

## First Aid requirements for RYA Certificates

### Applies to:

- RYA Instructors, Examiners, Coaches/Assessors, Instructor Trainers
- RYA Centre Inspectors
- RYA RTCs recognised to offer practical courses

### Introduction

The default first aid training required for those holding any RYA instructor qualifications or commercial endorsements is the RYA First Aid course. This course is widely available and designed for the specific demands of providing first aid afloat. It is also accepted by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for use on board small commercial vessels and by World Sailing for compliance with the Offshore Special Regulations, and covers the requirements of the Health and Safety regulations for the purposes of emergency first aid at work training.

It is recognised that it is not always possible to access an RYA training centre which delivers the RYA First Aid course, and there are also many situations where an individual is required to hold a different first aid qualification by their employer due to the nature of their work or due to other legal requirements.

The UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) no longer approves first aid at work qualifications and now empowers employers to select an appropriate first aid course for their particular circumstances. It should be noted that neither the HSE nor the MCA recognise online first aid training courses, so training must therefore be carried out face-to-face.

When delivering practical training through an RYA Recognised Training Centre (RTC) the duty of care owed to those under our care requires a certain amount of first aid support. The RYA conditions of recognition require all instructors to have a current first aid certificate. The individual instructors and centre principals have a duty to ensure an appropriate first aid qualification continues to be held to ensure the instructor award remains valid. Training centres also have a duty to comply with local employment and public safety regulations such as the UK's Health and Safety at Work or similar regulations covering first aid requirements in other countries.

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### Summary:

RYA practical instructors and training centres, other than those running cruising, Advanced Powerboat or Powerboat Tender Operator courses, may choose appropriate first aid training provided it meets the RYA's minimum requirements listed in this guidance.

First Aid requirements for Commercial Endorsement holders and Advanced Powerboat, Cruising and Yachtmaster Instructors are dictated by the regulations covering their particular operation and each individual must ensure their own compliance with these regulations.

Candidates for the Advanced Powerboat, Yachtmaster Coastal or Offshore exams must present a first aid certificate which meets the minimum requirements set out at the end of this guidance.

The RYA First Aid course should be the default training due to its widespread availability, relevance and acceptability for working afloat on small vessels.

### Related links:

[HSE Guidance](#)

[Training Support Site - First Aid](#)

[Commercial Endorsements](#)

[RYA Yachtmaster Coastal](#)

[RYA Yachtmaster Offshore](#)

[RYA Advanced Powerboat](#)

## **RYA practical instructors** (excluding Advanced Powerboat, Cruising and Yachtmaster Instructors)

For the purposes of RYA practical instructor qualifications other than Advanced Powerboat, Cruising and Yachtmaster Instructor endorsements, the RYA has opted to match the UK's HSE's practice in allowing RTCs and instructors to use alternative first aid qualifications, providing the course meets the minimum requirements given at the end of this guidance. On RYA Instructor courses the Coach / Trainer will verify that an in date first aid certificate is held.

## **Commercial endorsement applicants**

On vessels certified under the UK's Small Commercial Vessel Codes of Practice up to category 2 area of operation the minimum first aid qualification required is the RYA First Aid, STCW Elementary First Aid or Sea Fish first aid. If an individual is responsible for the first aid on board the first aid course must cover the use of Category C medical stores as detailed in MSN 1768 (M+F). The RYA First Aid course is the preferred option as the use of Category C medical stores forms part of the syllabus.

Applications for new or renewed commercial endorsements will be asked to sign a declaration confirming that they understand their responsibility with regard to maintaining valid medical fitness, first aid and radio operator's certificates and that they may need higher level certification subject to the nature of the vessel on which they work.

## **RYA Cruising Instructors, Yachtmaster Instructors, Powerboat Advanced Instructors**

Cruising and Yachtmaster Instructors and Advanced Powerboat instructors teaching the Advanced Powerboat course should hold a valid commercial endorsement and therefore comply with the requirements detailed in the commercial endorsement section above. Advanced Powerboat Instructors who don't hold a commercial endorsement may only teach up to the Intermediate course.

RTC Principals and Chief Instructors must ensure all instructors teaching Cruising and Advanced Powerboat courses hold an appropriate first aid certificate.

## **Centre Inspections**

Centre inspectors will continue to verify that each centre records their instructors' certificates, including expiry dates of first aid certificates. Each centre must ensure that suitable first aid certificates are held for the regulations governing their operation. The RYA centre inspection process cannot verify this compliance and does not infer acceptance of any certificate as complying with HSE, MCA or other national authority requirements.

## **RYA Exam candidates**

Candidates for the Advanced Powerboat, Yachtmaster Coastal or Offshore exams must present a first aid certificate which meets the minimum requirements set out at the end of this guidance. The notes to candidates will indicate that should they intend to work commercially that they will need to verify that their first aid certificate satisfies the regulations covering the vessels on which they work.

**Minimum RYA first aid requirements:**

**Course duration:** 1 day with at least 6 hours instructional time.

**Course outcomes:**

1. Understand the role of a first aider in regard to:
  - i. The importance of preventing cross infection
  - ii. The need for recording and/or reporting incidents and accidents
  - iii. Assessing a scenario and circumstances to ensure they act safely, promptly and effectively in an emergency
2. Can perform CPR to current protocols, and understand the differential for drowning.
3. Understand the importance of the recovery position and the need to modify it for small spaces.
4. Can administer first aid to those who are unconscious
5. Can identify types of external bleeding and control bleeding
6. Can use appropriate dressings, bandages and other first aid equipment available, including improvised dressings and bandages.
7. Understand the term shock, recognise and treat it
8. Can recognise and understands the treatment for hypothermia following immersion and/or exposure.
9. Recognise the signs of a reduced level of response, with particular reference to serious head injuries.
10. Can administer suitable first aid for:
  - i. breathing difficulties
  - ii. choking
  - iii. chest pain
  - iv. seasickness
  - v. diabetic emergency
  - vi. anaphylaxis
  - vii. hyperthermia
  - viii. fractures
  - ix. seizures
  - x. burns, including scalds, chemical and electrical
  - xi. minor injuries including small cuts, grazes, bruises and small splinters
11. Can choose suitable first aid equipment

First aid certificates should be refreshed or renewed every three years, other than STCW First Aid certificates which may be refreshed up to every 5 years.

**Note:** Commercial Endorsement holders must maintain a valid first aid certificate in line with the regulations governing their operation. In the UK the minimum qualification under the codes of practice for small commercial vessels are either RYA First Aid, STCW Elementary First Aid or Seafish Basic First Aid. Higher certification may be needed subject to the area of operation.