

## **M-Notices – August 2010 Telegraph**

### **MSN 1796 (M+F) — Vessel Traffic Services: Designation of Vessel Traffic Services in the UK**

This notice provides details of amendments to Merchant Shipping Notice 1796 and its associated annex and should be read in conjunction with the Merchant Shipping (Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Reporting Requirements) Regulations 2004 (as amended) and Marine Guidance Note 401: Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and Local Port Services in the UK.

Among the amendments is a new annex giving details of all the VTS centres in the UK and their designated service types — Information Service (INS); Traffic Organisation Service (TOS); and Navigational Assistance Service (NAS).

### **MSN 1825 (F) — Certificates of Equivalent Competency: Fishing Vessels Training & Certification Part F2**

This notice replaces MGN 220 (F) and MIN 340 (M+F) where it relates to fishing vessels and describes the requirements for fishing vessel officers holding certificates issued by specified maritime administrations working as officers on UK-registered fishing vessels including:

- the issue of Certificates of Equivalent Competency for use on UK-registered fishing vessels (Fishing CECs)
- the responsibilities of the owners and operators relating to crew members' knowledge

It replaces MGN 220 (F) and the information for fishermen contained in MIN 340 (M+F).

### **MGN 413 — Voluntary Code of Practice for Employment of Non European Economic Area (EEA) Fishing Crew**

This notice has been drawn up under the direction of the MCA's Fishing Industry Health and Safety Group (FISG) in an attempt to raise awareness of the voluntary code of practice produced by the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF). The initiative follows concern at a number of recent fatal incidents which have involved fishermen living onboard fishing vessels and which have occurred whilst vessels were alongside.

These incidents have mainly involved migrant workers who must reside on the vessel because of work permit restrictions. Many of these vessels are not designed to be used for long periods and have very basic cooking, heating, and washing facilities, and the notice points out that this has forced those who have to live aboard to 'make do' and in some cases take undue safety risks.

The Fishing Industry Health and Safety Group considers that the practice of living aboard these vessels is a reality, but it believes that 'needless deaths' can be prevented if the fishing industry follows the code of practice.

The code is set out in an annex to the notice, and covers such things as health and safety, risk assessments, shore power, alarms, means of escape, fire precautions, alcohol and smoking, accommodation, ventilation, heating, sanitary facilities, cooking and food, conditions of employment, and recreational facilities.

### **MGN 416 (M) — Inspection, Survey and Certification Guidance for UK Small Commercial Vessels Operating in Foreign Waters**

This notice points out that the MCA's small commercial vessel codes of practice apply to UK vessels of up to 24m loadline length (and vessels less than 150gt built before 21 July 1968) that are:

- pilot boats of any size on any service
- a vessel engaged at sea in non-pleasure activities
- carry cargo
- carry not more than 12 passengers
- providing a service

Although these vessels are normally surveyed and issued with certificates by an MCA-appointed certifying authority, international conventions do not cover all vessels and other maritime administrations or port state authorities are under no obligation to accept UK certificates. Some may accept UK certificates if they consider them equivalent to their own, but the notice advises owners and operators to check before accepting work abroad as other marine administrations have the right to refuse to allow such vessels to operate.

This note provides guidance to prevent difficulties. In particular, the MCA says, certain administrations may not accept small commercial vessel/workboat certification issued by certifying authorities. And a further complication arises from the acceptability of seafarers' certificates abroad, as certificates acceptable to the MCA in accordance with the small commercial vessel codes may not be acceptable to other administrations.

Where the skipper and crew hold certificates acceptable under the codes of practice which are not considered appropriate by a port state authority, owners and operators should consider using the Master (code vessels less than 200gt limited to 150 miles from a safe haven) and the Master (code vessels less than 200gt unlimited area) Certificates of Competency which are issued in accordance with the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended.

Details of these certificates can be found in MSN 1802 (M). If the vessel is 200gt or greater, other STCW certification is available. If the STCW certificate is not issued by the UK, the holder is required to hold a Certificate of Equivalent Competency issued by the MCA.