

SUBJECT: Boatmaster Licenses

REFERENCE: a) Merchant Shipping (Small Commercial Vessels) Regulations 2008
b) Code of safety for small commercial vessels (SCV Code)

TO: Owners, Operators, and Seafarers of small commercial vessels registered or licensed in Antigua and Barbuda

1. PURPOSE

To provide information on the policy of ADOMS towards Boatmaster qualifications, and the process for examination

2. APPLICATION

This Marine Notice applies to companies operating SCV certified vessels registered in Antigua and Barbuda.

3. BACKGROUND

The SCV Code applies to vessels operating commercially in the Caribbean trading area of up to 24 metres in length (loadline length) was adopted by the Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda in 2008 through the Merchant Shipping (Small Commercial Vessels) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No. 31). This Code sets a standard for construction and equipment for the vessels it applies to. As well as construction and equipment the Code specifies qualifications for Master's and Engineers in charge of these vessels.

In the past there has not been a process whereby local boat operators can obtain in Antigua and Barbuda the Boatmaster's Licences that are the minimum standard required for operating these boats. The International Maritime Organization which is the United Nations Agency with responsibility for maritime affairs and which originated the Code is keen to see it properly implemented in the Caribbean region. At the same time cruise ship companies, hotels and tour companies demand evidence of training and certification for marine based tourist businesses. Responding to this, ADOMS has encouraged local companies to set up training courses for Boatmaster's Licenses.

4. OBLIGATIONS AND GUIDANCE

1. ADOMS recognises that there has not previously been a facility whereby seafarers in Antigua and Barbuda can obtain the Boatmaster's qualification. Consequently, many personnel currently operating commercial vessels locally do not hold the qualifications. Recognising this ADOMS will:
 - a. Accept existing personnel operating solely in Barbuda waters who are already employed in small commercial vessels and who have at least 6 months of experience for service in SCVs without a Boatmaster's License until such time as Boatmaster's qualification can be obtained in Barbuda .

- b. Accept persons with experience or service on a particular boat employed on a particular route for an extended period and who have undertaken an assessment from one of the training providers for examination for a Boatmaster's examination directly and the issue a Boatmaster licence with limitations reflecting the area of operation.
- c. Waive the SCV Code requirement for the full completion of the STCW Basic Safety Training for personnel serving in SCVs that are operating solely in Antigua and Barbuda waters up to 3 miles offshore. This requirement in the Code will still apply for vessels operating further afield. Candidates for Boatmaster's Licenses will be required as a minimum to complete the Basic First Aid and Personal Survival Techniques modules of the BST Requirements

2. Grades of Boatmaster License

- a. Every SCV that is operating in protected waters (not more than 3 miles from a safe refuge) and which is an open boat carrying 12 or less passengers should have a person in charge who holds a Boatmaster Grade 3 License.
- b. Every other SCV that is operating in Protected Waters (not more than 3 miles from a safe refuge) should have a person in charge who holds a Boatmaster Grade 2 License (minimum).
- c. Every SCV that is operating with passengers and in Coastal Waters (up to 20 miles offshore) or operating beyond those limits should have a person in charge who holds a Boatmaster Grade 1 License.

3. Requirements to obtain a license

- a. Candidates for Boatmaster Grade 3 must be at least 18 years of age and have evidence of at least 3 months service in a similar boat to the one for which they require a license.
- b. Candidates for Boatmaster Grade 2 must be at least 20 years of age and have evidence of at least six months of service in SCVs including at least 3 months in a similar boat to the one for which they require a license.
- c. Candidates for Grade 1 must be at least 21 and have at least 12 month's experience in SCVs including at least 3 months service in a similar vessel to the one they intend to serve in.
- d. All candidates will be required to obtain a valid medical fitness certificate and to pass the examination.

4. Radio

- a. All candidates for service in vessels with radio installations will be required to complete the VHF operator's course and produce a certificate

5. Courses and medical certification

- a. The list of approved training institutes and Medical Practitioners available in Antigua and Barbuda is given in [Marine Notice No. 2017-05](#). As and when further are approved, the Marine Notice will be updated.

6. Examinations

- a. It is anticipated that applicants will be able to provide access to the boat that they are currently working on, or a similar boat, for the purposes of the examination.
- b. The syllabuses for each grade of examination are set out in the [SCV Code](#)
- c. In general, the examination structure will be an oral examination covering the theoretical aspects of the syllabus and a practical test of boat handling and emergency manoeuvring. For Grade 1 there will be an additional practical test on the operation of any electronic navigational equipment fitted to the applicant's boat.
- d. For those who have completed one of the approved theory courses and obtained a course completion certificate following success in the course assessment the oral part of the examination will be limited to the essential emergency situations and can be completed during the practical test. For applicants who have not completed one of the approved courses and obtained a certificate the oral part of the examination will be conducted separately from the practical test and will cover the complete syllabus and a pass at this oral part of the examination will be essential before taking the practical test.

7. Issue of License

- a. All commercial operators are required to hold a Boatmaster Licence
- b. Boatmaster Licenses are issued by ADOMS valid for 3 years and can be renewed on their expiry on production of a valid medical fitness certificate.
- c. Boatmaster Licenses are issued upon receipt of a Boatmasters training declaration from one the approved training providers or presentation of a valid Certificate of Competence (CoC) as outlined below and a valid medical certificate from one of the approved medical practitioners listed in [Marine Notice No. 2017-05](#)
- d. Training institutes are approved to conduct both the theoretical and practical training for the certificate of competence as Boatmasters.

8. Recognition of Boatmaster's Licenses issued outside Antigua and Barbuda

- a. Boatmaster's Licenses issued in other Caribbean Countries that have adopted the SCV Code can be recognised for service in Antigua and Barbuda vessels.

9. Recognition of CoC's for operation in Antigua and Barbuda

- a. The following are accepted as equivalent to Boatmaster Grade 1 Licenses:
- i. RYA Advanced Powerboat Certificate commercially endorsed plus STCW Basic Safety Training
 - ii. RYA Yachtmaster Coastal Certificate commercially endorsed plus STCW Basic Safety Training
 - iii. RYA Yachtmaster Offshore or Ocean, commercially and STCW endorsed (or with separate STCW Basic Safety Training)
 - iv. Any CoC according to the STCW Convention, Annex, Reg. II/1, II/2 or II/3, issued by an STCW white list country.
 - v. Other equivalencies may be granted on specific request regarding Boatmaster Grade 2/3 Licenses for example RYA Day Skipper with any further requirements.

Issued by

Antigua and Barbuda
Department of Marine Services and Merchant Shipping
(ADOMS) St. John's