



Shipping Guidance Notice 131

Inspection, survey and certification guidance for small commercial vessels operating in non-British waters

To: Owners, Operators, Masters & Certifying Authorities

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Shipping Guidance Notice (SGN) is to provide guidance and clarification with respect to small commercial vessels and rescue boats including any search and rescue assets operating in non-British waters.

2. Application

Gibraltar Merchant Shipping (Load Lines) Regulations 2004 apply to Gibraltar registered vessels, and require vessels to hold a valid Load Line Certificate.

Provisions are contained within the above-mentioned Regulations for Load Line Exemption Certificates to be issued in respect of a non-convention size vessel, and which shall state the conditions with which the ship is to comply. In respect of small vessels, Gibraltar accepts the application of the alternative UK MCA Codes of Practise ("Code") in respect of such conditions.

Such Codes of practise include:

- The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure Operating from a Nominated Departure Point (NDP);
- The Safety of Small Commercial Motor Vessels - A Code of Practice;
- The Safety of Small Commercial Sailing Vessels - A Code of Practice;
- The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Workboats and Pilot Boats;
- The equivalent provisions provided by the Annex to MGN 280 (M) - Small Vessels in Commercial Use for Sport or Pleasure, Workboats and Pilot Boats - Alternative Construction Standards;
- The Rescue Boat Code (The Code of Practice for Open Rescue Boats of Less Than 15 Metres in Length);
- The High Speed Offshore Service Craft Code (HSOSC);
- The Workboat Code Edition 2 – Amendment 1; The Safety of Small Workboats and Pilot Boats – A Code of Practice, and
- The Workboat Code Edition 3 – The Safety of Small Workboats and Pilot Boats – A Code of Practice.

Gibraltar registered small commercial vessels are for the most part surveyed and issued with certificates by one of the Gibraltar Maritime Administration's Certifying Authorities, against the requirements of the applicable Code. Such Certificates are acceptable to the Gibraltar Maritime Administration provided the vessel continues to meet the conditions of the Certificate.

3. Guidance

International Conventions do not cover these small vessels, therefore other Maritime Administrations or Port State Authorities are under no obligation to accept Gibraltar “Code” certificates for vessels in their waters, although other Maritime Administrations or Port State Authorities may accept Gibraltar “Code” certificates as an equivalent standard to their own.

Vessel Owner/Operator/Master should be aware of the acceptability of seafarers’ certificates abroad. Certificates acceptable to the Gibraltar Maritime Administration in accordance with the “Codes”, may not be acceptable to other Maritime Administrations.

Owners and operators are advised that before intending to operate or work, including providing a service and/or engaging in Search and Rescue activities, they should seek advice from the relevant Port State Authority on their requirements for certification for both vessel and the crew. Acceptance of certification issued under the Codes of Practice is at the discretion of the relevant Maritime Administration.

Gibraltar Load Line Exemption Certificates in some cases may be more acceptable to other Maritime Administrations in lieu of “Code” certificates. Exemption certificates may only be issued by the Gibraltar Maritime Administration. Should owners or operators be advised by an Administration that a Load Line Exemption Certificate will be required and accepted in lieu of a “Code” certificate, they should contact the Gibraltar Maritime Administration. Any Load Line Exemption Certificate issued, will be based on a valid “Code” Certificate already issued by the Certifying Authority. However, the Gibraltar Maritime Administration reserves the right to impose any additional conditions deemed necessary.

It is the responsibility of the vessel Owner/Operator to be aware of and ensure compliance with internationally recognised crew qualifications (STCW) when operating in non-British waters.

It is the responsibility of the vessel Owner/Operator to ensure compliance with international requirements for the pollution prevention from ships when operating in non-British waters. For example; a vessel fitted with a marine diesel engine with a power output of more than 130kW should hold a valid Engine International Air Pollution Prevention (EIAPP) Certificate, and a vessel that is intending to ever carry more than 15 persons (total) must hold an International Sewage Prevention Certificate.

4. More Information

Should any further clarification or information be required in respect of the above, the Gibraltar Maritime Administration should be contacted via; maritime.survey@gibraltar.gov.gi

Steve Gomez – Chief Surveyor (Ag)
For & on behalf of the Maritime Administrator

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