



MSN 1858 (M) Amendment 2

Training & Certification Guidance: UK Requirements for Deck Officers on Large Yachts (24m and over)

Notice to all Owners, Masters, Deck Officers and Crews of Commercially and Privately Operated Yachts and Sail Training Vessels, and those concerned with Maritime Training.

This Notice updates and replaces MSN 1858 (M+F).

This Notice includes guidance for seafarers and includes requirements that training providers must meet for the purposes of approval by the Secretary of State under the Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2022.

Summary

This Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) sets out and explains the regulatory requirements regarding the implementation of training elements applicable under Chapter II, Article IX, of the STCW Convention and Code. It outlines the certification structure and examination and training requirements for yacht deck officers. The route for yacht certification is structured to provide a progressive career path for those in the industry to achieve yacht restricted Officer of the Watch (OOW), Chief Mate and Master qualifications.

This MSN covers:

1. Introduction
2. Certificate Structure
3. Mandatory Requirements for Masters and Deck Officers Yachts up to 3000 GT
4. Mandatory Requirements for Masters and Deck Officers, Yachts Unlimited
5. Yacht Service Requirements
6. Ancillary and Safety Course Certification
7. Education and Training
8. Medical Fitness and Eyesight Standards
9. Application Procedure
10. Notice of Eligibility (NOE)
11. MCA Oral Examination
12. The Issue of your Certificate of Competency
13. Fraudulent Certificates and Seagoing Service
14. Manning Requirements for Yachts
15. Training Vessels
16. Approved Training Providers
17. Square Rig Sailing Vessels



The Annexes of this MSN cover:

- A. Yacht Rating/Deck Hand seagoing service testimonial for commercially and privately operated yachts and sail training vessels
- B. Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Yacht Certificate of Discharge
- C. Approved Yacht Training Providers

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2022 (“the 2022 Regulations”), implement the requirements of the International Convention and Code on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) 1978¹, (referred to in this MSN as the ‘STCW Convention’ and ‘STCW Code’ respectively), including the provisions prescribing, the mandatory minimum requirements for the certification of yacht restricted Masters and deck officers, and a reference in this Notice to the 2022 Regulations is a reference to the Regulations as amended.
- 1.1 Regulation 63 of the 2022 Regulations will provide for the Secretary of State (in this case, the MCA) to approve alternative training arrangements, which are equivalent to the STCW Convention requirements (Article IX of the STCW Convention). The MCA has relied on Article IX to adopt and allow for the issue of alternative arrangements to create a certificate structure for yacht restricted Certificates of Competency. On successful completion of this training the MCA issue alternative certification under regulation 7(6) of the 2022 Regulations (as provided for in Chapter VII of the STCW Convention).
- 1.2 Masters and deck officers serving in all UK-registered yachts and sail training vessels of 24 metres and over in load line length and under 3000 GT must be qualified in accordance with either this Notice or MSN 1856 (Amendment 1)².
- 1.3 This Notice provides details of the certification system for deck officers serving on:
- (a) Commercial yachts or sail training vessels of 24 metres and over in loadline length, less than 3000 GT, which do not carry cargo and do not carry more than 12 passengers, covered by the Red Ensign Group’s Yacht Code³; and
 - (b) Privately owned yachts not in commercial use of 24 metres and over in loadline length, less than 3000 GT used for sport or pleasure and which do not carry cargo and do not carry more than 12 passengers.
- 1.4 Candidates meeting the requirements will be issued with an STCW Certificate of Competency (**CoC**) limited to service in yachts and sail training vessels.

To obtain a United Kingdom STCW Certificate of Competency you must:

- Meet the minimum age requirement;
- Complete the minimum period of seagoing service;
- Undertake the required ancillary technical and safety training;
- Complete the appropriate programme(s) of education and training meeting the minimum vocational and academic standard;

¹ The 2022 Regulations revoked and replaced the previous regulations, the Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/782).

² Please refer to MSN 1856 (Amendment 1): www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1856-mf-amendment-1-uk-requirements-for-master-and-deck-officers.

³ The Red Ensign Group’s Yacht Code is underpinned by Statutory Instrument 2016 No. 0353, *The Merchant Shipping (Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure) (Amendment) Regulations 2016*. For more information, please refer to: www.redensigngroup.org/publications/.



- Meet medical standards (including eyesight); and
- If applicable, pass an oral examination conducted by an MCA examiner.

If you are considering a seagoing career, it is strongly advised that you undergo a medical or sight test, which includes testing of colour and visual acuity, before starting training. Please refer to section 8 of this Notice.

1.5 Prior to joining your first vessel for your first sea voyage you will need to hold⁴;

- Valid ENG1⁵ (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent;
- Personal Survival Techniques (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-1);
- Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-2);
- Elementary First Aid (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-3);
- Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-4);
- Security Awareness (STCW Code Table A-VI/6-1)⁶.

Apart from ENG1, all the certificates listed above are Certificates of Proficiency (CoP) required by the 2022 Regulations.

1.6 All references to Certificates of Competency in this notice mean those issued by the MCA (on behalf of the Secretary of State) can be used in an unlimited area of operation, unless otherwise stated.

2. Certificate Structure

2.1 The CoCs limited to yachts will be issued as follows:

Capacity	STCW Reg.	Vessel Limitations	Area Limitations
Master and OOW	II/3	Code vessels less than 200 GT Yachts less than 500GT	150 miles from safe haven Unlimited
Master and OOW	II/2	Code vessels less than 200 GT Yachts less than 500GT	Unlimited Unlimited
OOW	II/1	Yachts less than 3000 GT	Unlimited
Chief Mate	II/2	Yachts less than 3000 GT	Unlimited
Master	II/2	Yachts less than 500 GT	Unlimited
Master	II/2	Yachts less than 3000 GT	Unlimited

⁴ As required by Section A-VI/1 of the STCW Code, if you are employed or engaged in any capacity onboard a ship with designated safety or pollution-prevention duties, before being assigned to any shipboard tasks you will be required to successfully complete those elements of STCW basic training which are appropriate to your duties and functions.

⁵ See section 7 for further details. Details of MCA-Approved Medical Certificates are available from www.gov.uk/seafarer-medical-certificates.

⁶ If you are to serve on ships to which the International Ship and Port Facility (ISPS) Code applies you must hold a Security Awareness certificate (Section A-VI/6, paragraph 4 of the STCW Code, and STCW Code Table A-VI/6-1). If you are assigned designated security duties aboard a vessel you must obtain a Designated Security Duties certificate (Section A-VI/6, paragraphs 6-8 of the STCW Code, and STCW Code Table A-VI/6-2). Please refer to MSN 1865 (Amendment 1): www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1865-m-amendment-1-uk-requirements-for-emergency-occupational-safety-security-medical-care-and-survival-functions.



Chief Mate	II/2	Yachts Unlimited	Unlimited
Master	II/2	Yachts Unlimited	Unlimited

2.2 The Master (code vessels less than 200 GT) OOW (yachts less than 500 GT) Certificates of Competency are not mandatory. Seafarers serving on UK code vessels using MCA recognised qualifications have found that some overseas Administrations do not recognise those qualifications. To overcome this problem, holders of MCA recognised qualifications/certificates may apply to upgrade to Master (code vessels less than 200 GT) OOW (yachts less than 500 GT) Certificates of Competency on a voluntary basis.

2.3 The manning scales for Deck Officers to be carried in motor or sailing yachts and sail training vessels are laid down in section 14 of this Notice.

2.4 Functions and Capacities:

Deck yacht officer’s Certificates of Competency will state the following STCW functions:

- Navigation (function 1);
- Controlling the operation of the ship and care for persons onboard (function 3);
- Radiocommunications (function 7).

Certificates of Competency functions will be at the granted STCW capacity level:

- Operational – this will be identified as an “O” on the Certificate of Competency
- Management – this will be identified as an “M” on the Certificate of Competency

The required functions and capacities for each yacht Certificate of Competency will be:

Function	Applicable Yacht CoC	
	OOW	Chief Mate / Master
1	O	M
3	O	M
7	O	O

3. Mandatory Requirements for Masters and Deck Officers, Yachts up to 3000GT

3.1 Requirements to obtain a Master, II/3, Code Vessels less than 200 GT, not more than 150 miles from safe haven, Officer of the Watch Yachts, less than 500 GT, Certificate of Competency:

Safe haven: A safe haven is harbour or shelter of any kind, which affords safe entry and protection from the force of weather.

To qualify for the issue of this Certificate of Competency you must meet the following requirements:

- (a) Be at least 18 years of age;
- (b) While holding an RYA Yachtmaster Offshore **or** IYT Master of Yachts Limited certificate have completed 6 months’ seagoing service;
- (c) Hold either:
 - RYA Yachtmaster offshore certificate and a certificate of successful completion of a shore-based Yachtmaster Offshore course*; **or**



- IYT Master of Yachts Limited;
- (d) Hold the applicable ancillary course certificates as listed in section 6;
- (e) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent; **and**
- (f) Pass the MCA Master (code vessels less than 200 GT) oral examination.

***Note:** Not required if the candidate holds a Yachtmaster Offshore certificate issued before 31 July 2003.

Candidates will be required to present documentary evidence of onboard yacht service and seagoing service when applying for a Notice of Eligibility (NOE).

The 150 miles from safe haven limitation may be removed from your Certificate of Competency upon presentation of:

- A valid GMDSS certificate issued by the UK or an administration recognised by the MCA; **and**
- either:
 - An RYA shore-based Yachtmaster Ocean course and Yachtmaster Ocean certificate; **or**
 - An IYT Master of Yachts Unlimited.

Applications for this upgrade should be made to the MCA.

3.2 Requirements to obtain a Master, II/2, Code Vessels less than 200 GT, Unlimited Area and Officer of the Watch Yachts, less than 500 GT, Unlimited Area, Certificate of Competency:

To qualify for the issue of this Certificate of Competency you must meet the following requirements:

- (a) Be at least 18 years of age;
- (b) While holding an RYA Yachtmaster Ocean **or** IYT Master of Yachts Unlimited certificate have completed 6 months' seagoing service;
- (c) Hold either:
- An RYA Yachtmaster Ocean certificate and a certificate of successful completion of a shore-based Yachtmaster Ocean course*; **or**
 - An IYT Master of Yachts Unlimited;
- (d) Hold the applicable ancillary certificates listed in section 6;
- (e) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent;
- (f) Pass the MCA Master (code vessels less than 200 GT) oral examination.

***Note:** Not required if the candidate holds an RYA Yachtmaster Ocean certificate issued before 31 July 2003.

Candidates will be required to present documentary evidence of onboard yacht service and seagoing service when applying for a notice of eligibility (NOE).

3.3 Requirements to obtain a Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch (OOW) Yachts, less than 3000 GT, Unlimited Area, Regulation II/1, Certificate of Competency

To qualify for the issue of this Certificate of Competency you must meet the following requirements:



- (a) Be at least 19 years of age;
- (b) Hold either:
- An RYA Yachtmaster certificate Offshore and a certificate of successful completion of a shore-based Yachtmaster Offshore course*;
 - An IYT Master of Yachts Limited certificate;
 - An RYA Yachtmaster Coastal CoC accompanied with an RYA Coastal Skipper practical course completion certificate; or
 - An IYT Master of Yachts Coastal/Mate less than 200 GT;
- (c) Since the age of 16, have obtained a minimum of 36 months' onboard yacht service. This must include at least 365 days seagoing service on vessels of 15 metres or over in load line length, made up of:
- A **minimum** of 250 days' seagoing service **and**
 - 115 days of any combination of the following:
 - Seagoing service;
 - Stand-by service – A maximum of 14 consecutive days may be counted at one time, but on no occasion may a period of standby service exceed that of the previous voyage;
 - Yard service – up to a maximum of 90 days continuously or in separate periods;
- (d) Hold an Efficient Deck Hand (EDH) certificate given by an MCA approved training provider⁷;
- (e) Hold the applicable ancillary course certificates listed in section 6;
- (f) Successful completion of approved education and training, meeting the standards of competency identified by the MCA from section A-II/1 of the STCW Code as applicable to a yacht restricted Certificate of Competency, and covered by:
- Successful completion of the MCA approved 'Navigation and Radar (OOW yachts)' training module and pass the corresponding MCA professional examination;
 - Successful completion of the MCA approved 'General Ship Knowledge (OOW yachts)' training module and passing the corresponding MCA professional examination;
 - Completion of an MCA Yacht Training Record Book.
- (g) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent;
- (h) Pass the OOW (yachts less than 3000 GT) oral examination.

***Note:** Not required if the candidate holds a Yachtmaster Offshore certificate issued before 31 July 2003

To obtain Master, II/2, code vessels less than 200 GT endorsement on your OOW yachts, less than 3000 GT, II/1 Certificate of Competency, you must apply to sit a separate oral examination.

You may not be required to complete a Training Record Book for OOW yachts, less than 3000 GT, unlimited area, regulation II/1 if you can demonstrate 36 months' actual seagoing service on vessels of at least 24 metres in load line length.

⁷ This certificate must have been issued at least 18 months prior to the issue of your Certificate of Competency.



3.4 Requirements to obtain a Chief Mate Yachts, less than 3000 GT, Unlimited Area, Regulation II/2 Certificate of Competency

To qualify for the issue of this Certificate of Competency you must meet the following requirements:

- (a) Hold an OOW yachts, less than 3000 GT, II/1, Certificate of Competency **OR** have completed all of the requirements for this Certificate of Competency listed in 3.3;
- (b) Hold either:
 - An RYA Yachtmaster Ocean certificate and a certificate of successful completion of a shore-based Yachtmaster Ocean course*; **or**
 - An IYT Master of Yachts Unlimited;
- (c) Hold the applicable ancillary certificates listed in section 6;
- (d) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent.

This certificate can be applied for at the same time as OOW yachts, less than 3000 GT, II/1, Certificate of Competency, providing all qualifying conditions from section 3.3 are met in addition to the Chief Mate, II/2, yachts less than 3000 GT, requirements listed above.

***Note:** Not required if the candidate holds a Yachtmaster Ocean certificate issued before 31 July 2003.

3.5 Requirements to obtain a Master Yachts, less than 500 GT, Unlimited Area, Regulation II/2, Certificate of Competency

To qualify for the issue of this Certificate of Competency you must meet the following requirements:

- (a) Hold an MCA OOW yachts, less than 3000 GT, II/1, Certificate of Competency;
- (b) While serving as a OOW Yachts, less than 3000 GT, II/1, have completed a minimum of 12 months' onboard yacht service as a deck officer, including at least 120 days watchkeeping service, on vessels of 15 metres or over in load line length;
- (c) Hold the applicable ancillary certificates listed in section 6;
- (d) Successful completion of approved education and training, meeting the standards of competency identified by the MCA from section A-II/2 of the STCW Code as applicable to a yacht restricted Certificates of Competency and covered by:
 - Successful completion of an MCA approved 'Seamanship and Meteorology (Master Yachts)' training module and passing the corresponding MCA professional examination module;
 - Successful completion of an MCA approved 'Stability (Master Yachts)' training module and passing the corresponding MCA professional examination module;
 - Successful completion of an MCA approved 'Business and Law (Master Yachts)' training module and passing the corresponding MCA professional examination module;
 - Successful completion of an MCA approved 'Navigation, Radar and ARPA Simulator (Master Yachts)' training module and passing the corresponding MCA professional examination module;
 - Passing the MCA 'Celestial Navigation' professional examination;
- (e) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent;
- (f) Pass the Master (yachts less than 500 GT) oral examination.

3.6 Requirements to obtain a Master Yachts, less than 3000 GT, Unlimited Area, Regulation II/2, Certificate of Competency



To qualify for issue of this Certificate of Competency you must meet the following requirements:

- (a) While serving as a OOW yachts, less than 3000 GT, II/1, have completed a minimum of 24 months' onboard yacht service as a Deck Officer, including at least 240 days watchkeeping service. All of this service must be completed on vessels of 15 metres or over in load line length and include; 12 months on vessels of 24 metres or over in load line length, or 6 months on vessels of 500 GT or more;
- (b) Hold the applicable ancillary certificates listed in section 6;
- (c) Hold either:
 - An MCA Master yachts, less than 500 GT, II/2, Certificate of Competency and a pass certificate for the MCA 'Celestial Navigation' professional examination; **OR**
 - Certificates demonstrating successful completion of all of the MCA approved yacht modules and MCA professional examinations passes applicable to the Master yachts, less than 500 GT, II/2, Certificate of Competency (**Celestial Navigation must be less than 1 year old and all other MCA professional exam pass certificates must be less than 3 years old prior to the issue of this Certificate of Competency**);
- (d) Pass the Master (yachts less than 3000 GT) oral examination.

Note: As training module pass certificates are valid for three years, candidates are advised to obtain the MCA Master yachts, less than 500 GT, II/2, Certificate of Competency where circumstances may preclude them from attempting the Master (yachts less than 3000 GT) oral examination before the modules expire. If you do not hold a Master yachts, less than 500 GT, II/2, Certificate of Competency, with the exception of 'Celestial Navigation', all MCA professional examinations must be passed prior to the issue of your Notice of Eligibility (NOE).

4. Mandatory Requirements for Masters and Deck Officers, Yachts Unlimited

4.1 In response to evolving industry needs and to provide a clear progression pathway for seafarers operating in the large yacht sector, this new pathway introduces an unlimited route based on the existing qualification structure. This route serves as an interim solution to ensure that holders of this Certificate of Competency (CoC) are demonstrably qualified in accordance with the STCW Convention requirements for Chief Mate or **Master Unlimited**, with the exception of cargo-specific competencies. This aims to provide:

- **Alignment with International Standards:** The unlimited route ensures that candidates meet all STCW standards applicable to Chief Mate or Master Unlimited, thereby maintaining the integrity and international recognition of UK-issued CoCs.
- **Sector-Specific Flexibility:** Recognising the operational realities of large yachts, this amendment introduces a more flexible seagoing service pathway. This pathway takes into account the nature of experience gained on large yachts, which may not include traditional cargo operations but still involves complex navigational, managerial, and safety responsibilities.

By allowing for this tailored route, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) supports career progression within the large yacht sector while upholding the high standards expected of unlimited certification. This approach ensures that seafarers are not



disadvantaged due to the unique characteristics of their operational environment, while still meeting the core competencies required under STCW.

4.2 Approval in Accordance with Annex G of MSN 1856 (Amendment 1)

Only nautical colleges approved to deliver management-level unlimited CoCs under Annex G of MSN 1856 (Amendment 2) may run these modules. This requirement does not prohibit such colleges from partnering with yacht training providers based in the UK or overseas; however, any partnership must be subject to an oversight procedure set out by the nautical college and approved by the MCA. **Colleges must approach the MCA first before entering into any agreements with potential partners.**

UK approval under Annex G of MSN 1856 (Amendment 2) is essential because it sets the mandatory standards for management-level unlimited Certificates of Competency (CoCs). This ensures that the qualification and progression route are delivered by an approved nautical college in line with Annex G, safeguarding:

- **Accreditation of Qualifications and Routes:** Both the qualification and the pathway meet the same rigorous standards required for Chief Mate or Master Unlimited, maintaining parity with internationally recognised STCW requirements.
- **Consistency and Integrity:** Applying Annex G safeguards the credibility of UK-issued CoCs by ensuring that any alternative or sector-specific route does not dilute the competence expected at unlimited management level.
- **Regulatory Compliance and Quality Assurance:** Annex G provides the framework for verifying that training, assessment, and experience align with statutory obligations, ensuring full compliance with UK and international maritime regulations. Furthermore, accreditation of qualifications delivered by FE institutions adds an additional layer of quality assurance, reinforcing the UK's standing as a responsible and trusted Flag Administration.

When applying for approval for the Yacht Unlimited route, nautical colleges may use their existing approvals to deliver the Management Level modules listed in section 4.3 below. However, separate approval will be required for the tailored modules 'Management of Yacht Operations' and 'Ship Stability'. Details of the approval process and syllabus requirements can be obtained by emailing: exams@mcga.gov.uk.

4.3 Requirements to obtain a Chief Mate Yachts, Unlimited, Regulation II/2, Certificate of Competency

To qualify for issue of this Certificate of Competency (CoC) you must meet the following requirements:

(a) Hold either:

- A Master Yachts, less than 3000 GT, II/1, CoC; **or**
- An OOW unlimited CoC with a minimum of 12 months onboard yacht service as an OOW, which includes at least 6 months of seagoing service. All this service must be performed onboard a yacht of at least 500 GT. OOW Unlimited candidates must hold NAEST (M) Certification.

(b) Hold the applicable ancillary certificates listed in section 6;



(c) Complete the following Academic modules⁸ at an MCA approved nautical college⁹:

- Applied Marine Meteorology
- Management Level Passage Planning
- Management of Bridge Operations
- Management of Yacht Operations
- Marine Engineering Systems
- Marine Vessels – Structures and Maintenance
- Ship Stability: Theory and Practical Application
- Shipboard Management
- Shipmaster's Law and Business

(d) Successfully pass:

- MCA Assessments in Chief Mate Navigation and Stability (Yacht Unlimited).

(e) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent.

(f) Pass MCA Oral Exam

4.4 Requirements to obtain a Master Yachts, Unlimited, Regulation II/2, Certificate of Competency

To qualify for issue of this Certificate of Competency (CoC) you must meet the following requirements:

(a) Hold or meet the requirements for a Chief Mate (Yachts) Unlimited CoC¹⁰.

(b) Complete either:

- While holding a Chief Mate Yachts Unlimited CoC or Chief Mate Unlimited CoC, have completed a minimum of 12 months' onboard yacht service as Chief Mate, which includes at least 6 months of seagoing service. All service must be onboard a yacht of at least 500 GT.
- While holding a Master Yachts, less than 3000 GT, II/2, CoC, you must have completed a minimum of 6 months onboard yacht service as a Master, which includes at least 3 months of seagoing service. All this service must have been onboard a vessel of at least 500 GT.
- While holding an Officer of the Watch (OOW) Unlimited Certificate of Competency (CoC), you must have completed 36 months of onboard yacht service as an OOW, including at least 15 months of seagoing service. All service must be completed on vessels of 15 metres or more in length, with the seagoing service performed on vessels of at least 500 gross tonnage (GT).

(c) Hold the applicable ancillary certificates listed in section 6.

(d) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent.

(e) Pass the Master Unlimited GT Yacht oral examination.

⁸ Holders of a MCA approved management level qualification (Honours Degree, Foundation Degree, Scottish Professional Diploma, DipHE, HND, or Advanced Diploma) obtained from an MCA approved nautical college will not need to complete these modules.

⁹ These are nautical colleges approved under Annex G of MSN 1856 (as amended).

¹⁰ Holders of a Master (Yachts) CoC less than 3000 GT, II/2, or a Chief Mate Unlimited CoC (merchant or yachts) are exempt from the Chief Mate Yacht Unlimited oral examination for this CoC. They must, however, pass the Master Unlimited GT Yacht oral examination for this CoC.



5. Yacht Service Requirements

- 5.1** Before being issued with a Notice of Eligibility to sit an MCA oral examination you must provide evidence of having completed the full amount of qualifying service applicable to the Certificate of Competency you are applying for.

Service should be in the deck department onboard yachts and will be reckoned from the date of engagement to the date of discharge. A minimum of 4 hours of working duty in 24 hours would count as 1 full day.

At least 6 months of the qualifying seagoing service must have been performed within the 5 years immediately preceding the MCA's receipt of your application.

Service may be performed on vessels of any flag.

Candidates who are serving in a dual engine and deck capacity will have their service counted at the rate of 50%.

5.2 Service Definitions

For the purposes of this notice service definitions are:

- **Onboard yacht service:** Is the time spent signed on a yacht, irrespective of the vessel activity.
- **Seagoing service:** Is the time spent at sea, which may include time at anchor or river and canal transits associated with a passage. A minimum of 4 hours of working duty in 24 hours would count as 1 full day;
 - **Explanation of seagoing service, sea service at anchor, on a buoy or mooring for seafarers who are not a certificated watchkeeping officer in full charge of a navigational watch:** if the time at anchor, on a buoy or mooring is part of a passage (i.e. short period at anchor whilst waiting for a berth or to transit a canal or lock) then it may be counted as actual seagoing service but on no occasion may a period of seagoing service at anchor, on a buoy or mooring, exceed that of the previous voyage. If the period at anchor, on a buoy or mooring is at the conclusion of a passage (i.e. the vessel goes to anchor rather than to a berth) then time will be counted as stand-by service;
- **Stand-by service:** Is the time immediately following a voyage while the vessel is under preparation for a subsequent voyage. A maximum of 14 consecutive days may be counted at one time, but on no occasion may a period of standby service exceed that of the previous voyage. **Therefore, under no circumstances can your total standby service exceed your actual seagoing service;**
- **Yard service:** Is the time when standing by a build, refit or repair;
- **Watchkeeping service:** Is the actual seagoing service spent as a watchkeeping officer in full charge of a navigational watch for not less than 4 out of every 24 hours while the vessel is engaged on voyage

Watchkeeping service may be recorded on a cumulative basis. This means that every 4 hours watchkeeping accrued may be counted as 1 day of watch keeping service and does not need to be completed in a 24 hour period. Time spent at anchor associated with a passage, whilst the Officer is engaged in a bridge watch and if this passage is part of the same 24 hour voyage, can also be accepted. Completing more than 4 hours watchkeeping within a 24 hour period cannot be counted as more than 1 day watchkeeping time, e.g. a 12 hour watch within a 24 hour period can only be counted as 1 day of watchkeeping time.



5.3 Calculating Yacht Service

A month is defined as a calendar month or 30 days if made up of periods less than 1 month.

5.4 Proof of Service and Testimonials

You are expected to prove the full amount of qualifying service for a Certificate of Competency before being considered for an oral examination. All service required must be completed and verified to the satisfaction of the MCA. Where there are doubts about the service claimed or it cannot be verified as described below, it will only be accepted upon written confirmation by some responsible person having personal knowledge of the facts to be established, to the satisfaction of the MCA.

You will be required to present documentary proof of onboard yacht service and seagoing service for each Certificate of Competency for which you apply. Additionally, candidates for Master (yachts less than 500 GT) and Master (yachts less than 3000 GT) will need to provide proof of watchkeeping service.

Proof of onboard yacht service will need to be documented in either:

- Merchant Navy discharge book supported by testimonials (**Annex A**); **or**
- Certificates of discharge (**Annex B**) supported by testimonials; **or**
- Similar MCA approved service record book.

Your testimonials should cover your conduct and ability for the last 12 months of onboard yacht service immediately preceding the date of your application and should also include details of sea service and watchkeeping service as applicable. Testimonials, which must be verifiable, should be in the format given in **Annex A**. If details of sea service and watchkeeping service are not included in the testimonials then this time must be verified by separate certificates of service.

Testimonials or certificates of service must be signed by the Master of the vessel in which the qualifying service has been performed. In the case of service as Master, the testimonials or certificates of service must be signed by the owner or a responsible person from the Yacht Management Company such as a company director or yacht manager.

If you are applying for your first watchkeeping Certificate of Competency and are following an MCA approved training programme your testimonials may be incorporated in a loose-leaf format into your service record book or training portfolio.

Seafarers who have signed Crew Agreements or Seafarer Employment Agreements and have neglected to join their vessels, or, who after having joined have left their ships other than upon discharge, or who have committed misconduct onboard will be required to produce satisfactory proof of 2 years' subsequent onboard yacht service with good conduct at sea prior to be issued an NOE or Certificate of Competency. This period may be reduced at the discretion of the MCA.

6. Ancillary and Safety Course Certification

6.1 The ancillary technical and safety courses that are required for the issue of each Certificate of Competency are contained in the table below. On successful completion of each course you will be issued with an STCW certificate of proficiency.

The ancillary technical courses form part of the education and training specified in A-II/1, A-II/2 of the STCW Code. The safety courses form part of the mandatory training for



emergency, occupational safety, security, medical care and survival functions specified in chapter A-VI STCW 1978 Code.

6.2 You must successfully complete **all** the required ancillary technical and safety training applicable to the Certificate of Competency you are applying for.

Ancillary Course Certificate	Master Code Vessel <200GT II/3*	Master Code Vessel <200GT II/2	OOW Yacht <3000GT	Chief Mate Yacht <3000GT	Master Yacht <500GT, <3000GT,	STCW Reference	Updating required
Personal Survival Techniques ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A-V1/1-1	•
Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A-VI/1-2	•
Elementary First Aid ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A-V1/1-3	
Personal Safety and Social Responsibility ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A-V1/1-4	
Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats ^b			Yes	Yes	Yes	A-V1/2	•
Advanced Fire Fighting ^b				Yes	Yes	A-VI/3	•
Medical First Aid ^b				Yes	Yes	A-V1/4-1	
Medical Care ^b					Yes	A-VI/4-2	see 5.12
ECDIS ^c	Optional	Optional	Yes	Yes	Yes	A-II/1 and A-II/2	
Efficient Deck Hand (EDH) ^c			Yes			Based on A-II/5	
GMDSS (GOC) ^d		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A-IV/2	
GMDSS (ROC) ^d	Yes			Yes	Yes	A-IV/2	
HELM (Operational) ^c	Yes	Yes	Yes	See 6.10		A-II/1	
HELM (Management) ^c				Yes	Yes	A-II/2	

*not more than 150 miles from safe haven



Ancillary Course Certificate	Chief Mate Yacht Unlimited	Master Yacht Unlimited	STCW Reference	Updating required
Personal Survival Techniques ^a	Yes	Yes	A-V1/1-1	•
Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting ^a	Yes	Yes	A-VI/1-2	•
Elementary First Aid ^a	Yes	Yes	A-V1/1-3	
Personal Safety and Social Responsibility ^a	Yes	Yes	A-V1/1-4	
Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats ^b	Yes	Yes	A-V1/2	•
Advanced Fire Fighting ^b	Yes	Yes	A-VI/3	•
Medical First Aid ^b	Yes	Yes	A-V1/4-1	
Medical Care ^b	Yes	Yes	A-VI/4-2	see 6.12
ECDIS ^c	Yes	Yes	A-II/1 and A-II/2	
GMDSS (GOC) ^d	Yes	Yes	A-IV/2	
HELM (Management) ^c	Yes	Yes	A-II/2	
NAEST (Management)	Yes	Yes	A-II/2	

- You will be required to provide documentary evidence of either completing the training course or updating your training within the preceding 5 years for all Certificate of Competency applications. To satisfy Port State Control requirements you will need to hold evidence onboard your vessel of completing or updating your training within the last 5 years. For further information relating to STCW course certificates, including their validity, please refer to MSN 1865 (Amendment 2).

6.3 For the issue of a Certificate of Competency:

a – The MCA will accept certificates issued under the authority of any IMO 'White List' country.

b – The MCA will accept certificates issued under the authority of any EU Member State, as well as by any country noted in MIN 643¹¹.

c – Certificates must be MCA-approved.

d – The MCA will accept certificates issued under the authority of any EU Member State and those listed on the approved list available from our website: www.gov.uk and search “GMDSS”.

- 6.4** The MCA strongly recommends all yacht officers complete a STCW Certificate of Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats given by an MCA approved training provider. However, as yacht officers operate on vessels without davit launch lifeboats, the MCA is permitting these officers to complete a CoP in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats (Other than

¹¹ For further details please refer to MIN 643: www.gov.uk/government/publications/min-643-maritime-and-coastguard-agency-mca-short-course-approval-process-guidance.



fast rescue boats) (Restricted) given by an MCA approved training provider, in lieu of the full course.

6.5 This course will provide the required training to yacht personnel who are required to take charge of a survival craft in emergency situations. This course is intended only for personnel serving on vessels not equipped with davit launched lifeboats. It should be noted that the MCA cannot guarantee acceptance of a CoP in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats (Other than fast rescue boats) (Restricted) outside of the UK/Internationally.

6.6 For yacht Certificates of Competency only, a CoP in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats (Other than fast rescue boats) (Restricted) may be accepted in lieu of Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats; however, your Certificate of Competency will be endorsed with the following limitation:

“Not for use on ships equipped with davit launched lifeboats”

6.7 Deck officers on yachts who hold a CoP in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats (Other than fast rescue boats) (Restricted) given by an MCA approved training provider, will need to meet the requirement to update this course every five years course. This is in line with Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats course. The refresher course is intended for use on yachts that are not equipped with davit launched lifeboats.

6.8 The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)

Any person operating any radio equipment must be appropriately qualified. The GMDSS course forms part of the education and training required to obtain a UK Certificate of Competency. To obtain a UK Certificate of Competency you must hold a valid GMDSS certificate issued by the UK or an administration recognised by the MCA. The certificate must have an STCW endorsement. For further information about the GMDSS and how to obtain an STCW endorsement, please refer to MSN 1864 (Amendment 2)¹².

6.9 Efficient Deck Hand (EDH)

The EDH course forms part of the education and training required to obtain a UK yacht Certificate of Competency. The EDH course provides an understanding of safe working practices with regard to seamanship, cargo work, anchor procedures, pilot ladders and means of access, shipboard organisation and associated topics. Further information about the course requirements can be found in MSN 1862 (Amendment 2)¹³. All EDH Courses must be approved in accordance with MSN 1865 (Amendment 2) **Annex F**¹⁴.

6.10 Human Element and Leadership and Management (HELM)

The HELM course forms part of the education and training required to obtain a UK Certificate of Competency. HELM aims to provide you with the leadership and managerial skills required by the STCW code.

Seafarers planning to obtain a Chief Mate, II/2, (yachts less than 3000 GT) Certificate of Competency at the same time as applying for an OOW, II/2, (yachts less than 3000 GT) Certificate of Competency will be required to complete both HELM operational and HELM management courses.

¹² Please Refer to MSN 1864 (Amendment 1): www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1864-m-amendment-1-uk-requirements-for-radio-operators.

¹³ Please Refer to MSN 1862 (Amendment 1): www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1862-m-amendment-1-uk-requirements-for-deck-ratings.

¹⁴ Please Refer to MSN 1865 (Amendment 1): www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1865-m-amendment-1-uk-requirements-for-emergency-occupational-safety-security-medical-care-and-survival-functions.



6.11 Electronic Chart Display & Information System (ECDIS)

ECDIS is now a mandatory requirement for OOW (yachts less than 3000 GT), Chief Mate (yachts less than 3000 GT), Master (yachts less than 500 GT and 3000 GT).

If you are applying for a Master Code Vessel, less than 200 GT, Certificate of Competency and do not complete an MCA approved ECDIS course you will receive the following limitation:

“From the 1 January 2017 this certificate is not valid for service on ships fitted with ECDIS”

6.12 Medical Care:

The person designated to take charge of medical care and medicines onboard of UK registered vessels must hold an MCA approved or recognised Proficiency in Medical Care (MC) (STCW A-VI/4 paragraph 4-6) certificate (regulation 29(2) of the 2022 Regulations), or an MCA approved Updated Proficiency in Medical Care certificate, issued within the preceding 5 years (regulation 43(6) of the 2022 Regulations). Details are given in MGN 482 (M), or any subsequent amendments¹⁵.

It is strongly recommended that any Officers working on non-UK registered vessels check the medical care requirements with the Administration, prior to undertaking a role onboard the vessel.

6.13 Further Information

Further information about Personal Survival Techniques, Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting, Elementary First Aid, Personal Safety and Social Responsibility, Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats, Advanced Fire Fighting, Medical First Aid Medical Care and other required shipboard courses can be found in MSN 1865 (Amendment 1)¹⁶.

7. Approved Education and Training Schemes

- 7.1** Education and training programmes leading to the issue of Certificates of Competency must be approved by the MCA. The MCA will ensure that each programme meets the STCW regulatory requirements. The MCA will monitor and audit all training providers (including nautical colleges) that offer training and education leading to the issue of an STCW Certificate of Competency. Details of the approval process are contained in **Annex C**.
- 7.2** The MCA will monitor and audit all nautical colleges and training providers that offer training and education leading to the issue of an STCW Certificate of Competency. Examinations for training modules may only be conducted at approved centres. MCA safety and professional examinations will be set and marked only by the MCA or by an appointed body on behalf of the MCA.
- 7.3** To ensure learning outcomes can be successfully delivered, the MCA requires a classroom attendance rate of **100%** unless otherwise agreed with the MCA.

¹⁵ Please Refer to MGN 482: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mgn-482-m-amendment-1-maritime-labour-convention-2006-medical-care>.

¹⁶ Please Refer to MSN 1865 (Amendment 1): www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1865-m-amendment-1-uk-requirements-for-emergency-occupational-safety-security-medical-care-and-survival-functions.



- 7.4 'Celestial Navigation' does not have a set module that must be completed prior to taking the examination. For all other modules you must obtain a course completion certificate to be eligible to take the module examination.
- 7.5 'Celestial Navigation' training module passes are valid for 1 year. All other yacht training module and examination certificates are valid for 3 years. The training module pass certificate must be in date at the time of the issue of the Certificate of Competency.
- 7.6 If you hold a Master (yachts less than 500 GT), regulation II/2, Certificate of Competency your module passes do not need to be in date when you apply for a Master (yachts less than 3000 GT) Certificate of Competency.
- 7.7 If you fail an examination for any training module you will be allowed one re-sit, without the need to retake the training module, provided that the second attempt is taken within 12 months of the failed attempt. If you fail the second attempt, the training module must be retaken prior to taking the examination.
- 7.8 The syllabuses for the training modules and the associated professional examinations are available from the MCA website: www.gov.uk "MCA Yacht Syllabus".
- 7.9 With the exception of 'Celestial Navigation', you must gain a certificate of successful completion for each required module in addition to an examination pass certificate issued by the MCA approved training provider.
- 7.10 The contact details for the nautical colleges offering MCA-approved yacht training modules are available from the MCA website: www.gov.uk and search "nautical colleges".

8. Medical Fitness and Eyesight Standards

- 8.1 For any Certificate of Competency, you must meet the medical fitness and eyesight standards as required by the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Medical Certification) Regulations 2010 (S.I. 2010/737)¹⁷. Details on the application of those regulations are found in MSN 1886, or any subsequent amendments.¹⁸
- 8.2 The seafarer medical examination includes a sight test for both colour vision and visual acuity. Failure to meet the statutory requirements will mean that an unrestricted medical certificate cannot be issued. **If you are considering a seagoing career it is strongly advised that you undergo a medical and sight test, which includes testing of both colour and visual acuity, before you start the training.** You can arrange a separate sight test with a local optometrist by taking along an Application for Seafarer Vision Test Form (MSF 4100). The form can be obtained by contacting an MCA Marine Office or the MCA Seafarer Medical Team: medical@mcga.gov.uk.
- 8.3 For any Certificate of Competency you must produce one of the following as a valid medical fitness certificate:
- (a) The UK medical fitness certificate, currently known as an ENG1, issued by an MCA-approved medical practitioner; **or**
 - (b) A certificate issued by the administration of any country whose medical fitness certificate is recognised as equivalent to the UK ENG1.

¹⁷ These Regulations are amended by the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Medical Certification) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/242). Further details on the required Medical Fitness Standards and Certification are available from: www.legislation.gov.uk and search "Maritime Labour Convention".

¹⁸ Details of MCA-Approved Medical Certificates are available from: www.gov.uk/seafarer-medical-certificates.



8.4 Updated lists are available from the MCA website.

8.5 The medical fitness certificate must specify the date of examination, the period of validity and any restriction applied.

9. Application Procedure

9.1 The application form, MSF 4343, details the procedure and fee to obtain a Certificate of Competency. You must complete this and submit it to the MCA with the relevant fee and documents listed on the form. MIN 690 (as amended) details the process and procedure

9.2 The application form can be found on our website; go to www.gov.uk and search "MSF 4343".¹⁹

9.3 If you are required to pass an MCA oral examination and you meet the requirements specified on the application form, you will be issued with a Notice of Eligibility (NOE).

10. Notice of Eligibility (NOE)

10.1 Candidates should refer to MIN 690 (as amended) for full details on the updated Notice of Eligibility (NOE) format, the revised online oral examination booking process, and new requirements relating to examination structure and resits.

10.2 You will be issued with an NOE once you have met the requirements specified below. The NOE will allow you to book an oral examination.

10.3 Prior to the issue of your NOE you must submit²⁰:

- The appropriate fee for the CoC you are applying for;
- An ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent²¹;
- Passport (attested copy only);
- The required photos for your Certificate of Competency (see application form);
- Proof of the required yacht and watchkeeping service, applicable to the Certificate of Competency being applied for.

10.4 For a first UK Certificate of Competence you must also submit:

- Evidence of completing the following STCW basic safety training:
 - Personal Survival Techniques (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-1);
 - Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-2);
 - Elementary First Aid (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-3);
 - Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-4);
- A completed Training Record Book (**for OOW Yachts less than 3000 GT only**).

¹⁹ MSF 4343: www.gov.uk/government/publications/certificate-of-competency-yacht-deckmsf-4343

²⁰ If you are applying for a Master (yachts less than 3000 GT) Certificate of Competency and you do not hold a Master yachts, less than 500 GT, II/2, Certificate of Competency, with the exception of 'Celestial Navigation' all MCA professional examinations must be passed prior to the issue of your Notice of Eligibility (NOE).

²¹ To go to sea you must have obtained a valid medical fitness certificate. Whilst this may have expired when you apply for your NOE, it must be valid at the time when we issue your Certificate of Competency.



10.5 An NOE provides you with the offer of an MCA oral examination and is valid for period of 5 years from the date of issue. The date of issue will be put on your NOE. After this period has elapsed you will need to make a new application, with the supporting documentation and the appropriate fee, to the MCA so that your current competency can be assessed to ensure you meet the required standards.²²

11. MCA Oral Examination

11.1 If you are undertaking an OOW (yacht less than 3000 GT) oral examination, prior to the exam you must be able to provide your MCA approved Training Record Book to the MCA on request.

11.2 You must take your current passport (with visa if applicable) to the oral examination as a means of identification.

11.3 It is recommended that you complete all of the education and training before attempting the oral examination as this will provide you with the knowledge on which the examination is based.

11.4 Your oral examination pass is valid for a period of 3 years. This must be in date at the time of the issue of your CoC. The NOE must be returned to the MCA with any outstanding documentary evidence.

11.5 If you fail your oral examination, you will need to apply to the MCA for another NOE and pay an additional fee for a re-sit oral examination.

11.6 If a candidate fails an oral examination, they must refer MIN 690 (as amended) which sets out the resit requirements and appropriate times between exams.

11.7 Time periods between examinations are set out in MIN 690 (as amended)²³.

11.8 Further information about the oral examination syllabus can be found on www.gov.uk.²⁴

12. The Issue of your Certificate of Competency

12.1 At least 6 months of the qualifying seagoing service must have been performed within the 5 years immediately preceding the issue of your Certificate of Competency. A Certificate of Competency will not be issued until the MCA has received all the documentary evidence confirming you have met the required standard.

12.2 The appropriate Certificate of Competency will be issued and valid for a period of 5 years from the date that the qualifying conditions were met. Your ENG1 seafarer medical (or equivalent) must be valid at the time we issue your Certificate of Competency. Any outstanding fees must be received by the MCA before a Certificate of Competency can be issued.

12.3 Your GMDSS certificate should be submitted with your NOE pass so that the STCW endorsement expiry date can be synchronised with that of your Certificate of Competency.

²² If you do not pass your oral examination within this timescale, your application will be rejected and the appropriate fee will be taken.

²³ Further information about the NOE and oral examination syllabus can be found via the following link: www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-seafarer-careers-training-provision-and-information.

²⁴ For the MCA's published Oral Examination Syllabi, please refer to the following page and navigate to the section titled 'Oral Exam Syllabuses': www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-seafarer-careers-training-provision-and-information.



12.4 You must check you meet the current regulatory requirements when you make an initial application AND at the time you submit your NOE pass for the issue of your Certificate of Competency.

12.5 Further information and guidance is available from our website go to www.gov.uk and search “Yacht CoC”.

13. Fraudulent Certificates and Seagoing Service

13.1 The MCA checks that all of the information you submit in support of your application is accurate and true. We can:

- Verify Certificates of Competency and Watchkeeping certificates issued by foreign administrations;
- Check and verify ancillary and safety course certificates;
- Verify sea service testimonials and discharge book entries;
- Verify all original course completion and exam pass certificates online.
- Where required, request original course completion, ancillary and safety certificates.

13.2 If you submit fraudulent seagoing service records or certificates we will not allow you to proceed with your application. We may also refer your application to the MCA Enforcement Branch who may decide to proceed against you in court. The MCA reserve the right not to let you apply again until after a period specified by the MCA’s Chief Examiner.

13.3 The UK holds a record of all Certificates of Competency issued. The authenticity of a Certificate of Competency can be verified on request. For more information please email the MCA: exams@mcga.gov.uk.

14. Manning Requirements for Yachts

The manning scales given in this Notice are the minimum required and it is strongly recommended that additional officers are carried where necessary in order to prevent fatigue, particularly in periods of intensive operations. The tables below show the minimum qualifications required. **Vessels of 500 GT or more are required to have a Safe Manning document please refer to MSN 1868 (Amendment 1).**²⁵

In the tables 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 we have used the following abbreviations:

YM – Yacht Master (RYA issued)

MOY – Master of Yachts (IYT issued)

An MCA-issued Master, II/2, code vessels less than 200 GT, not more than 150 miles from safe haven, may be used in lieu of the YM Offshore or MOY limited Certificate.

An MCA-issued Master, II/2, code vessels less than 200 GT, unlimited area, may be used in lieu of the YM Ocean or MOY unlimited Certificate.

14.1 Minimum deck officer manning scale for motor and sail yachts of 24 metres or more.

AREA	Rank	VESSEL
------	------	--------

²⁵ Please refer to MSN 1868 (Amendment 1): www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1868-m-amendment-1-uk-requirements-for-safe-manning-and-watchkeeping.



Miles from Safe Haven		>24m <200 GT	200-<500 GT	500-<3000 GT
Up to 60nm	Master	YM Offshore or MOY limited	Master (Y) <500 GT	Master (Y)
	Chief Mate	YM Coastal ¹ or MOY Coastal ²	YM Coastal ² or MOY Coastal ²	OOW (Y) <3000 GT ²
	OOW	–	–	
Up to 150nm	Master	YM Offshore or MOY limited	Master (Y) <500 GT	Master (Y)
	Chief Mate	YM Coastal or MOY Coastal	YM Offshore ² or MOY Limited	Chief Mate (Y)
	OOW	–	–	–
Over 150nm	Master	YM Ocean or MOY unlimited	Master (Y) <500 GT	Master (Y)
	Chief Mate	YM Offshore ² or MOY limited	OOW (Y) <3000 GT ²	Chief Mate (Y)
	OOW	–	YM Offshore or MOY limited	OOW (Y) <3000 GT

Note¹ Where appropriate dual deck and engineer roles may be considered, provided that the officer is suitably qualified in both disciplines and that the person holding the dual role is not the Master.

Note² Where appropriate dual deck and assistant engineer roles may be considered provided that the officer is suitably qualified in both disciplines and that the person holding the dual role is not the Master.

14.2 Minimum deck officer manning scale for square rigged sailing vessels over 24 metres

AREA	Rank	VESSEL		
		>24m <200 GT	200-<500 GT	500-<3000 GT
Miles from Safe Haven				
Up to 60nm	Master	YM Offshore or MOY limited	Master (Y) <500 GT	Master (Y)
	Chief Mate	YM Coastal or MOY Coastal	Chief Mate (Y)	Chief Mate (Y)
	OOW	–	–	–
Up to 150nm	Master	YM Offshore or MOY limited	Master (Y) <500 GT	Master (Y)
	Chief Mate	YM Coastal	Chief Mate (Y)	Chief Mate (Y)
	OOW	–	–	–
Over 150nm	Master	YM Ocean or MOY unlimited	Master (Y) <500 GT	Master (Y)



	Chief Mate	YM Offshore or MOY limited	Chief Mate (Y)	Chief Mate (Y)
	OOW	–	OOW (Y) <3000 GT	OOW (Y) <3000 GT
	OOW (2) ³	–	OOW (Y) <500 GT	OOW (Y) <500 GT

14.3 Minimum deck officer manning scale for training vessel over 24 metres.

AREA	Rank	VESSEL			
		>24m <200 GT & <20 trainees ¹	>24m <200 GT & <50 trainees ¹	>200 GT & <50 trainees ¹	>50 trainees ¹
Up to 60nm	Master ²	YM Offshore or MOY limited	YM Offshore or MOY limited	Master (Y) <3000 GT	Master Reg. II/2
	Chief Mate	YM Coastal or MOY Coastal	YM Coastal or MOY Coastal	Chief Mate (Y)	Chief Mate Reg. II/2
	OOW	–	–	–	–
Up to 150nm	Master ²	YM Offshore or MOY limited	Master (C) <200 GT	Master (Y) <3000 GT	Master Reg. II/2
	Chief Mate	YM Coastal or MOY Coastal	YM Offshore MOY limited	Chief Mate (Y)	Chief Mate Reg. II/2
	OOW ³	–	–	–	OOW Reg. II/1
Over 150nm	Master ²	YM Ocean or MOY Unlimited	Master (C) <200 GT	Master (Y) <3000 GT	Master Reg. II/2
	Chief Mate	YM Offshore or MOY limited	YM Ocean or MOY Unlimited	Chief Mate (Y)	Chief Mate Reg. II/2
	OOW (1)	–	–	OOW (Y) <3000 GT	OOW Reg. II/1
	OOW (2) ³	–	–	OOW (Y) <500 GT	OOW Reg. II/1

Note¹ Maximum number of trainees or combination of trainees and passengers

Note² The Master in a training vessel carrying more than 12 trainees is required to either:

- Hold a certificate specified in the Table and be able to prove at least 50 days satisfactory sea service in a position of responsibility in training vessels; **or**
- Hold at least a Master <500 GT (yachts).

Note³ Where a third watchkeeping officer is required to be carried for the safe manning of the vessel.

15. Training Vessels



15.1 Given the nature of training vessels, and the fact that a large number of untrained personnel may be carried, those training vessels must have adequate manning to cater for all operations onboard. Yacht restricted qualifications will only be applicable to training vessels carrying less than 50 trainees or combination of trainees and passengers. For vessels which carry more than 50 trainees or combination of trainees and passengers Merchant Navy STCW qualifications will be required. A training vessel operating under a Code of Practice may only carry a maximum of 12 passengers at any time.

15.2 Definition of Training Vessel: a Training Vessel, which may be either a sailing or motor vessel, means a vessel which is operated to provide:

- (a) Instruction in the principles of responsibility, resourcefulness, loyalty and team endeavour, and/or;
- (b) Instruction in navigation and seamanship, marine engineering or other shipboard related skills.

15.3 A training vessel will be operated under one of the following:

- 'Small Commercial Vessels Code';
- Red Ensign Group Yacht Code;
- Applicable Merchant Shipping Regulations.

15.4 The sail training vessel must be properly and safely manned at all times, both at sea and, if necessary, in port, by a sufficient number of experienced and competent personnel to ensure that trainees are adequately supervised, giving particular consideration to the number, age and sex of the trainees. All training must be properly organised with clearly detailed objectives and outcomes.

15.5 A Trainee MUST:

(a) Be onboard for the sole purpose of:

- Obtaining instruction in the principles of responsibility, resourcefulness, loyalty and team endeavour; and/or
- Instruction in navigation and seamanship, marine engineering or other shipboard related skills;

(b) Be considered to form part of a 'trainee voyage crew';

(c) Participate in the operation of the vessel to the best of their ability.

15.6 A trainee MUST NOT:

- (a) Be part of the crew for the purpose of safe manning or have any safety critical duties;
- (b) Have any employment contract or any employment relationship with the owner or operator of the vessel;
- (c) Receive any remuneration for their activities onboard;
- (d) Be considered to be a seaman or seafarer;
- (e) Be considered as a passenger.

Note: The fact that a trainees may contribute towards the cost of their welfare while onboard does not imply that they are passengers.

15.7 Minimum Age of Trainees: A trainee must only sail in a vessel if it can reasonably be expected that they are physically and mentally capable of safely taking part in the operation of the vessel. There must be specific documented provisions in place to cover the health, safety, and welfare of the trainees. Safety management tools, such as Formal



Safety Assessment (**FSA**) and risk assessment techniques may be useful when considering the acceptable age of a trainee for a specific vessel, voyage or operating area/condition. Due consideration must also be given to the profile and balance of the crew for each voyage, taking into account the age and sex of the trainees. In any event a trainee shall not be less than 12 years of age and any person below this age must be considered as a passenger.

16. Approved Training Providers

16.1 All training, assessment and examinations must be taken at an MCA approved training provider. Details of MCA-approved yacht training establishments are available from the MCA website www.gov.uk (search “nautical colleges”). The details of how to gain approval are listed in **Annex C**.

17. Square Rig Sailing Vessels

17.1 The Master and all watchkeeping officers of any square rig vessel must, in addition to holding the appropriate Certificate of Competency base certificate, have served at least 14 days at sea as a watchkeeping officer in the vessel and have been assessed as competent to serve as a watchkeeping officer or Master, as appropriate, under assessment systems approved and monitored by the MCA. In the case of assessment for a watchkeeping officer, this service shall be as the junior of the watch under the supervision of an experienced watchkeeping officer. In all cases, the Master and watchkeeping officers shall only serve in the vessel, or specified sister vessel, for which the assessment has been undertaken.

17.2 For an Owner/Operator’s Assessment System to be approved by the MCA to permit officers to serve in specific square-rigged sailing vessels, full details must be submitted of the criteria against which assessment will be made and the process of assessment. There must be a separate assessment system for the watchkeeping officers and Masters. Such systems require the owners/operators to demonstrate that the applicants have followed an assessment programme, which includes proving knowledge of sailing ship terms and methods of working, including the following evolutions:

- Tacking;
- Setting and stowing sails;
- Wearing;
- Reefing;
- Anchoring;
- Operating at night;
- Heaving to;
- Operating in heavy weather;
- Coping with squalls;
- Effect of knockdowns;
- Understand the content of the vessels stability book, with particular reference to sailing conditions and ability to use Maximum Steady Heel angle Curves;
- Actions to take when caught aback;
- Launching and recovering rescue boats under sail;
- Safety of crew and trainees when working aloft;
- Rescue Aloft;
- Actions to be taken for Man Overboard under sail;
- Loss of Rig.

17.3 The management organisation must be able to demonstrate that they have established that the candidates know how to deal with emergencies at the appropriate level, including



at least 2 man overboard evolutions, and have demonstrated competency in passage planning in an exercise relating to critical circumstances when the weather pattern is adversely changing and deteriorating.

- 17.4** Any officer who, in addition to holding the appropriate Certificate of Competency, holds a Nautical Institute Square Rig Sailing Ship Certificate or a Nautical Institute International Sail Endorsement for square rigged vessels shall be considered to have met the requirements of section 17.2.



More Information

Seafarer Services
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/11
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel:

e-mail: deck@mcga.gov.uk

Website Address: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency

General Enquiries: infoline@mcga.gov.uk

Published:

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

© Crown Copyright 2026

Safer Lives, Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas



Yacht Rating/Deck Hand seagoing service testimonial for commercially and privately operated yachts and sail training vessels

Company Name:

Company Address/Contact Details:

Company Address:		
Contact Details:	Tel:	
	E-mail:	

This is to certify that in capacity of Yacht Rating/ Deckhand*:

Full Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Discharge Book/ Passport Number:	

has served on:

Name of Vessel:		IMO Number:	
Type of Vessel:		Gross Tonnage:	
		Load line Length:	
Date of joining:		Date of discharge:	

Areas Cruised:	
----------------	--

The above service includes:

Actual Seagoing Service of days[†]
 Stand-by Service of days[†]
 Yard Service of days[†]

Seagoing service: Is the time spent at sea, which may include time at anchor or river and canal transits associated with a passage. A minimum of 4 hours of working duty in 24 hours would count as 1 full day.

Explanation of seagoing service, sea service at anchor, on a buoy or mooring for seafarers who are not a certificated watchkeeping officer in full charge of a navigational watch: if the time at anchor, on a buoy or mooring is part of a passage (i.e. short period at anchor whilst waiting for a berth or to transit a canal or lock) then it may be counted as actual

[†] Complete as appropriate or if no time write NIL.

*Delete as appropriate.



seagoing service but on no occasion may a period of seagoing service at anchor, on a buoy or mooring, exceed that of the previous voyage. If the period at anchor, on a buoy or mooring is at the conclusion of a passage (i.e. the vessel goes to anchor rather than to a berth) then time will be counted as stand-by service.

Stand-by service: A maximum of 14 consecutive days may be counted at one time, but on no occasion may a period of standby service exceed that of the previous voyage. If you wish to claim standby service you must complete table A on the reverse of this testimonial. This is not required if you have an MCA-approved Service Record Book signed by an authorised official.

Please record, the actual watchkeeping time undertaken on this voyage.

During this period the above-named Yacht Rating/ Deckhand accrued the following bridge watchkeeping duty, under the supervision of a certificated navigation officer, for at least 4 hours out of every 24 hours while the vessel was engaged on seagoing voyages:

_____ Days

My report on the service of the trainee/rating, during the period stated, is as follows:

Conduct:	
Ability:	
General comments:	

In addition the above-named Yacht Rating/ Deck Hand:

- a) Regularly carried out other duties in connection with the routine and maintenance of the ship*
- b) Was granted no leave of absence*
- c) Was granted leave of absence as follows:

.....
 *Delete as appropriate

Table A, for standby service (continue on a separate sheet if required):

Date voyage began	Date voyage ended	Standby days claimed	Master's signature
Total time in months and days:			



PART 4 – OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT

Name of Master or responsible person**:		
Position in company:		
CoC number:		
Issuing Administration:		
Email Address:		
Signature of Master**:		
Date:		Ship/company stamp:
** In exceptional circumstances this testimonial may be signed by a responsible official of the company.		



Company Name

Officer's Seagoing service testimonial for commercially and privately operated yachts and sail training vessels

Company Address/Contact Details:

Company Address:		
Contact Details:	Tel:	
	E-mail:	

This is to certify that in capacity of Master/ Chief Mate/ OOW*:	
Full Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Capacity:	
Discharge Book/ Passport Number:	

has served on:

Name of Vessel:		IMO Number:	
Type of Vessel:		Gross Tonnage:	
		Load Line Length:	
Date of joining:		Date of discharge:	

Areas Cruised	
---------------	--

The above service includes:

Actual Seagoing Service of days[†]
Stand-by Service of days[†]
Yard Service of days[†]

Seagoing service: Is the time spent at sea, which may include time at anchor or river and canal transits associated with a passage. A minimum of 4 hours of working duty in 24 hours would count as 1 full day;

- **Certified Officer:** Watchkeeping service may be recorded on a cumulative basis. This means that every 4 hours watchkeeping accrued may be counted as 1 day of watch keeping service and does not need to be completed in a 24 hour period. Time spent at anchor associated with a passage, whilst the Officer is engaged in a bridge watch and if this passage is part of the same 24 hour voyage, can also be accepted. Completing more than 4 hours watchkeeping within a 24 hour period cannot be counted as more than 1

[†] Complete as appropriate or if no time write NIL.

*Delete as appropriate.



day watchkeeping time, e.g. a 12 hour watch within a 24 hour period can only be counted as 1 day of watchkeeping time.

Stand-by service: A maximum of 14 consecutive days may be counted at one time, but on no occasion may a period of standby service exceed that of the previous voyage. If you wish to claim standby service you must complete Table A on the reverse of this testimonial. This is not required if you have an MCA-approved Service Record Book signed by an authorised official.

Please record, the actual watchkeeping time undertaken on this voyage.

During this period the above-named Officer accrued the following bridge watchkeeping service, in full charge of a navigation watch, for at least 4 hours out of every 24 hours while the vessel was engaged on seagoing voyages:

_____ Days

My report on the service of the Officer, during the period stated, is as follows:

Conduct:	
Ability:	
General comments:	

In addition the above-named Officer:

- a) Regularly carried out other duties in connection with the routine and maintenance of the ship*
- b) Was granted no leave of absence*
- c) Was granted leave of absence as follows:

.....

*Delete as appropriate

Table A, for standby service (continue on a separate sheet if required):

Date voyage began	Date voyage ended	Standby days claimed	Master's/owner's/ operator's signature
Total time in months and days:			



PART 4 – OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT

Name of Master**:		
Position in company:		
CoC number:		
Issuing Administration:		
Email Address:		
Signature:		
Date:		
** If you are sailing as a Master, this testimonial must signed off by the yacht owner, operator or manager.		



**MARITIME AND COASTGUARD AGENCY (MCA)
YACHT CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE**

Surname (Block Capitals)		Other Names (In Full)	
Passport or Discharge Book Number		Date and Place of Birth	
Name of Yacht		Port of Registry	
Official or IMO Number	Gross Tonnage	Load Line Length	
Capacity		Grade and Number of any CoC	
Date and Place of Joining		Date and Place of Leaving	
Description of Voyage		Total Time Onboard	
		Leave of Absence	
		Total Days at Sea	

Signature of Master

Name (Print)

Email Address

CoC No

Issuing Administration

Yacht/ Company Stamp:

Date of issue/...../.....



Approved Yacht Training Providers

All training, assessment and examinations must be taken at an MCA approved training establishment. Details of which providers are approved by the MCA to deliver training modules and short course training programmes are available from the UK Seafarer Services Branch.

In accordance with regulation 48 of the 2022 Regulations, all training providers planning to offer education and training leading to the issue of a Certificate of Competency will need to obtain MCA approval.

Approval Process

To gain approval to provide a course for certification under the 2022 Regulations, training providers will have to undergo assessment by the MCA to ensure their training standards and course content meet the requirements of the STCW Convention. Training providers wishing to obtain approval must make a written application to the MCA outlining:

- Course title;
- Instructions for creating lesson plans/ schemes of work;
- Course duration;
- Facilities, teaching aids and equipment;
- Staff qualifications and experience;
- Examination and assessment procedures;
- Monitoring of entry requirements;
- Issue, control, authentication and recording of certification; **and**
- Quality management systems and procedures that ensures the educational requirements of 8 of this notice.

Instructors and assessors are required to be qualified in accordance with the requirements of section A-I/6 of the STCW Code (regulation 48(2) in the 2022 regulations).

Training Providers must develop an education and training programme that incorporates the requirement for delivering the underpinning knowledge and training required for STCW deck officers.

Approval

When the MCA is satisfied that the education and training programme meets the requirements of this Notice, an approval letter will be issued by the MCA.

Ongoing Monitoring

Training Providers: In accordance with regulation 48(12) of the 2022 Regulations, all Training Providers that offer education and training leading to the issue of a Certificate of Competency will be periodically audited by the MCA in accordance with the following requirements:

- Course title;
- Guidance for creating lesson plans/ schemes of work;
- Course duration;
- Facilities, teaching aids and equipment;
- Staff qualifications and experience;
- Examination and assessment procedures;



- Where the completion of the MCA Safety exams are not required, equivalent levels of robust assessment are in place to satisfy the requirements of the STCW Convention and Code;
- Monitoring of entry requirements;
- Issue, control, authentication and recording of certification; and
- Quality management systems and procedures that ensure the educational requirements of 8 of this notice.

If there are any non-conformities found, the MCA may:

- Assess the non-conformities, including requesting evidence such as photographs, updates to desk instructions, new staff CV etc. Where the MCA requests such evidence a deadline should be agreed for the training provider to provide the evidence requested and that deadline should be recorded on the report.
- Request a follow up onsite visit to ensure the nautical college has satisfactorily remedied any non-conformities.
- Alternatively, if satisfied that the non-conformities have been resolved, confirm there is compliance without a further visit.

The MCA will always work with approved Training and Education Providers whose qualifications lead to an MCA Certificate of Competency to ensure standards are maintained. However, if the MCA identifies major non-conformities the course approval may be altered (which included suspension) or cancelled (regulation 48(6) of the 2022 Regulations). If a training provider's approval were cancelled pursuant to regulation 48(6) of the 2022 Regulations, an appeal may be lodged against the decision within 21 days of that decision (pursuant to regulation 50(1) of the 2022 Regulations). Major non-conformities are summarised below (but this is not an exhaustive list):

- Failure of management to implement a QMS system to ensure the required STCW standards set out in the 2022 Regulations and this Notice are met prior to the issue of documentary evidence of a standard being met (critical for an STCW Certificate of Competency);
- Teaching of the wrong practices or delivery of incorrect assessments that could endanger the seafarer while training or working at sea; or
- Fraudulent or illegal activity.

Any changes to course structure or syllabus must be submitted in writing to the MCA.

The introduction of any new course that is developed by an MCA approved training provider leading to the issue of a Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency must be approved by the MCA.

The MCA will inform training providers of any changes to STCW requirements that will affect the education and training syllabus. When notified, training providers must provide details in writing of how they plan to incorporate such changes into their programmes. Once the MCA is satisfied that the new STCW regulatory requirements have been met, the existing approval will be amended to reflect that the training provider has successfully incorporated the change into the programme. Prior to the amended approval being granted the MCA may carry out a site visit.

All MCA approved 'Yacht Training Providers' will need to be able to offer an MCA Yacht Competency Examinations: The exams syllabus is set by the MCA and the exams are moderated by the MCA to ensure compliance with STCW requirements. There is currently a contractual arrangement between the MCA and a service provider to administer and monitor these exams.

All training providers wishing to offer Yacht Training must also apply to be an MCA approved examination centre. The MCA will follow an internal procedure to ensure an exams centres is



suitable, prior to deciding on an approval. This procedure is available on request. If the MCA agrees to an exam centre being approved for MCA safety and professional examinations, then the exam centre can then apply to the MCA contracted 'exams body' who will provide them with the terms and condition for approval and ongoing monitoring.

The contracted service provider must be separate or demonstrate independence from the training provider offering the underpinning knowledge set out in this section of the Notice. The MCA may cancel or suspend approval if exam irregularities are deemed as major non-conformities (which decision may be appealed pursuant to regulation 50(1) of the 2022 Regulations).

