



RESOURCES

To be used in conjunction with the RYA Professional Practices and Responsibilities Course or the RYA Commercial Regulations - Small Vessels book.

Select a heading from the list below to find information on your chosen subject.

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All links in the definitions and information below (shown in blue text) lead to live documents on the internet.



BOATMASTER

What is it? A command qualification for domestic passenger vessels.

Where does it apply? There is a Europe-wide Boatmaster qualification although there is an element of local or national restriction based on local knowledge assessments.

Links:

- [MCA Boatmaster information](#)

See also: [Categorised Waters, Inland Waterways Small Passenger Boat Code](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 24

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CATEGORISED WATERS

What is it? A grading of UK inland and coastal waters deemed not to be “at sea” for the purpose of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. The grading lists waters from A to D and is primarily used in relation to domestic passenger ships.

Where does it apply? UK waters

Links

- [MSN 1827 Categorisation of Waters](#)

See also: [Boatmaster, Inland Waterways Small Passenger Boat Code](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 23

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CLASS XII

What is it? It is a classification of pleasure vessel in the UK.

Where does it apply? It applies to British flagged pleasure vessels over 13.7m length.

Link:

- [MCA Survey and Certification Policy](#) see Annex 1: UK Ship Classification & EU Equivalents

See also: [Pleasure vessel](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 15

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CODE OF SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR MERCHANT SEAMEN

Also known as: COSWOP, COSWP, Code of Safe Working Practices

What is it? Gives guidance to merchant seafarers on how to comply with health and safety requirements. It is compulsory to carry a copy of the publications on board British flagged merchant ships.

Where does it apply? To anyone on board British flagged vessels.

Link:

- [The full COSWOP document](#)

Key sections referenced in the course:

Risk assessment

- Chapter 1 Risk Assessment
- Chapter 1 Annex 1.1 *Guidance on main elements of risk assessment*

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on pages 14 and 43.

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COLREGS

Also known as: The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, IRPCS, Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, COLREG

What is it? Details the regulations governing collision avoidance, sound signals, lights and shapes and internationally recognised distress signals for all ships.

Where does it apply? To all vessels on the high seas and in all waters connected navigable by seagoing vessels.

Links:

- [Overview of the convention](#) *Overview of the international convention*
- [MSN 1781: The Merchant shipping \(distress signals and prevention of collisions\) Regulations 1995](#) *The full collision regulation text issued by the MCA*

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on pages 6 and 10

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COMMERCIAL ENDORSEMENT

What is it? An endorsement added to RYA certificates to verify their use on certain commercial vessels.

Links:

- [RYA Guidance on commercial endorsements](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 37

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COMMERCIAL VESSEL

What is it? A commercial vessel is any vessel that is not designated a pleasure vessel.

See also: [Pleasure vessel](#)

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CONVENTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR PREVENTING COLLISIONS AT SEA

See also: [COLREGs](#)

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ELECTRONIC AIDS TO NAVIGATION

What is it? Electronic equipment such as radar, GPS receivers, chart plotters, ECDIS systems etc.

Link:

- [Use of electronic aids to navigation \(MGN 63\)](#) *Guidance issued by the MCA on the appropriate use of electronic aids to navigation*

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EUROPEAN UNION

Also known as: EU

What is it? An economic and political partnership between 27 countries. It has a presence at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) although it is not a member in its own right.

An EU member country must follow the EU policy on matters regarding shipping.

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FLAG STATE

What is it? The country where a vessel is registered. The country is responsible for implementing International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions in their jurisdiction.

See also: [Port state](#), [UNCLOS](#)

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GENERAL OPERATOR'S CERTIFICATE

Also known as: GOC

What is it? A radio operator's certificate under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMSS).

Where does it apply? Globally

Link:

- [Association of Marine Electronic and Radio Colleges](#)

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GUIDELINES FOR VOYAGE PLANNING

What is it? An International Maritime Organization (IMO) resolution detailing the expected standard of voyage planning.

Where does it apply? Worldwide.

Link:

- [IMO Resolution A.893\(21\) Annex 24](#)

See also: [SOLAS](#) Chapter V

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ICC

Also known as: International Certificate of Competence, International Certificate of Competence for Operators of Pleasure Craft

What is it? A certificate of competence for pleasure craft issued by countries which are members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Countries taking part in this scheme accept ICCs issued by other participating countries as sufficient evidence of competence within their jurisdiction.

Where does it apply? Within countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.



Links:

- [European Boating Association - ICC](#)
- [RYA ICC pages and application form](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 8.

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IMO

Also known as: International Maritime Organisation

What is it? A specialised agency of the United Nations with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of pollution by ships.

Where does it apply? Globally

Links:

- [About the IMO](#)
- [IMO website](#)
- [IMO conventions](#)

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INLAND WATERWAYS SMALL PASSENGER BOAT CODE

What is it? A voluntary code for passenger vessels carrying less than 12 passengers in categorised waters.

Where does it apply? The UK

Links:

- [Inland Waterways Small Passenger Boat Code](#)

See also: [Boatmaster](#), [Categorised Waters](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 24.

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IRPCS

Also known as: International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, COLREGS

See also: [COLREGs](#)

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LLOYD'S OPEN FORM

Also known as: LOF

What is it? A standard agreement for the arrangement of salvage.

Where does it apply? Globally

Link

- [Lloyd's Open Form](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 72.

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M-NOTICES

Also known as: MSN, MGN, MIN

What is it? There are three different types of Marine Notice; Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN), Marine Guidance Note (MGN) and Marine Information Note (MIN). These Notices publicise to the shipping and fishing industries important safety, pollution prevention and other relevant information.

Merchant Shipping Notices are used to convey mandatory information that must be complied with under UK legislation. These MSNs relate to Statutory Instruments and contain the technical detail of such regulations.

Marine Guidance Notes give significant advice and guidance relating to the improvement of the safety of shipping and of life at sea, and to prevent or minimise pollution from shipping.

Marine Information Notes are intended for a more limited audience e.g. training establishments or equipment manufacturers, or contain information which will only be of use for a short period of time, such as timetables for MCA examinations. MINs are numbered in sequence and have a cancellation date (which will typically be no more than 12 months after publication).

Within each series of Marine Notices suffixes are used to indicate whether documents relate to merchant ships or fishing vessels, or to both. The suffixes following the number are:

- (M) for merchant ships
- (F) for fishing vessels
- (M+F) for both merchant ships and fishing vessels
e.g. Notice MSN 3456 (M+F) would apply to all UK vessels

Thus fishing vessel operators can see immediately if a particular document will be of interest.

PLEASE NOTE: When a document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel and you should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.



Links:

- [M Notice Record](#) - Historical record of the status of all M Notices
- [MSNs](#) - Merchant Shipping Notices
- [MGNs](#) - Marine Guidance Notes
- [MINs](#) - Marine Information Notes
- [Availability](#) - How to obtain M Notices

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 19.

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MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

What is it? Most national authorities have a dedicated system in place to investigate marine accidents.

Referenced in the course:

- [MGN 458 Accident Reporting and Investigation](#) *Details of requirements with regard to accident reporting and investigation in the UK*
- [South African Maritime Safety Authority](#)
- [Australian Transport Safety Bureau](#)
- [MAIB report on Gas Monarch/Whispa collision](#)
- [MAIB report on Bluebell of Warsash](#)

See also:

- [Merchant Shipping Act](#) Section 267
- [Marine Accident Investigation Branch](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 17.

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MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH

Also known as: MAIB

What is it? The UK authority responsible for the investigation of marine accidents.

Where does it apply? British flagged vessels worldwide and any vessel in British waters.

Links:

- [MAIB website](#)
- [MAIB incident report form](#)
- [MAIB report on Gas Monarch/Whispa collision](#)
- [MAIB report on Bluebell of Warsash](#)



Key references in the course:

Accident investigation reports

- [Search investigation reports](#)
- [Safety digests](#) - summaries of significant findings

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on pages 17 and 54

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MARPOL

Also known as: International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships

What is it? International convention published by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) covering the prevention of the pollution of the marine environment by ships.

Where does it apply? Worldwide with significant variations depending in size and type of vessel and geographical location.

Links:

- [Overview of convention](#)
- [The Green Blue](#) Joint environment programme between British Marine Federation and RYA
- [How Degrading!](#) A Green Blue information leaflet
- [MGN 385 - Guidance on the Merchant Shipping \(Prevention of Pollution by Sewage and Garbage from Ships\) Regulations 2008](#)
- [MSN 1807 - The Merchant Shipping \(Prevention of Pollution by Sewage and Garbage from Ships\) Regulations 2008 - SI 2008 No. 3257](#)

See also: [Small Commercial Vessels and Pilot Boat Code](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on pages 6, 11, 12 and 14

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MASTER'S DISCRETION

What is it? The owner, the charterer, the company operating the ship as defined in regulation IX/1, or any other person shall not prevent or restrict the master of the ship from taking or executing any decision which, in the master's professional judgement, is necessary for safety of life at sea and protection of the environment.

Where does it apply? Worldwide

Link:

- [SOLAS Chapter V regulation](#) – see section 34-1: Master's discretion

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MCA APPROVED ENGINE COURSE

Also known as: AEC

What is it? A marine engineering course approved by the MCA for use on small and large commercial yachts.

Where does it apply? On British flagged commercial yachts.

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MCA CODES OF PRACTICE

What is it? The MCA have issued numerous Codes of Practice for the operation of certain types of vessel. These include the Small Commercial Vessel Code and the Large Yacht Code.

Link:

- [Codes of Practice Information Pack](#)

Referenced in the course:

- Approved certifying authorities - Section 2.2 of [Codes of Practice Information Pack](#)

See also: [Small Commercial Vessel and Pilot Boat Code](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 26

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MEDICAL FITNESS CERTIFICATES

Also known as: ML5, ENG1

What is it? Certification that verifies a seafarer's medical fitness to work at sea.

Where does it apply? There is an internationally accepted standard for seafarers' medical acceptable globally. There are also local standards for each flag state which may or may not be transferrable.

Links:

- [Your health at sea](#)
- [Application of the Merchant Shipping \(Medical Examination\) Regulations 2002 MSN 1765 \(M\)](#)
- [ML5 medical certificate](#)
- [Medical Fitness Requirements for Those Employed on Boats Certificated under MCA Codes of Practice, Crew of Seagoing Local Passenger Vessels and Non-seagoing Boatmasters - MGN 264\(M\)](#)

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MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT 1995

What is it? A British Act of Parliament which puts into law the framework under which commercial shipping under the British flag or in British territorial waters are regulated.

Where does it apply? British flagged commercial vessels worldwide, and any flagged commercial vessel when in British waters.

Link:

- [Searchable contents page for the full Act](#)

Key sections referenced in the course:

Accident Investigation

- Section 267 Investigation of Marine Accidents.

Safety

- Section 58 Conduct Endangering Ships, Structures or Individuals. *Defines the conduct of seafarers with regard to the safety of vessels and people, including impaired judgement through the use of alcohol or drugs.*
- Section 100 Owner Liable for Unsafe Operation of a Ship. *Details the duty on owners/managing agents to take reasonable steps to operate a ship in a safe manner.*

Jurisdiction

- Section 279 Jurisdiction in relation to offences
- Section 282 Offences committed by British seamen

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on pages 56 and 59.

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MERCHANT SHIPPING REGULATIONS

Also known as: Statutory instruments, SIs

What is it? Merchant Shipping Regulations give detail on the implementation of the enabling Act of Parliament.

Where does it apply? British flagged vessels worldwide.

Links:

- [Vessels in Use for Sport and Pleasure - Regulations 1998](#)
- [Health and safety at work – MGN 20](#)
- [Distress signals and prevention of collisions – MSN 1781](#)



Key sections referenced in the course:

Pleasure vessels

- Vessels in Use for Sport and Pleasure - Regulations 1998: section 2 'Interpretation' gives the definition of a pleasure vessel.

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NOTICES TO MARINERS

Also known as: NMs

What is it? The UK Hydrographic Office's safety information for the updating of charts and publications.

Links:

- [Overview of types of NMs available](#)
- [NM web search](#)

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OFFICIAL LOGBOOKS

What is it? Some vessels are legally required to keep an official logbook as a record of the vessel activity. In the UK all commercial vessels over 25 gt are required to keep an official logbook.

Where does it apply? Globally

Links:

- [Merchant Shipping \(official Logbooks\) Regulations 1981](#) – exemptions from requirements

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 32.

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PLEASURE VESSEL

What is is? Extract from Merchant Shipping (Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure) Regulations.

"**pleasure vessel**" means-

(a) any vessel which at the time it is being used is:

(i) (aa) in the case of a vessel wholly owned by an individual or individuals, used only for the sport or pleasure of the owner or the immediate family or friends of the owner; or

(bb) in the case of a vessel owned by a body corporate, used only for sport or pleasure and on which the persons on board are employees or officers of the body corporate, or their immediate family or friends; and



(ii) on a voyage or excursion which is one for which the owner does not receive money for or in connection with operating the vessel or carrying any person, other than as a contribution to the direct expenses of the operation of the vessel incurred during the voyage or excursion; or

(b) any vessel wholly owned by or on behalf of a members' club formed for the purpose of sport or pleasure which, at the time it is being used, is used only for the sport or pleasure of members of that club or their immediate family, and for the use of which any charges levied are paid into club funds and applied for the general use of the club; and

(c) in the case of any vessel referred to in paragraphs (a) or (b) above no other payments are made by or on behalf of users of the vessel, other than by the owner.

In this definition "immediate family" means:

in relation to an individual, the spouse or civil partner of the individual, and a relative of the individual or the individual's spouse or civil partner; and "relative" means brother, sister, ancestor or lineal descendant;

Key sections referenced in the course:

Carriage of safety equipment

- [MGN 489: Pleasure vessels – UK regulations](#)

Referenced in "RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)" on page 15

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PORT STATE

Also known as: Coastal state

What is it? In addition to authority over their own flagged vessels, countries also have authority over foreign flagged vessel in their territorial waters as the Port or Coastal State.

See also: [Flag state](#)

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RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT SAFETY ACT

What is it? A UK Act of Parliament which gives various enforcement powers over the British transport system, particularly shipping with respect to alcohol and drugs abuse.

Where does it apply? British flagged vessels worldwide and foreign flagged vessels in British waters.

Link:

- [Part 4 Shipping: alcohol and drugs](#)



See also: [STCW](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 63.

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SAFE MANNING

What is it? Safe manning is a concept of having sufficient crew with the necessary qualifications and experience to ensure the safe operation of the vessel. It would take into account hours of work regulations, the nature of the work or passages made and the number of passengers onboard.

Links:

- [Principles of safe manning](#) *IMO resolution A21/890 giving guidance on the principles of safe manning*
- [Hours of Work, Safe Manning and Watchkeeping MSN 1767](#) *UK guidance on compliance for merchant ships*
- [Keeping a safe navigational watch on merchant vessels MGN 315](#)

See also: [Small Commercial Vessel and Pilot Boat Code](#) - see section on Manning

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SAFETY MANAGEMENT

What is it? Methodology and systems in place to ensure that vessels are operated in a safe manner.

Where does it apply? Globally

Links:

- [International Safety Management Code](#) *Safety management code for vessels over 500gt*
- [Large Yacht Code Annex 2](#) *Gives details for the safety management on large yachts between 200gt and 500gt*
- [Domestic Passenger Vessel Code](#) *Guidance for UK based domestic passenger vessels, ie local ferries etc*
- [Sail Training Vessels Guidance](#) *Guidance for a voluntary code for small sail training vessels in the UK*
- [Health and Safety Executive](#)
- [Safe Work Australia](#)
- [US Labor Department](#)
- [SOLAS Chapter V regulation – see section 34-1: Master's discretion](#)

See also: [SOLAS](#) and [Master's discretion](#)

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SCV 1 AND 2

What is it? SCV 1 is the application form to a certifying authority to be coded as a small commercial vessel.

SCV 2 is the survey form where full details of the equipment onboard the vessel is entered. It also contains the annual and intermediate renewal declarations.

Where does it apply? On British flagged small commercial vessels.

Link:

- [SCV Code of Practice certification process](#)

See also: [Small Commercial Vessel and Pilot Boat Code](#)

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SHIP REGISTRY

What is it? Vessels may register under a particular country's flag for a variety of reasons – commercial, convenience or simply national identity. The flag of the vessel dictates the regulations under which the vessel operates (flag state).

Links:

- [UK Ship Register](#)
- [UK Small Ships Register](#)

See also: [Flag state](#), [Port state](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 22

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SMALL COMMERCIAL VESSEL AND PILOT BOAT CODE

Also known as: SCV Code, MGN 280, the Code of Practice for Small Commercial Vessels

What is it? A code of practice for the construction, machinery, equipment, stability, operation, manning, examination, certification and maintenance of vessels up to 24 metres load line length which are in commercial use for sport or pleasure, as a workboat or pilot boat.

Where does it apply? United Kingdom (UK) vessels of up to 24 metres load line length which are engaged at sea in activities on a commercial basis, which carry cargo and/or not more than 12 passengers, or provide a service in which neither cargo nor passengers are carried, or are UK pilot boats of whatever size.



Links:

- [Full document in HTML format](#)
- [Full document in PDF format](#)

Key sections referenced in the course:

Areas of operation

- Section 3.2 Areas of Operation. *Defines the categories (0 to 6) that limit the operational areas of small commercial vessels.*

Manning

- Section 26 Manning. *General guidelines*
- Annex 3 The Manning of Small Vessels. *Detailed guidance on specific qualifications relevant to each area of operation*
- Annex 3 Table 1 Deck Manning Requirements for Small Vessels in Commercial Use. *Summary of Annex 3 qualifications*

MARPOL

- Section 29 Clean Seas. *General guidance on the prevention of pollution at sea*
- Annex 6 MARPOL Oil Pollution Prevention Information.

Safety

- Section 27.7 - Maintaining and Operating the Vessel. *Details of the responsibility of the owner/managing agent to maintain and operate the vessel in a safe manner*
- Section 13 - Lifesaving Appliances. *Details of safety equipment such as liferafts, lifebuoys, pyrotechnics etc*
- Section 15 - Fire Appliances. *Details of fixed and portable fire fighting equipment*
- Annex 7 Skippered Charter - Safety Briefings. *Details of the minimum briefing required when carrying passengers*
- Annex 3 section 2.10 - Health and Safety at Work Provisions. *The application of risk assessments and risk reduction*
- **Liferafts for small commercial vessels:** *MCA guidance on the acceptance of ISO 9650 standard liferafts*

Stability

- Section 11.1.1 Intact Stability Requirements for all Vessels. *Details the stability criteria and requirements such as stability books*
- Section 11.6 Additional Stability Requirements for Vessels Fitted with Deck Cranes or Other Lifting Gear

See also: [MCA Codes of Practice](#) and [SCV 1 and 2](#)

Referenced in "RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)" on page 25

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SMALL VESSEL CERTIFYING AUTHORITIES

What is it? Bodies approved by the MCA to issue small commercial vessel certificates.

See also: [MCA codes of practice](#)

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SOLAS

Also known as: Safety of Life at Sea, International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea

What is it? An international convention published by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) concerning safety at sea.

Where does it apply? Worldwide although most sections only apply to merchant shipping. Chapter V applies to all vessels.

Link:

- [An overview of the convention](#)

Key sections referenced in the course:

SOLAS V

- [SOLAS Chapter V full text](#)
- [Guidelines for pleasure vessels](#)
- [SOLAS Chapter V regulation – see section 34-1: Master's discretion](#)

Liferaft equipment packs - SOLAS A and SOLAS B

Liferafts not built to the SOLAS standard may be accepted on small commercial vessels, eg ISO 9650 standard is accepted. In many cases the acceptance is conditional on additional equipment being carried in a grab bag to bring the equipment level up to the level of a SOLAS A or B liferaft.

See also: [Master's discretion](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on pages 6, 9 and 31

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STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

Also known as: SIs

What is it? Statutory Instruments are created by an Act of Parliament to provide the necessary details that would be too complex to include in the Acts themselves. They provide the detail necessary for the implementation of the Acts.

See also: [Merchant Shipping Regulations](#)

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STCW

Also known as: Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping, STCW 95, STCW 78 as amended

What is it? An International Maritime Organisation (IMO) convention detailing the required standards for the qualification structure within the global shipping industry. In relation to RYA qualifications it refers to the basic safety training modules of the convention. These are:

- STCW personal safety and social responsibilities
- STCW elementary first aid
- STCW fire fighting and fire prevention
- STCW personal survival techniques

Where does it apply? Globally

Links:

- [The international convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping](#)
- [Guidance on medical certification, hours of work and alcohol limits](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on pages 6 and 10.

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UNCLOS

Also known as: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

What is it? An international convention setting out the mutual co-operation and understanding required for the use of the oceans. It defines the territorial limits of nations and sets out the roles of Flag and Coastal states.

Where does it apply? Globally

Links:

- [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](#)

Referenced in “RYA Commercial Regulations for Small Vessels (G105)” on page 6.

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VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE

Also known as: VTS

What is it? A marine traffic monitoring system established by harbour or port authorities similar to air traffic control for aircraft.

Link:

- [London VTS](#)

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