



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

## MIN 242 (M+F)

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# Certificates of Equivalent Competency - Amendment of Procedures

**Notice to all Owners, Operators, Managers, Masters, Skippers and Officers of Merchant Ships and Fishing Vessels**

*This notice should be read with MGN 220 (F) and MGN 221 (M) and replaces MIN 163 (M+F).*

*This notice expires 30 June 2007*

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### Summary

Details for obtaining Certificates of Equivalent Competency (**CECs**) for officers on board Merchant Ships and Fishing Vessels are contained in MGN 221 (M) and MGN 220 (F). MIN 163 (M+F) provided updated information on procedures and requirements for obtaining CECs. In particular:

- stricter quality control procedures;
- re-emphasis on responsibilities of Masters and Shipping Companies employing seafarers; and
- advice on streamlining of certain procedures to facilitate the issue of CECs.

**This notice repeats MIN 163 (M+F) which has expired. There are no further changes to the procedures or requirements.** The layout of the document and minor aspects of text have been updated in line with current house style and for clarity.

## 1. Introduction/ Background

1.1 MGN 221 (M) and MGN 220 (F) issued in March 2003 explain the requirements for obtaining CECs for officers for service on board UK-registered Merchant Ships and Fishing Vessels. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (**MCA**) constantly reviews procedures to ensure they remain relevant. In reviewing the processes for obtaining CECs we have been able to streamline a number of procedures whilst at the same time improving certain important aspects of quality control to enhance maritime safety. This notice explains the revised procedures, in particular those relating to **Verification of Certificates of Competency (CoCs), Issue of temporary CECs, UK Legal and Administrative Processes (UKLAP) Requirements, Medical Fitness & Sight Test Certificates**. This notice should be read in conjunction with MGN 221 (M) and MGN 220 (F). A table of the revised procedures and requirements for obtaining a CEC is provided at Annex 1.

## 2. Medical Fitness and Sight Test Certificates

- 2.1 Attention is drawn to the list of Medical Fitness and Sight Test requirements for CEC applicants contained in MGN 221 (M) and MGN 220 (F) in particular countries whose medical fitness and sight test certificates are accepted by the MCA. **It is an offence under the Merchant Shipping Act to employ a seafarer on a UK-registered vessel who does not hold an appropriate medical fitness or sight test certificate.** [Full details on UK medical requirements are contained in MSN 1765 (M) and MSN 1797 (M)].
- 2.2 From the date of this notice (refers to issue of MIN 163 February 2004) applicants will not be required to submit the Medical Fitness or Sight Test Certificate with the application for a CEC. However, it is emphasised that these requirements remain in force and it is the responsibility of the company to ensure that seafarers employed on its vessels fully comply with the Regulations. Documentation must be verified by the Master or Skipper when the applicant reports for duty and will be liable to Flag State Inspection.

## 3. UKLAP

- 3.1 **UKLAP Grade 1** requirements for Masters and Skippers remain unchanged. Masters and Skippers will be required to obtain UKLAP Grade 1 by the MCA oral examination or Scottish Qualifications Authority (**SQA**) written test. A temporary CEC may be issued for up to six months to enable the Master or Skipper to obtain the qualification. EU and EEA nationals may alternatively serve an Adaptation Period of up to six months in a lower rank. A full (five year) CEC will only be issued once all requirements have been met and verified by the MCA.
- 3.2 **UKLAP Grade 2** requirements for Chief Mate, Chief Engineer and Second Engineer have been revised. The company will be responsible for ensuring that these officers are sufficiently familiar with UKLAP requirements equivalent to the UKLAP Grade 2 syllabus. The on board Adaptation Period has been streamlined and companies will no longer be required to submit completed Adaptation Period Reports to the MCA. A written record confirming that each officer has attained the necessary standard must be kept on board. The written record should be in the form at Annex 3 for Merchant Vessels or Annex 4 for Fishing Vessels. This may be verified by Flag State Inspection.

## 4 English Language

- 4.1 **Merchant Navy** - the requirements for English Language remain as specified in MGN 221 (M).
- 4.2 However, for applicants choosing to prove competence in English language by taking the Marlin's test, we are now able to offer an additional alternative. Previously applicants were required to supply evidence of a pass in the Marlin's tests supported by evidence of a company interview confirming that the applicant's standard of spoken English was satisfactory. MCA recognised Marlin's test centres are now able to offer a Test of Spoken English (**TOSE**). The Marlin's TOSE will be accepted in lieu of the company interview provided that it is accompanied by the normal Marlin's test certificate indicating a pass at the levels indicated in MGN 221 (M). This offers applicants the option to complete both parts of the requirements in one test centre.
- 4.3 **Fishing** – from the date of this notice (refers to issue of MIN 163 February 2004) applicants for CECs for service on board Fishing Vessels will not be required to provide evidence of knowledge of English Language.

**NB.** To ensure the necessary standards of safety are maintained it is the responsibility of the company to ensure that AT LEAST ONE OFFICER MUST be competent in English Language to the standard specified in Annex 2. This may be verified by Flag State Inspection.

## **5 Certificates of Competency**

5.1 The MCA will require evidence of the authenticity and validity of the applicant's CoC. Ideally the original CoC should be submitted with the application. However, we recognise this is difficult in many circumstances and therefore will accept photocopies attested by:

a) a MCA Marine Office;

b) the issuing administration; or

c) by the company responsible for the day to day operation of the vessel: subject to entering a formal attestation agreement with the MCA. (Contact the Seafarer Training and Certification Branch for details).

5.2 The Master or company representative should check the CoC to ensure it is authentic and valid when the officer reports for duty.

## **6 Application Procedure**

6.1 Applications must be submitted to the Seafarer Training and Certification Branch with the full supporting documentation specified in Annex 1.

6.2 The MCA will endorse the Confirmation of Receipt of Application (**CRA**) – Annex 5 as applicable. This acknowledges that we have received the application and will cover the applicant for up to three months service on board a UK vessel in accordance with Regulation 1/10 paragraph 5 of STCW. **It is the responsibility of the applicant (or company in the case of company applications) to ensure that all applications are made in accordance with the Regulations i.e. that applicants hold MCA recognised CoCs, Medical Fitness and Sight Test Certificates (where appropriate) and meet the English Language requirements. It is an offence under the Merchant Shipping Act to knowingly make a false application.**

6.3 The MCA will verify all CoCs with the issuing administration to confirm validity and authenticity. Once confirmation has been received a CEC will be issued subject to all other requirements being met.

6.4 Temporary CECs will only be issued in limited circumstances, for instance where a Master requires longer than three months to complete the UKLAP Grade 1 requirements or where verification of the CoC has not been confirmed.

## More Information

Seafarer Training and Certification Branch  
Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
Bay 1/17  
Spring Place  
105 Commercial Road  
Southampton  
SO15 1EG

Tel : +44 (0) 23 8032 9231  
Fax : +44 (0) 23 8032 9252  
e-mail: [exams.section@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:exams.section@mcga.gov.uk)

General Inquiries: 24 Hour Infoline  
[infoline@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:infoline@mcga.gov.uk)  
0870 600 6505

MCA Website Address: [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)

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### Revised Application Procedures for Certificates of Equivalent Competency – Merchant Navy

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Application For:</b>	<b>Application Requirements</b>	<b>Company Action</b>	<b>MCA Action</b>
Master	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Completed Application Form</li> <li>* Fee</li> <li>* Photographs</li> <li>* Proof of English Language</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of CoC</li> <li>* CRA with Section 1 completed</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of Passport or Discharge Book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Verify validity of medical fitness or sight test certificate</li> <li>* Check original CoC for correctness</li> <li>* Complete application in accordance with the Regulations &amp; requirements in Column B and send to MCA</li> <li>* Send proof of UKLAP Grade 1 to MCA as soon as obtained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Complete Section 2 of CRA and return</li> <li>* Verify CoC with issuing administration</li> <li>* Issue Temporary CEC and instruction to take UKLAP Grade 1</li> <li>* Issue Full (5 year) CEC when proof of successfully passing UKLAP Grade 1 received from the company and all other checks are complete</li> </ul>
Chief Mate Chief Engineer 2 <sup>nd</sup> Engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Completed Application Form</li> <li>* Fee</li> <li>* Photographs</li> <li>* Proof of English Language</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of CoC</li> <li>* CRA with Section 1 completed</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of Passport or Discharge Book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Verify validity of medical fitness or sight test certificate</li> <li>* Check original CoC for correctness</li> <li>* Ensure officer receives sufficient training to satisfy the knowledge requirements of UKLAP Grade 2 and retain records</li> <li>* Complete application in accordance with the Regulations &amp; requirements in Column B and send to MCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Complete Section 2 of CRA and return</li> <li>* Verify CoC with issuing administration</li> <li>* Issue Full (5 year) CEC when checks are complete</li> </ul>
OOW Deck OOW Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Completed Application Form</li> <li>* Fee</li> <li>* Photographs</li> <li>* Proof of English Language</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of CoC</li> <li>* CRA with Section 1 completed</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of Passport or Discharge Book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Verify validity of medical fitness or sight test certificate</li> <li>* Check the original CoC for correctness</li> <li>* Complete application in accordance with the Regulations &amp; requirements in Column B and send to MCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Complete Section 2 of CRA and return</li> <li>* Verify CoC with issuing administration</li> <li>* Issue Full (5 year) CEC when checks are complete</li> </ul>

**Revised Application Procedures for Certificates of Equivalent Competency – Fishing Vessels**

A	B	C	D
Application For:	Application Requirements	Company Action	MCA Action
Skipper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Completed Application Form</li> <li>* Fee</li> <li>* Photographs</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of CoC</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of Passport or Discharge Book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Verify validity of medical fitness or sight test certificate</li> <li>* Check original CoC for correctness</li> <li>* Complete application in accordance with the Regulations &amp; requirements in Column B and send to MCA</li> <li>* Send proof of UKLAP Grade 1 to MCA as soon as obtained</li> </ul> <p><b>Ensure at least one officer on board is competent in English Language to the standard specified in Annex 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Verify CoC with issuing administration</li> <li>* Issue Temporary CEC and instruction to take UKLAP Grade 1</li> <li>* Issue Full (5 year) CEC when proof of successfully passing UKLAP Grade 1 received from the company and all other checks are complete</li> </ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Hand and Engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Completed Application Form</li> <li>* Fee</li> <li>* Photographs</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of CoC</li> <li>* Original or properly attested copy of Passport or Discharge Book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Verify validity of medical fitness or sight test certificate</li> <li>* Check original CoC for correctness</li> <li>* Ensure officer receives sufficient training to satisfy the knowledge requirements of UKLAP Grade 2 and retain records</li> <li>* Complete application in accordance with the Regulations &amp; requirements in Column B and send to MCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Verify CoC with issuing administration</li> <li>* Issue Full (5 year) CEC when checks are complete</li> </ul>

**Acceptable Evidence of Knowledge of English Language for Service on Board Fishing Vessels**

The following is acceptable evidence of competency in English. Candidates for Fishing Vessel CECs are not required to demonstrate this evidence at the application stage. However, the company must ensure that AT LEAST ONE OFFICER on board is able to demonstrate competency in English to the satisfaction of the MCA which may be verified at Flag State Inspection.

- Confirmation of proficiency by a MCA surveyor on board the vessel or in a Marine Office
- Passing the Marlins tests at an approved Marlins Test Centre – the minimum acceptable pass mark is 70%. Addresses of approved centres are available from the MCA and the Marlin company homepage <http://www.marlins.co.uk>
- Satisfying the MCA that English is the candidate's mother tongue.
- Holding a certificate of competency for which the examinations are conducted in English.
- Holding an advanced English language certificate issued by the British Council or an International Language Testing System (IELTS) test report showing Overall Band of at least 6.
- Holding a certificate of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) as applicable for admission to US universities.
- Passing the MCA English Language test administered for the MCA by the SQA and conducted by arrangement with SQA in any British Council Office.

**CERTIFICATE OF EQUIVALENT COMPETENCY  
WRITTEN RECORD OF UKLAP GRADE 2 FAMILIARISATION TRAINING  
MERCHANT VESSELS**

A report must be completed for each officer serving with the company holding a Certificate of Equivalent Competency.

Name of officer		
Name of ship		
Capacity in which served		
Period of assessment	From	To

**UKLAP – in this section confirmation is required of the officer’s knowledge of the subject areas listed below. Confirm in the space provided that the officer has been assessed and would, if required, be able to demonstrate knowledge.**

<b>List of certificates and documents required to be carried on a UK flag vessel</b>	
SAFCON, SEC and Radio Certificates	
Loadline Compliance	
Period and Maintenance of Validity on UK ships	
Understanding of survey procedures	

<b>Role and function of the MCA and it’s organs</b>	
Registry of Shipping and Seamen	
HM Coastguard	
Port State Control	
M Notices	

<b>Provision of Muster, Drills and Training on Board</b>	
Muster, Drills and Training	

<b>Provision of Health and Safety on UK Ships to include</b>	
Safety Officials, meetings	
Comprehensive understanding of the Code of Safe Working Practices	
Entry into enclosed spaces, safe movement aboard ship	
Hatches and lifting appliances	
Means of access and risk assessment	

<b>An outline knowledge of entries to be made in the Official Log Book</b>	
Dedicated pages	
Narrative section to include disciplinary procedures	

**COMMUNICATION, CONDUCT AND SOBRIETY** – in this section, a report is required of the officer’s ability to communicate in written and spoken English within the context of VHF, official and social communication, integrate within the ship’s community, establish relationships and maintain discipline. A report is also required upon signs of alcohol or drug abuse.

<b>Communication</b>	
Clarity of speech	
Initiation of dialogue, ability to continue and progress of conversation	
Vocabulary, including job functions	
Understanding of the overall theme of the conversation/radio report	
Clarity of written English	

<b>Conduct and Sobriety</b>	
Relations with colleagues	
Conduct and ability to maintain discipline	
Alcohol and drug related problems	

<b>Overall Assessment – use this space to summarise the report and provide any relevant information not included elsewhere</b>

I am personally satisfied that the content of this report is a fair and accurate reflection of the performance, competence and conduct of the officer during the period and assess the officer as follows:

- PASS** – I am satisfied that the officer has met the full requirements of UKLAP Grade 2 and English and has demonstrated a satisfactory standard of conduct, discipline and sobriety
- EXTENSION** – the officer has made good progress toward the necessary standard but requires some further improvement in the following areas

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I expect the necessary standard to be reached by.....

- FAIL** – the officer has failed to reach the standard in the following area(s)

--

Signature of Company Representative	
Full Name of Company Representative	
Company	

Company stamp
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**CERTIFICATE OF EQUIVALENT COMPETENCY  
WRITTEN RECORD OF UKLAP GRADE 2 FAMILIARISATION TRAINING  
FISHING VESSELS**

A report must be completed for each officer serving with the company holding a Certificate of Equivalent Competency.

Name of officer		
Name of vessel		
Capacity in which served		
Period of assessment	From	To

**UKLAP – in this section confirmation is required of the officer’s knowledge of the subject areas listed below. Confirm in the space provided that the officer has been assessed and would, if required, be able to demonstrate knowledge.**

<b>List of certificates and documents required to be carried on a UK flag fishing vessel</b>	
UK FVC or IFVSC	
Period and Maintenance of Validity on UK ships	
Understanding of survey procedures	

<b>Role and function of the MCA and it's organs</b>	
Registry of Shipping and Seamen	
HM Coastguard	
M Notices	

<b>Provision of Muster, Drills and Training on Board</b>	
Muster, Drills and Training	

<b>Provision of Health and Safety on UK Ships to include</b>	
Safety Officials, meetings	
Crew Agreement & Crew Accommodation Regulations	
Hatches and lifting appliances	
Means of access and risk assessment	

<b>An outline knowledge of entries to be made in the Official Log Book</b>	
Dedicated pages	
Narrative section to include disciplinary procedures	

**CONDUCT AND SOBRIETY** – in this section, a report is required of the officer’s ability to establish relationships and maintain discipline. A report is also required upon signs of alcohol or drug abuse.

<b>Conduct and Sobriety</b>	
Relations with colleagues	
Conduct and ability to maintain discipline	
Alcohol and drug related problems	

<b>Overall Assessment – use this space to summarise the report and provide any relevant information not included elsewhere</b>

I am personally satisfied that the content of this report is a fair and accurate reflection of the performance, competence and conduct of the officer during the period and assess the officer as follows:

- PASS** – I am satisfied that the officer has met the full requirements of UKLAP Grade 2 and has demonstrated a satisfactory standard of conduct, discipline and sobriety
- EXTENSION** – the officer has made good progress toward the necessary standard but requires some further improvement in the following areas

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I expect the necessary standard to be reached by.....

- FAIL** – the officer has failed to reach the standard in the following area(s)

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Signature of Company Representative	
Full Name of Company Representative	
Company	

Company stamp
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Bay 1/17  
Spring Place  
105 Commercial Road  
SOUTHAMPTON  
SO15 1EG

Applicant - please enter name and address in the box below

TEL : 02380 329254  
DDI : 02380 329231  
GTN : 1513 231  
Fax : 02380 329252  
e-mail exams\_section@mcga.gov.uk

**Fax No**

**CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION – CERTIFICATE OF EQUIVALENT COMPETENCY**

**SECTION 1 – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT / COMPANY**

I/we enclose applications for Certificates of Equivalent Competency for the following seafarer(s).

Surname	Initials	Date of Birth	CoC Number	Capacity of the CoC or lower rank if required	MCA use only
					Received

**Declaration (the maximum penalty for a false declaration is £5000)**

I declare that all the applicants listed above hold a valid Certificate of Competency, a valid medical fitness certificate, and where appropriate sight test certificate, accepted by the MCA for the issue of a Certificate of Equivalent Competency as detailed in MGN 221 (M). All required supporting documentary evidence is enclosed, as detailed in MGN 221 (M).

Signed ..... Date .....

Name ..... Position in Company .....

**SECTION 2 – TO BE COMPLETED BY MCA**

We confirm receipt of the above \_\_\_ applications on \_\_\_\_\_. This notice may be used as documentary evidence that the above applications have been submitted to the MCA in accordance with STCW78 as amended, Regulation I/10 paragraph 5, and will remain valid until \_\_\_\_\_ (Only valid when stamped, dated and signed by an authorised MCA official)

Signed .....

Name .....  
Duly Authorised MCA Official

Date.....

MCA Stamp

