
|  |   |  |                 |
| <b>Age</b>   | 0-15<br>16-25<br>Over 25  | 0<br>30<br>60                                      |                 |
|  |   |  |                 |
| <b>Flag State History</b>  | Available for previous 24 months<br>No History  | 0<br>20  |                 |
| <b>Inspection History</b>  | No deficiencies in last 12 months<br>0-10 deficiencies in last 12 months<br>11 – 20 deficiencies in last 12 months<br>20 deficiencies or more in last 12 months   | 0<br>10<br>20<br>30                                |                 |
| <b>Detention History</b>   | Detained once in last 12 months<br>Detained twice in last 12 months<br>Detained more than twice in last 12 months<br>Detained once in last 24 months<br>Detained twice in last 24 months<br>Detained more than twice in last 24 months<br>Detained once in last 5 years<br>Detained twice in last 5 years<br>Detained more than twice in last 5 years | 15<br>30<br>60<br>10<br>25<br>50<br>10<br>20<br>40 |                 |
|  |   |  |                 |
|  |   | <b>TOTAL</b>                                       |                 |
| <b>Name of CSM</b>   | Check CSM database  |  |                 |

<sup>1</sup> Consideration of the Class Society relates to the Society BEFORE transfer to the UK Register.

**SURVEY THRESHOLDS - FOR USE WITH ABOVE TABLE**

| Actual Score | Flag in by MCA through survey | Pre Flag in Inspection by MCA prior to flag in survey | Refer to Flag in Panel | Refer to Flag in Panel for confirmation of refusal to register |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| 0 – 50       | ✓                             |   |                        |  |
| 51 – 100     |                               | ✓   |                        |  |
| 101 – 120    |                               |   | ✓                      |  |
| 121 +        |                               |   |                        | ✓  |

**NOTES**

- A. Classification Society:** A previously un-classed over 24 metre Fishing Vessel or one classed with a non UK authorised classification society may be accepted subject to a UK authorised classification society classing the vessel prior to joining the UK Register and rigorous survey by the MCA.