



The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels - Standards which can be used to prepare for your MCA Inspection

Notice to all Designers, Builders, Owners, Employers, Skippers and Crew of Fishing Vessels

This notice should be read with Fishing Vessels (Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/9) as amended by the Fishing Vessels (Safety of 15-24 Metre Vessels) Regulations 2002 (S.I. 2002/ 2201); the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 1997 (S.I. 1997/2962), as amended, and MSN 1813 (F)

Summary

This Notice provides a Small Fishing Vessel Code of Practice that has been based on MSN 1813, but is revised taking into account MAIB findings and investigations into incidents. This Code is voluntary but may be used as an alternative to MSN 1813 for the purposes of having your vessel inspected. MSN 1813 will remain in force.

The main changes from MSN 1813 are:

- Liferrafts are required for vessels of 7m Registered Length (L) to less than 12m (L);
- Vessels built prior to 2007 newly entering the fishing industry must have a Survey by a Certifying Authority prior to registration;
- Inspections of the vessel are required at change of ownership;
- Emergency drills are now required;
- Radar Reflectors are now to be fitted to all vessels;
- Bilge Alarms for Open vessels (7m (L) -15m Length Overall (LOA));
- Certificates to be issued for Small Fishing Vessels;
- Structural modifications to be notified to MCA prior to work taking place;
- EPIRBs and Stability requirements for vessels of 12m (L)-15m (LOA);
- Personal Floatation Devices or Lifelines recommended to be worn whilst working on open decks.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Marine Guidance Note is intended to allow owners and skippers to improve the safety of their vessels by complying with a revised but non mandatory within Small Fishing Vessel Code of Practice. It is intended that this revision of the Code will become mandatory within two years.

2.0 Background

2.1 This Code is associated with the Fishing Vessels (Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels) Regulations 2001.

2.2 The Regulations came into force on 1st April 2001 and gave statutory force to the Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels and replaced the requirements of the Fishing Vessels (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975 and the Fishing Vessels (Life Saving Appliance) Regulations 1988 as they applied to fishing vessels with a registered length less than 12 metres.

2.3 The Fishing Vessels (Safety of 15-24 Metre Vessels) Regulations 2002 brought into force the Code of Safe Working Practice for the Construction and Use of 15 Metre (LOA) to less than 24 Metre (L) Fishing Vessels. Those Regulations also amended the Fishing Vessels (Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels) Regulations 2001 to include vessels of less than 15 metres (LOA).

3.0 The Revised Code

3.1 The Code contained within this MGN sets out the full text of the proposed revision to MSN 1813 - The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels. It is intended that this revision of the Code will become mandatory within two years. Until that time MSN 1813 remains the Code by which vessels are considered to be complying with the Regulations. However, vessels may make use of this Code to prepare for their mandatory inspections and compliance with this Code will be treated as demonstrating compliance the Regulations and MSN 1813.

3.2 The Code has been subject to a review by MCA, industry and other interested bodies and this Notice and the revised Code have been developed as a result of that review. This Notice represents part of a continuing review of the Fishing Vessels (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975 and other legislation applicable to fishing vessels. The aim of the review is to update existing requirements in order to improve the safety of fishing vessels in foreseeable operating conditions, and the survival of the crew in the event of an accident.

4.0 Changes applied to the revised Code

4.1 This Code sets out a number of additional requirements over and above MSN 1813. These are based on recommendations from the MAIB and investigations of past incidents.

4.2 The changes applied to this Code include:

- Liferafts now required for vessels of 7m (L) to less 12m (L);
- Vessels built prior to 2007 newly entering the fishing industry must undergo a Survey by a Certifying Authority prior to registration as a fishing vessel (already required under Registration Regulation but to be made more explicit for potential vessel owners in the Code);
- Inspection of vessels will now take place when the vessels ownership changes;



- Monthly emergency drills are to take place;
- Radar Reflectors to be fitted to all vessels, previously only required on open vessels of 7m (L) -12m (L);
- Bilge Alarms for open vessels (7m (L) -15m (LOA)), previously this was only for decked vessels;
- Certificates to be issued when a vessel has satisfactorily undergone its Code inspection;
- Structural modifications to all vessels to be notified to MCA prior to work taking place.

4.3 In addition, the requirements for EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) and Stability for vessels of 12m (L) to less than 15m (LOA) were inadvertently removed from legislation when the 15-24m Code came into force. With the agreement of Fishing Industry Safety Group, these are being reintroduced into this Code.

4.4 Due to the numbers of fishermen that have died after falling overboard, the Code recommends that all crew whilst working on the open deck of a vessel that is underway wear a Personal Floatation Device or a safety harness. Attention is also drawn to The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Personal Protective Equipment) Regulations 1999 which set out the general rule that Personal Protective Equipment must be used when risks cannot be avoided or reduced to an acceptable level. MSN 1731 (The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1999) says that for any work where there is reasonable foreseeable risk of going overboard then a lifejacket or Personal floatation Device should be worn.

5.0 Other Applicable Legislation

5.1 The guidance contained in this section of the Code is a reminder of other statutory requirements, which are relevant to fishing vessels covered by the Code. It does not form part of the statutory requirements under the Fishing Vessels (Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels) Regulations 2001.

5.2 An owner will be required to ensure that an appropriate and up to date health and safety risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 1997.



More Information

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