



MSN 1864 (M) Amendment 1

Training & Certification Guidance: UK Requirements for Radio Operators

Notice to all Owners, Masters, Officers, Ratings and those concerned with maritime training.

This notice replaces MSN 1864 (M)

Summary

This Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) outlines the examination and training requirements for the certification of radio personnel onboard Merchant vessels.

This MSN covers:

1. Introduction
2. Certification, Training and Examination Requirements
3. The GMDSS STCW Endorsement
4. The Revalidation of an STCW Endorsement
5. Application Guidance for STCW Endorsements
6. Company Responsibilities
7. Training of Maintenance of GMDSS Installations Training
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Merchant Shipping (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2015 ("the 2015 Regulations"), implement the requirements of the International Convention and Code on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) 1978¹ (referred to in this MSN as the 'STCW Convention' and 'STCW Code' respectively), including the provisions prescribing the mandatory minimum requirements for certification of radio personnel appointed for distress and safety communication purposes in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Merchant Shipping (Radio Installations) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/2070) (hereafter known as the Radio Regulations). The Radio Regulations implement, in the United Kingdom, Chapter IV of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974 (SOLAS).

¹ The STCW Regulations (SI 2015/782) were amended by S.I. 2018/68, S.I. 2019/630 and S.I. 2021/XXX.



1.2 In the United Kingdom the issue, approval and monitoring of Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) certification is currently delegated to an associated body on behalf of the MCA. Further details are published in MIN 643.²

2. Certification, Training and Examination Requirements

2.1 If you are applying for a Certificate of Competency (CoC) as a deck officer or are the person in charge of performing radio duties on a ship, you must have completed education and training provided by an MCA approved training provider and met the standards of competence specified in section A-IV/2 of the STCW Code (regulation 8 of the 2015 Regulations).

2.2 All radio operators serving on UK registered ships, in accordance with the Radio Regulations, must reach the required vocational and academic standards as specified in section A-IV/2 of the STCW Code and hold one of the following suitably endorsed radio certificates of competency:

- Restricted Operator's Certificate (ROC) to operate in sea area A1; **or**
- A General Operator's Certificate (GOC) to operate in any sea area A1 to A4.

2.3 For the issue of a deck officer COC you must hold either a GMDSS GOC **Error! Bookmark not defined.** or, for some near coastal Certificates of Competency, a GMDSS Restricted Operators Certificate (ROC).

2.4 To qualify for your UK GMDSS certificate you must:

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Have completed a MCA GMDSS GOC or ROC approved course and passed the examinations, demonstrating the standards of competence specified in Section A-IV/2 of the STCW Code.

2.5 On satisfactory completion of the training and having passed the relevant MCA approved examinations you will be issued with the appropriate GMDSS certificate. For the availability of courses, commencement dates, fees and examinations you should refer to the MCA delegated body's contact details in section 11 of MIN 643 or your chosen nautical college.

2.6 In order to comply with the requirements of the STCW Convention and to perform the radio communications function onboard ships, all GMDSS certificates must be endorsed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) (regulation 30 of the 2015 Regulations).

The MCA may accept some GMDSS certificates issued by other administrations for the use on UK ships.³ The approved list is subject to change so you should refer to the website for the current list: www.gov.uk and search "GMDSS".⁴ You will need to apply for an UK Authority to Operate (ATO), enabling you to use your non-UK GMDSS certificate onboard UK ships. Please refer to MSN 1867 (Amendment 1) for further information.⁵

3. The GMDSS STCW Endorsement

3.1 To obtain a UK STCW endorsement for your GMDSS you must meet the following requirements:

² Further information can be found in MIN 643.

³ Further information on the list of accepted GMDSS Certificates toward the issue of a UK Deck Certificate of Competency can be found in MIN 643.

⁴ Further information can be found on: www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-gmdss-stcw-endorsement-merchant-navy-radio-operators

⁵ Further information can be found in MSN 1867 (Amendment 1).



- (a) Hold AMERC-issued GMDSS GOC or ROC;
- (b) Hold basic STCW safety training certificates:

- Personal Survival Techniques (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-1),
- Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-2),
- Elementary First Aid (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-3),
- Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-4);

- (c) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent⁶.

3.2 Holders of valid UK deck, engineer and electro-technical STCW Certificates of Competency valid for seagoing service will not be required to produce evidence of the STCW safety training certificates listed above by virtue of the training undertaken to obtain their Certificates of Competency.

Personal Survival Techniques and Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting must have been completed or updated within the last 5 years. For further information please refer to MSN 1865 (Amendment 1).⁷

3.3 The MCA-issued STCW endorsement will be valid from a period of five years from the date of issue.

To continue to work at sea as a radio operator your MCA issued STCW endorsement for a UK GOC and ROC must be revalidated every five years.

4. The Revalidation of an STCW Endorsement (regulation 35 of the 2015 Regulations)

4.1 If you hold a GMDSS GOC or ROC, in order to revalidate your STCW endorsement you must provide documentary evidence of:

- (a) Completing a minimum of:

- 12 months' seagoing service within the last 5 years immediately prior to making an application to revalidate your STCW endorsement **or**
- At least 30 months' service in an acceptable occupation in the 5 years immediately prior to making an application to revalidate your STCW endorsement⁸;

- (b) Hold a valid ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent.

4.2 If you are unable to meet the revalidation requirements listed above, you must demonstrate to the MCA that you are competent to return to sea by submitting the following documents:

- (a) An ENG1 (medical fitness certificate) or accepted equivalent;
- (b) Either:

- The basic STCW safety training certificates:
 - Personal Survival Techniques (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-1),

⁶ Details of MCA Approved Medical Certificates are available from www.gov.uk/seafarer-medical-certificates.

⁷ Further information can be found in MSN 1865 (Amendment 1).

⁸ Further information on acceptable occupations to revalidate an MCA STCW endorsement can be found in MIN 643.



- Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-2),
- Elementary First Aid (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-3),
- Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities (STCW Code – Table A-VI/1-4) **or**

- A UK CoC valid for seagoing service.

4.3 Personal Survival Techniques and Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting must have been completed or updated within the last 5 years. For further information please refer to MSN 1865 (Amendment 1).⁹

5. Application Guidance for STCW Endorsements

5.1 The application form MSF 4354 describes the procedure, process and fee (if applicable) to obtain or revalidate a UK STCW endorsement for your GMDSS certificate. You must complete the application form and submit it to the MCA with the relevant fee and required documents. The application form can be found on our website, go to www.gov.uk and search “MSF 4354”.¹⁰

5.2 Seagoing service must be documented in one of the following:

- Merchant Navy Discharge Book;
- Seagoing Service Testimonials;
- Certificates of Discharge;
- Similar MCA approved service record book.

5.3 If you are applying for the revalidation of a GMDSS STCW endorsement by virtue of an acceptable occupation, you must submit a company letter stating your role, responsibilities and length of service within the last five years.

5.4 If you meet the qualifying conditions applicable to either the initial STCW endorsement or the revalidation of an STCW endorsement, your GMDSS will be valid for seagoing service for a period of five years from date of issue or will be synchronised to the expiry date of your CoC.

5.5 If you hold a UK CoC your GMDSS certificate should be submitted with your NOE pass or CoC revalidation application so the expiry dates can be synchronised.

6. Company Responsibilities

6.1 In conforming to the provisions of Regulation 1/14 of the STCW Convention and section A-I/14 of the STCW Code, a company must ensure that: seafarers assigned to any of its ships have received refresher and updating training as required by the Convention (STCW Code Regulation I/14).

6.2 Companies should provide ship-specific introductory programmes aimed at assisting newly employed seafarers to familiarise themselves with all procedures and equipment relating to their areas of responsibility. Companies should also ensure that personnel who may be required to operate the GMDSS equipment receive GMDSS familiarisation training, on joining the ship and at appropriate intervals thereafter.

⁹ Further information can be found in MSN 1865 (Amendment 1).

¹⁰ MSF 4354: www.gov.uk/government/publications/gmdss-stcw-endorsement-msf-4354



7. Training of Maintenance of GMDSS Installations

7.1 Regulation 16 of Chapter IV of SOLAS '74, regulation 18 of the Radio Regulations and Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1690 (M) allow for the use of 'at-sea electronic maintenance capability' to ensure the availability of radio equipment, as required.¹¹

7.2 A person designated to perform at-sea electronic maintenance is required to hold:

- An appropriate certificate as specified by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Radio Regulations and as referred to in STCW Code B-IV/2, **or**
- Have equivalent at-sea electronic maintenance qualifications. Further information and details of suitable training courses may be obtained from the delegated body approved by the MCA for GMDSS Certificates.¹²

8. Vessel Requirements

8.1 A summary of the required Radio Certification, depending on vessel type and area of operation, is summarised in the table in MIN 643.¹²

¹¹ MSN 1690: www.gov.uk/government/publications/msn-1690-radio-equipment-serviceability-and-maintenance

¹² Further information can be found in MIN 643.



More Information

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General Enquiries: info@mcga.gov.uk

Published: December 2021

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