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## Sea Service Verification on Large Yachts

**Notice to all Owners, Masters, Officers and Crews of Commercially and Privately Operated Yachts and Sail Training Vessels, and those concerned with Maritime Training.**

*This notice should be read with MSN 1858, MSN 1859, MSN 1861 and MIN 524.  
This MIN expires 28 March 2022.*

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### Summary

This notice describes revised arrangements for verification of sea service testimonials (SST) of seafarers working in the large yacht sector.

The MCA requires evidence of qualifying sea service in support of seafarer's applications for a Notice of Eligibility (NoE) or for the renewal of a Certificate of Competency, to be in the form of a correctly completed SST, signed by a Responsible Person and verified in accordance with the provisions of this Notice.

In addition to direct applications, the MCA has previously delegated authority for verification of sea service to the Professional Yachting Association (PYA) and to Nautilus International (Nautilus) for their members. This notice formalises this arrangement and gives notice that all seafarers employed in the large yacht sector, irrespective of their individual membership of any organisation or association, must have their sea service verified by one of these organisations prior to submitting this information to the MCA. **Failure to do this will cause severe processing delays of around 160 days.**

This document provides further information for obtaining Sea Service Verification from approved organisations other than the MCA for seafarers in the large yacht sector.

### 1. Introduction and Overview of the New Requirements

1.1 A sea service testimonial (SST) provides documented evidence of both time served on board a vessel (yacht service), standby service, ship yard service and actual sea service, which together constitutes qualifying service. A SST will include statements on watch keeping service performed (as applicable).



**1.2** The MCA will continue to provide direct verification of sea service on individual application but seafarers must note that the response time may be subject to operational delays and will not be included in the normal MCA service standards. The MCA may take 160 days to process applications that do not include a completed PYA or Nautilus Record Book. We may return applications where sea service is not broken down as per section 4 of MSN 1858 for Deck Officers or Section 4.8 of MIN 524 for Engineers. This will result in additional courier costs to be covered by the seafarer.

**1.3** The MCA currently accepts the following documentation as evidence of sea service:

- Merchant Navy discharge book supported by verified yacht service testimonials.
- Certificates of discharge supported by verified yacht service testimonials.
- The Professional Yachting Association Service Record Book.
- Nautilus Service Record book.

**1.4** The MCA requires sea service testimonials (SSTs) submitted for the issue of a Notice of Eligibility and for re-validation of an existing Certificate of Competency to be verified by a competent and authorised organisation.

**1.5** The MCA will continue to accept that duly signed and stamped entries of qualifying sea service declared in an approved Service Record Book (SRB) constitute prima facie evidence of such sea service and does not require additional documentation or further verification.

## **2. Definitions**

**2.1** ‘**On board yacht service**’ is the total time served on board a vessel.

**2.2** ‘**Sea service**’ is the combination of sea service, standby service and shipyard service.

**2.3** ‘**Watch keeping service**’ is any 4 hours in 24 hours served as the watch-keeping officer.

**2.4** ‘**Responsible person**’ is the Master<sup>1</sup> of the vessel in which the qualifying service has been performed. In the case of service as Master, the testimonials or certificates of service must be signed by the owner or a responsible person from the Yacht Management Company such as a company director or yacht manager.

**2.5** **Verifying organisation** is an MCA approved organisation or association delegated the responsibility to undertake verification of sea service.

## **3. Verification Process**

**3.1** The process of verifying sea service will include:

3.1.1 Confirmation of the seafarer’s identity by sighting an attested copy of a valid passport as proof of identity. A copy will be retained for auditing purposes<sup>2</sup>.

3.1.2 Performing checks that the SST has been completed correctly to ensure that all the required data has been entered accurately and is legible.

3.1.3 Checking that the information on the SST is plausible. The information provided in the SST will be examined for inconsistencies. Information will be compared with other data held on file to identify conflicts.

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<sup>1</sup> A Chief Engineer can be the responsible person for signing off others working in the Engineering department.

<sup>2</sup> The MCA will periodically audit onsite but reserves the right to visit and inspect the retained seagoing service evidence without prior notice.



- 3.1.4 Obtaining confirmation from the responsible person who signed the SST that the information within it is correct. A verified copy of this correspondence must be retained for auditing purposes.

#### **4. Administration Requirements of Sea Service Testimonials Verification by Approved Organisations.**

- 4.1 Verifying organisations carrying out verification of an SST on behalf of the MCA will be required to take all reasonable precautions to ensure that the data declared and contained in the SST and supporting documentation is correct.
- 4.2 A record of all SSTs received for verification is to be maintained including those SSTs for which verification approval was not possible. This record is to be retained by the verifying organisation for audit by the MCA on request.
- 4.3 On successful completion of the verification process, the verifying organisation is to mark the original SST to indicate that it has been verified stating the date and the person(s) who have undertaken the process.
- 4.4 Copies (either electronic or documents) of all SSTs must be retained for a minimum period of ten years together with copies of all related correspondence. These must be made available to the MCA for audit and/or inspection.

#### **5. Procedure for Obtaining a Verified Sea Service Testimonials**

The procedures for obtaining a verified sea service testimonial are fully detailed in the references above. The MCA's requirements regarding SSTs are set out in:

**MSN 1858 (M+F):** UK requirements for deck officers on large yachts (over 24m).

**MSN 1859 (M+F):** UK requirements for engineer officers on large yachts (over 24m).

**MSN 1861:** UK procedure for the revalidation of certificates of competency and tanker endorsement.

**MIN 524 (M+F)** Engineer Officer Small Vessel Certificate of Competency.

- 6. The requirement to have sea service verified by an MCA approved organisation will come into force from the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017.**



## More Information

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