

Department of Transport

Certificates of Competency for Fishing Vessels

Directions as to the Examination of Deck Officers under the Merchant Shipping Acts

The 'Exam Directions'

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

- 1.1 These directions, issued under Statutory Instrument No. 313/2023 Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck officers and Engineer officers) Regulations 2023 and the Merchant Shipping (Certification of Seamen) Act, 1979, specify the standards of competency and the conditions to be satisfied before Certificates of competency are issued. These directions give particulars of: -
- 1.1.1 the conditions of entry for examinations and the approval of training by the Department of Transport for Deck Officer Certificates of competency (COC), for service on fishing vessels
 - 1.1.2 the conditions for the issue of Certificates of equivalent competency (CEC) by the Department of Transport for service on Irish fishing vessels
- 1.2 These directions should be read in conjunction with the guidelines on the website www.seafarers.ie.
- 1.3 Statutory Instrument No.313/2023 Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck officers and Engineer officers) Regulations 2023 provide for the issue and revalidation of Certificates of competency as follows:

Capacity	Limitations Applying
Skipper Full	None
Skipper (Limited)	Skipper of a fishing vessel of less than 100m in length in the limited area
Skipper (Limited) <24m	Skipper of a fishing vessel of less than 24m in length in the limited area
Second Hand Full	None
Second Hand Special ¹	Skipper of a fishing vessel of less than 24m in length in the limited area
Second Hand Limited	Deck Officer in the Limited Area

The “Full” certificates of competency are valid for service in all fishing vessels in all waters. The “Limited” certificates of competency are valid for service only in fishing vessels which do not proceed beyond the area bounded by a line from a point on the Norwegian coast in latitude 62 north due west to a point 62 north 14 30 west, thence to a point 42 north 14 30 west and thence due east to the Spanish coast (i.e. the Limited Area).

- 1.4 Certificates of competency may be subject to limitations relating to a geographical area for any given capacity. Further limitations may also be applied as directed by the Minister.
- 1.5 Statutory Instrument No. 52/2024 – European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Safe Manning) Regulations 2024 provide that every Skipper and Deck officer assigned to an Irish fishing vessel holds an appropriate certificate in respect of any

¹ See Chapter 7

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function they are to perform on that ship.

1.6 Valid Certificates: means: -

- A Certificate of competency issued by the Department of Transport, in accordance with Statutory Instrument No. 313/2023 Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck officers and Engineer officers) Regulations 2023 of the appropriate class for the capacity in which the holder is to be carried in the fishing vessel.

1.7 Any Certificate of competency or Certificate of equivalent competency referred to in these Directions is a Certificate issued by or on behalf of the Minister for Transport. Such Certificates may only be issued when all the conditions relating to the issue of the Certificate have been met in accordance with these Directions. Certificates are issued on behalf of the Minister by the Chief Surveyor of the Marine Survey Office.

1.8 Statutory Instrument No. 313/2023 Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck officers and Engineer officers) Regulations 2023 apply to fishing vessels of 15 metres in length overall (Loa) and over.

1.9 Fees for Examination: Fees are as listed on SIS Form 9. www.seafarers.ie.

1.10 Miscellaneous: Any reference in these rules to "he" includes "she" and to "him"/"his" includes "her"/"hers".

1.11 Approved: means approved by the Minister or under the authority of the Minister.

1.12 Where these exam directions refer to applications for a certificate, unless otherwise specified, all applications must be made to the Mercantile Marine Office, Dublin.

Applications

1.13 How to Apply

- 1.13.1 Applicants should complete SiS Form 9 or SiS Form 6 for revalidation. The relevant application forms are available from the Mercantile Marine Office, Dublin or can be downloaded from www.seafarers.ie
- 1.13.2 **By Post:** The completed form, together with the supporting documents and appropriate fee should be forwarded to: **Examiner of Masters and Mates, Mercantile Marine Office, Department of Transport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60.**
- 1.13.3 It is recommended that applicants should use a registered postal service when sending original documents to the Mercantile Marine Office. Candidates may opt to have certificates posted out to a designated address within Ireland. The registered postal service will be used for delivery of Certificates.
- 1.13.4 Certificates will not be posted to addresses outside of Ireland except at the written request of candidates and on the written undertaking that they accept

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all responsibility for the certificate in transit. The normal postal service will be used, and no responsibility will be taken for lost certificates. Certificates claimed lost in this way will be dealt with as per Chapter 4 Section 4.18. Overseas candidates may request that their Certificate is sent by registered post or courier and in this case, they shall bear the cost of such postage.

- 1.13.5 **In person:** Candidates may deliver application forms and documents to the Mercantile Marine Office during business hours. Certificates may be collected in person or by a designated agent of the candidate at the Mercantile Marine Office, Dublin. Candidates are recommended to make an appointment prior to calling to the office to ensure that someone will be available to deal with their application.

1.14 Correspondence

- 1.14.1 All correspondence with the Examiner of Masters and Mates should be made, in the first instance, through the Mercantile Marine Office, Dublin. Telephone +353 1 6783480. Email: admin@seafarers.ie
- 1.14.2 **Seafarer's Identity Number:** All seafarers holding certificates or other documents issued by or under the authority of the Department of Transport are required to have a unique identity number.
- 1.14.3 A seafarer identity number can be obtained by logging onto www.seafarers.ie and following the instructions.

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Certificates of Competency Conditions

To serve on a fishing vessel as a deck officer the fisher must be qualified and hold the relevant Certificate of competency for the position being held on board. Certificates of competency are issued by the Marine Survey Office of the Department of Transport.

2.1 Medical Fitness

- 2.1.1 CANDIDATES ARE ADVISED TO ENSURE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE THAT THEY WILL BE CAPABLE OF MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ISSUE OF A MEDICAL FITNESS CERTIFICATE. FAILURE TO OBTAIN SUCH A CERTIFICATE WILL MEAN THAT THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY CANNOT BE ISSUED.
- 2.1.2 It is important that every person who contemplates becoming a deck officer should realise that the ability to reach the required standard in Medical Fitness, and in particular Eyesight, when they first go to sea, does not guarantee that they will be able to pass the test when they present for examination for a Certificate of competency. It is possible that there may be certain latent defects in their eyesight, which may result in a candidate being unable to meet the specified standard in visual acuity. These defects can only be discovered by a more thorough examination. It is recommended that before embarking upon a seagoing career in a deck capacity that every person should, in their own interests, undergo a thorough examination of their eyesight by an Ophthalmologist.
- 2.1.3 A Medical Fitness Certificate may be obtained from a recognised Medical Practitioner by meeting the medical fitness requirements of the European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Medical Examination) Regulations 2020, or recognised equivalent, acceptable to the Department of Transport. As the standards may change from time-to-time candidates should check with the Marine Survey Office Examinations Department regarding the most recent regulations.
- 2.1.4 Information concerning Medical Fitness Certificates, medical examinations and approved doctors may be obtained on www.seafarers.ie.

2.2 Examination Procedure

- 2.2.1 Examinations for Certificates of competency consist of various examination formats which include but are not limited to, written examinations, oral examinations, and ancillary courses. All modules and written examinations for Certificates of competency will be set and marked entirely by the BIM Fishery Colleges. The required modules for each examination are set out in Chapter 3.
- 2.2.2 All examination modules must be passed prior to entry to the oral examinations.
- 2.2.3 Oral examinations shall be conducted by an Examiner of Masters and Mates at the Department of Transport.
- 2.2.4 Candidates for Deck Officer examinations may be required to produce documentary evidence of satisfactory attendance at a fishery college. An

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attendance rate of at least 90% must be shown. Documentary evidence may be in the form of college attendance records or a letter from the BIM Course Coordinator verifying satisfactory attendance throughout the course. Further sea service may be imposed on a candidate whose college attendance is below the required level without valid explanation.

- 2.2.5 BIM shall provide a list of candidates who have attained the pass mark in the required modules to the Examiner of Masters and Mates, Mercantile Marine Office. In the event of failing to attain the pass mark set by the Department in any of the modules, candidates should arrange to retake the failed module(s) directly with the National Fishery colleges.

2.3 Notice of Eligibility and Application

- 2.3.1 **Application procedures:** Candidates shall make an application to the Department for a Notice of Eligibility, which permits entry to the written and oral examination. Candidates shall make an application for an NOE at least six weeks in advance of any written examination.
- 2.3.2 **Fees:** Each candidate will be required to pay the appropriate fee on each occasion of making an application for examination. Details of the current fees may be obtained from the Examination Clerk, Marine Survey Office, Dublin.
- 2.3.3 **Determination of Eligibility:** Each candidate enquiring as to their eligibility for admission to an examination will be required to make formal application and pay the appropriate fee before assessment of their application will be made.

2.4 Candidates seeking admission to the written and oral examinations should apply for a Notice of Eligibility as follows:

- 2.4.1 An application will only be accepted by the Department if the candidate has satisfactorily completed the relevant training and the qualifying sea service requirements for the grade of certificate applied for.
- 2.4.2 Candidates for examinations should complete a form of application SIS Form 9 obtainable on www.seafarers.ie
- 2.4.3 The completed form, together with the appropriate fee and testimonials, discharges, proof of nationality, Certificate of competency or service, if any, and other seagoing service testimonials as required, should be addressed to the **Examiner of Masters and Mates, Marine Survey Office, Leeson Lane Dublin 2, DO2 TR60**
- 2.4.4 When a candidate's application has been approved a Notice of Eligibility will be issued by the Department of Transport. This notice will specify which modules and training are required to be completed and it will authorise the candidate's admission to the written exams at BIM and the oral examination as appropriate.
- 2.4.5 A Notice of Eligibility is valid for two years from the date it is issued.

2.5 Candidates agree arrangements for the oral examination with the Exam Clerk, Department of Transport, Dublin, either by telephone or email.

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- 2.6 Certificates are progressive from grade to grade. The knowledge, understanding and proficiency for a higher grade in both written and oral examination is always regarded as including the knowledge, understanding and proficiency for the corresponding subject, if any, for certificates of a lower grade.
- 2.7 Oral examinations will be held for the following certificates:
- 2.7.1 Skipper Full
 - 2.7.2 Skipper <24metres
 - 2.7.3 Second Hand Full
 - 2.7.4 Second Hand Limited
- 2.8 A candidate who is unsuccessful in orals at their first attempt will be required to pay separate fees in respect of his second and subsequent attempts at this part of the examination.
- 2.8.1 A candidate who is unsuccessful in the oral examination is required to wait at least 30 days before attempting a repeat examination. A candidate must wait at least three months before attempting a third or further re-sits of an oral examination.
- 2.9 A candidate who fails to appear for any written or oral examination at the appointed time, without reasonable excuse, may be failed by default. In the absence of reasonable proof that the failure to attend was unavoidable, the examination fee shall be forfeited.
- 2.10 A pass in each of the written examination modules listed on the notice of eligibility required for a Certificate of competency will remain valid for a period of five years.
- 2.11 **Forgery and Fraud:** Section 3 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1979 provides that if a person makes a statement which he knows to be false or recklessly makes a statement which is false in a material particular, such as representing himself as having served in a higher capacity than his actual rank for the purpose of obtaining for himself or for another person a certificate or other document which may be issued under the Fishing Vessels Officers Regulations, he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine.
- 2.12 **Proof of Identity:** Each candidate for a Certificate of any grade will be required to produce proof of name, nationality, and place and date of birth. Proof of nationality will in general involve the production of a passport, birth certificate or of a certificate of naturalization.
- 2.13 **Knowledge of English:** Written and Oral examinations shall be conducted in the English language.
- 2.13.1 Each candidate must prove to the satisfaction of the Department of Transport that they are competent in the use and understanding of English in both the written and oral form and have adequate knowledge of the English language to enable them to use nautical publications and perform navigation duties in an Irish ship. Candidates who are unable to communicate effectively in the English language will not be issued with a Certificate of competency.

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2.13.2 Prior to undertaking an approved course, non-native English-speaking candidates may provide, or be required to provide, evidence of their competence in the English language by providing a Test Report Form from the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent. This test report should show that the applicant has achieved at least academic level 6 in the four modules: - listening, reading, writing, and speaking with an overall band score of at least 6.5 in the academic modules.

2.14 Certificate Issue

2.14.1 Certificates of competency are issued at the Mercantile Marine Office, Dublin, when all parts of the examination and all other mandatory conditions governing the Certificate are successfully completed or met.

2.14.2 Before the holder of a Certificate of competency of a particular grade is issued with a certificate of a higher class, that person shall surrender the first mentioned certificate to the Minister for Transport or to such person as the Minister directs, for cancellation.

2.15 A holder of a Certificate of competency may apply, paying the appropriate fee, for replacement for a lost Certificate of competency at the Mercantile Marine Office, Leeson Lane Dublin 2, DO2 TR60. A declaration as to the circumstances in which the Certificate was lost must be made by the applicant before the Superintendent. The Superintendent will then refer the application to the Examiner of Masters and Mates.

- No fee is chargeable if the applicant can show that the certificate was lost through a shipwreck, fire on board or other shipping casualty.

2.16 **Insufficient Service:** If, after a candidate has passed the examination, it is discovered that his service is insufficient to entitle him to receive a certificate of the Class for which he has passed, a certificate of that Class will not be granted to him. If, however, the Minister is satisfied that the error in the calculation of the candidate's service did not occur through any fault or wilful misrepresentation on his part, the Minister may either return the fee to him or issue the certificate to him after he has produced evidence of having served the necessary additional sea service. If the error was due to fault or misrepresentation of the part of the candidate, the examination will be cancelled and the fee forfeited.

2.17 Oral Examinations

2.17.1 The oral examination is intended to ascertain a candidate's competency in the practical aspects of a deck officer's duty.

2.17.2 Oral examinations will predominantly be based upon the operational duties of a Skipper or Deck Officer in the following functions and at the level appropriate to the examination that they are taking. However, the examination may include aspects of the syllabus normally covered in written examinations:

- Navigation
- Catch Handling and Stowage
- Controlling the operation of the ship and care for the persons on board
- Radiocommunications

2.17.3 The content of the oral exam shall be appropriate to the relevant Certificate of

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competency and as set out in the examinations for Certificates of competency deck officer syllabus. A pass mark for the oral exam is not specified, however, an inability to adequately answer questions relevant to the capacity of Certificate of competency being examined may lead to failure.

- 2.17.4 Candidates for Skipper certificates are expected to prepare themselves thoroughly for oral examinations. In addition to other elements the oral examination is an assessment of a candidate's ability to manage personnel and emergency situations.
- 2.17.5 Candidates for examination for Second Hand Full may choose to be examined simultaneously for Skipper less than 24meters Limited Area or return for further oral examination for this competency
- 2.17.6 During the oral examination the Examiner will test a candidate's knowledge of the sense and intention of the Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. Mere ability to repeat the Regulations word-for-word will not suffice to ensure a candidate passing, nor will the lack of it necessarily entail failure, provided that the Examiner is satisfied that the candidate grasps the full significance, content and practical application of the Regulations. Examiners will not ask for the content of the Regulations by number, but by the subject with which they deal, and they will discourage the use by candidates of verses as aids to memorising the Regulations. Examiners will not place a candidate in the position of handling a sailing ship but may test the candidate's ability to recognise a sailing ship's lights and the candidate's knowledge of a sailing ship's possible manoeuvres according to the direction of the wind.
- 2.17.7 A candidate who is unsuccessful in the oral part of the examination for any Certificate of competency through serious weakness in knowledge relevant to the duties of a deck officer at the level subject to examination may, at the Examiner's discretion, be required to perform further sea service before being re-examined. Such sea service will not exceed six months and may be performed in any capacity on deck in a seagoing ship relevant to the Certificate of competency being sought.

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Classes of Certificates

- 3.1 **Skipper (Full):** For the certificate of competency as Skipper (Full) a candidate must:
- 3.1.1 be not less than 20 years of age
 - 3.1.2 hold a valid medical fitness certificate (S.I. 266/2020, Reg. 7)
 - 3.1.3 hold a valid Second Hand Full or Skipper Limited Certificate of Competency
 - 3.1.4 Have approved seagoing service in the deck department of a fishing vessel of not less than 36 months of which 12 months shall be in a capacity not lower than Second Hand on fishing vessels of more than 15 metres in length and provide documentary evidence of such service
 - 3.1.5 have completed the approved education and training programme for Skipper Full and met the required standard of competence
 - 3.1.6 possess ancillary certification and other certification as per Annex A of these directions
 - 3.1.7 meet the applicable requirements as appropriate for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the radio regulations
 - 3.1.8 A person holding a Second-Hand Full Certificate of Competency may attend the Skipper Full course at a Fishing College and undertake the written examination without the additional sea service. However, the required 12 months' sea service is required along with the additional criteria before attending for oral examination for a Skipper Full Certificate of Competency.

Skipper Full		
Module	Overall assessment pass %	Recognised Prior Learning
Coastal Navigation	70	-
Ocean Navigation	60	-
Ship Construction and Stability	60	-
Meteorology & Oceanography	60	-
Maritime Law Business and Management	60	-
NAEST O	-	Yes
ECDIS	-	Yes

- 3.2 **Skipper Limited:** For the certificate of competency as Skipper on fishing vessels of less than 100m in the Limited Area a candidate must:
- 3.2.1 Be not less than 20 years of age
 - 3.2.2 Hold a valid medical fitness certificate (S.I. 266/2020, Reg. 7)
 - 3.2.3 Hold a valid Second-Hand Full Certificate of competency
 - 3.2.4 Have approved seagoing service in the deck department of a fishing vessel of not less than 36 months of which 12 months shall be in a capacity not lower than Second Hand on fishing vessels of more than 15 metres in length and provide documentary evidence of such service
 - 3.2.5 Possess ancillary certification and other certification as per Annex A of these directions

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3.2.6 Meet the applicable requirements as appropriate for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the radio regulations.

3.3 **Skipper Limited <24m:** For the certificate of competency as Skipper on fishing vessels of less than 24m in the Limited Area a candidate must:

- 3.3.1 Be not less than 19 years of age
- 3.3.2 Hold a valid medical fitness certificate (S.I. 266/2020, Reg. 7)
- 3.3.3 Have approved seagoing service in the deck department on fishing vessels of 15 metres or more in length, of not less than 24 months and provide documentary evidence of such service
- 3.3.4 Have completed approved education and training and met the required standard of competence for Second Hand Full Certificate of competency
- 3.3.5 Possess ancillary certification and other certification as per Annex A of these directions
- 3.3.6 Meet the applicable requirements as appropriate for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the radio regulations.

3.4 **Second Hand Full: Deck officer in charge of a navigational watch on all fishing vessels:** For a certificate of competency as Second Hand Full every candidate for certificate must:

- 3.4.1 Be not less than 18 years of age
- 3.4.2 Hold a valid medical fitness certificate (S.I. 266/2020, Reg. 7)
- 3.4.3 Have approved seagoing service in the deck department on fishing vessels of 15 metres or more in length, of not less than 24 months and provide documentary evidence of such service
- 3.4.4 Have completed approved education and training programme for Second Hand Full and met the required standard of competence
- 3.4.5 Possess ancillary certification and other certification as per Annex A of these directions
- 3.4.6 Meet the applicable requirements as appropriate for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the radio regulations.

Second Hand Full		
Module	Overall assessment pass %	Recognised Prior Learning
Chartwork & Pilotage	70	-
Meteorology	50	-
Ocean Navigation	70	-
Ship Construction & Stability incl. catch handling	50	-
NAEST O	-	Yes
ECDIS	-	Yes
Signals	90	-

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3.5 **Second Hand Limited: Deck officer in charge of a navigational watch on fishing vessels of less than 24m in the limited area:** For a certificate of competency as Second Hand Limited every candidate for certificate must:

- 3.5.1 Be not less than 18 years of age
- 3.5.2 Hold a valid medical fitness certificate (S.I. 266/2020, Reg. 7)
- 3.5.3 Have approved seagoing service in the deck department on fishing vessels of 15 metres or more in length, of not less than 24 months and provide documentary evidence of such service
- 3.5.4 Have completed the approved education and training programme for Second Hand Limited and met the required standard of competence
- 3.5.5 Possess ancillary certification and other certification as per Annex A of these directions
- 3.5.6 Meet the applicable requirements as appropriate for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the radio regulations.

Second Hand Limited		
Module	Overall assessment pass %	Recognised Prior Learning
Chartwork & Pilotage	70	-
Meteorology	50	-
Electronic navigation Systems	-	-
Signals	90	-

CHAPTER 4

Sea Service

4.1 Approval of seagoing service

- 4.1.1 Sea service shall be relevant to the qualification being applied for. The purpose of sea service is to allow the fisher to be instructed in and to practice under appropriate supervision, those safe and proper seagoing practices, procedures, and routines which are relevant to the qualification applied for.

4.2 Sea Service

- 4.2.1 Approved seagoing service for Certificates of competency must be performed in the deck department, although an allowance may be given in respect of service in a dual capacity where a reasonable proportion of time each day has been spent on deck duties. Such service will be considered by the Examiner of Masters and Mates.
- 4.2.2 Where a period of approved seagoing service is specified for a Certificate of competency this is the **minimum** amount that shall be accepted.
- 4.2.3 A minimum of six months of the approved seagoing service shall be performed within the five-year period immediately preceding an application for examination.
- 4.2.4 **Seagoing service means service onboard a fishing vessel relevant to the issue or revalidation of a certificate.** In general, approved seagoing service required for all Certificates of competency shall be served on fishing vessels of 15 metres in length or more and are actively engaged in fishing. Service in non-trading vessels may be accepted in exceptional circumstances and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - 4.2.4.1 Approved seagoing service will be reckoned from the commencement of the voyage (fishing trip) or period of continuous sea service to its termination inclusive of both dates, subject to verification by the Superintendent of the Mercantile Marine Office as required.
 - 4.2.4.2 Notarised testimonials which may be supplemented with discharge book entries shall be provided as a record for all approved seagoing service, these entries may be supported by company letters.
 - 4.2.4.3 The Examiner may use appropriate databases to cross check and verify seagoing service. Further documentary evidence may be required to demonstrate the actual period of seagoing service for example entries in the Official Logbook. It shall be the responsibility of the candidate to prove seagoing service to the satisfaction of the examiner.
 - 4.2.4.4 For calculating seagoing service, a month shall be defined as a calendar month or 30 days if made up of a period less than a month.

4.3 Proof of Sea Service

- 4.3.1 A candidate for a certificate as Second Hand must produce satisfactory evidence of the prescribed qualifying sea service. A candidate for a certificate

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as Skipper (Full) must produce satisfactory evidence of the prescribed twelve months' service as Second Hand such as the appropriate certificate of discharge etc. Service on fishing vessels of under 15 metres in length but not less than 12 metres in length for Second Hand Limited or Second-Hand Full certificates may be accepted in part depending upon the type of fishing voyage in which the vessel is engaged, e.g., voyages by day only may be accepted at half rate subject to an overall maximum of six months.

Sea Service Table

Certificate of competency	Minimum Sea Service Required
Second Hand Limited	24 months
Second Hand Full	24 months
Skipper Limited <24m	24 months
Skipper Limited <100m	36 months, of which 12 months shall be in the capacity of Second Hand
Skipper Full	36 months, of which 12 months shall be in the capacity of Second Hand

CHAPTER 5

Continued Proficiency and Updating of Knowledge

5.1 Revalidation of Certificates

- 5.1.1 A Certificate of competency shall be revalidated or renewed, at intervals not exceeding five years, if the holder wishes to continue to be able to serve at sea. All certificates issued to Skippers and Deck Officers will have a maximum validity of five years and will become due for revalidation on or before the expiry date shown in the certificate.
- 5.1.2 When a certificate is revalidated, it will be reissued as a new document
- 5.1.3 Certificates may be revalidated up to six months prior to the expiry date. In such cases the expiry date of a new certificate will be five years from the date of expiry of the previous certificate.

5.2 To fulfil the requirements for revalidation, Certificate holders will be required to demonstrate medical fitness and continued professional competence by:

- 5.2.1 Holding a valid Medical Fitness Certificate (maximum validity two years), and
- 5.2.2 Hold a certificate of proficiency issued within the previous five years in personal survival techniques, and fire prevention and firefighting or evidence of update training within the previous five years, and
- 5.2.3 Candidates seeking to revalidate a Certificate of competency as Skipper Full or Skipper Limited shall provide a certificate of proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats or evidence of update training within the previous five years and a certificate of proficiency in advanced firefighting or evidence of update training completed within the previous five years.

5.3 The Medical Care Onboard certificate shall be updated at intervals not exceeding five years. This must be valid when applying to revalidate a Certificate of competency as Skipper.

5.4 There will be no time limit on applications for the revalidation of an expired Certificate of competency for sea-going service, irrespective of the date on which the certificate ceased to be valid for such service.

5.5 Candidates who wish to revalidate an expired certificate of competency may be required to complete an approved training programme and assessment

CHAPTER 6

Certificates of equivalent competency

6.1 All applicants

- 6.1.1 A Certificate of competency issued by another country with which Ireland holds a mutual agreement may be recognised for the purpose of serving on an Irish Fishing Vessel, in the form of a Certificate of equivalent competency.
- 6.1.2 The Irish Maritime Administration shall only issue a Certificate of equivalent competency to a person who is going to work on an Irish fishing vessel and has an offer of employment.

6.2 When an application for a Certificate of equivalent competency has been received, the Department will check the validity and authenticity of the Certificate of competency with the country that issued it. If it is authentic and valid, a Confirmation of Receipt of Application shall be issued, which is valid for a period of three months. This will allow an applicant to sail on an Irish ship while the application is processed. See Annex B for details of English Language requirements.

6.3 An applicant shall fulfil the following criteria prior to applying for a Certificate of equivalent competency:

- 6.3.1 Hold a Seafarer ID Number
- 6.3.2 Have an offer of employment on an Irish fishing vessel or be employed on an Irish fishing vessel
- 6.3.3 Hold a Certificate of competency from a country² with which Ireland has an agreement on the mutual recognition of Certificates of competency
- 6.3.4 The Certificate of competency issued is valid, and that the capacity and any limitations imposed are appropriate for the position on board **and in accordance with the applicable safe manning requirements of the Administration³**.
- 6.3.5 Applicants for a CEC at Skipper level shall have appropriate knowledge of Irish maritime legislation relevant to the functions they are permitted to perform.
- 6.3.6 Evidence of sufficient command of the English language to sail on an Irish ship; see Marine Notice 15 of 2015 for further information.
- 6.3.7 hold a valid Medical Fitness Certificate.
- 6.3.8 For Skipper Full and Skipper Limited hold a certificate of proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats issued within the previous five years and a certificate of proficiency in advanced firefighting issued within the previous five years or evidence of update training as applicable and
- 6.3.9 Certificate of proficiency in Medical Care onboard shall be completed within the previous five years.
- 6.3.10 Hold a certificate of proficiency in personal survival techniques, elementary first aid, fire prevention and firefighting issued within the previous five years or evidence of update training as required.

² Current list of countries may be found on www.seafarers.ie

³ A CEC shall not be issued with a limitation that is not issued to an Irish COC holder.

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Second Hand (Special)

The Department will no longer issue Certificates of competency for the deck officer qualification of Second Hand (Special), except for those fishers who have already commenced a period of training for that qualification prior to the implementation of SI 313 of 2023. Fishers who hold a Second Hand (Limited) or have commenced a period of training at the National Fishery Colleges to secure a Certificate of competency which may lead to a Second Hand (Special), may complete this training, including sea service, in line with the exam directions previously in place. This must be done within three years of the regulations coming into force to be issued with a Certificate of competency as Second Hand (Special). As the regulations came into effect on the 1st July 2023, all training, including sea service, must be completed before 1st July 2026 to secure a Certificate of competency as Second Hand.

- 7.1 **Second Hand Special Skipper on fishing vessels of less than 24m in the limited area:** For a certificate of competency as Second Hand (Special), every candidate for certificate must:
- 7.1.1 Be not less than 19 years of age
 - 7.1.2 Hold a valid medical fitness certificate (S.I. 266/2020, Reg. 7)
 - 7.1.3 Have approved seagoing service in the deck department of a fishing vessel of not less than 36 months of which 12 months shall be in a capacity not lower than Second Hand on fishing vessels of more than 15 metres in length and provide documentary evidence of such service
 - 7.1.4 Hold a valid Second-Hand Limited Certificate of competency
 - 7.1.5 Possess ancillary certification and other certification as per Annex A of these directions
 - 7.1.6 Meet the applicable requirements as appropriate for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the radio regulations.
- 7.2 A candidate who holds a Second Hand Limited or Second Hand (Special) and who wishes to qualify for a Certificate of competency as Second Hand Full and Skipper <24m Limited Area under S.I. 313 of 2023, will be required to complete the following elements at the BIM fishery college prior to attending for an oral examination at DoT:
- Ship Construction and Stability – Written Examination
 - Ocean navigation (sailings) – Written Examination
 - Update knowledge Meteorology
 - Oral Preparation

Annex A – Ancillary Certification

Ancillary and other Certification	Skipper Full	Skipper Limited less than 100m	Skipper Limited less than 24m	Second Hand Full	Second Hand Limited	Second Hand Special	Update Training Required
Certificate of Proficiency in Personal Survival techniques	√	√	√	√	√	√	Yes
Certificate of proficiency in Fire Prevention and Firefighting	√	√	√	√	√	√	Yes
Certificate of proficiency in Elementary First Aid	√	√	√	√	√	√	-
Basic Training PSSR	√	√	√	√	√	√	-
GMDSS GOC	√	√	√	√	-	√	-
GMDSS LRC	-	-	-	-	√	-	-
Certificate of proficiency in Advanced Fire Fighting	√	√	-	-	-	-	Yes
Certificate of proficiency in personal survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats ⁴	√	√	-	-	-	-	Yes
NAEST (O) ⁵ including ECDIS	√	√	√	√	-	-	-
Medical First Aid at Sea	√	√	√	√	√	√	-

⁴ Implemented for those commencing the education programme or revalidation from date of these directions

⁵ Implemented for those commencing the education programme from date of these directions

Annex A – Ancillary Certification

Medical Care on Board	√	√	√	-	-	-	Yes
ENS	-	-	-	-	√	√	-
NCC ⁶	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Fitness (ENG II)	√	√	√	√	√	√	Yes

⁶ Candidates who have completed Skipper Full education programme prior to implementation of these directions

Annex B – English Language Requirements

Applicants for a Certificate of competency for fishing vessels issued by the Government of Ireland are required to show an acceptable level of proficiency in the English language in written, oral and aural form, or for the recognition of professional qualifications.

One of the following may be accepted as demonstrating this level of proficiency in English:

1. A pass in the Marlins English Language Computer Test at an approved Marlins Test Centre. Approved Marlins test centres are available on the Marlin company home page <http://www.marlins.co.uk>

The minimum acceptable pass marks are as follows (to be submitted on a stamped computer print-out from a Marlins approved centre):

Deck Officers	Engineer Officers
Senior Deck Officers (Management level) 90%	Senior Engineering Officers (Management level) 80%
Junior Deck Officers (Operational level) 80%	Junior Engineering Officers (Operational level) 70%

In addition, as the Marlins English Language Computer Test does not cover oral English, evidence of a satisfactory level of oral English must be demonstrated. Oral English must be assessed at a centre recognised by the Department of Transport. In order to be recognised as a centre for assessing ability in oral English, assessors should forward details of their credentials, qualifications and competency in the English language to:

Marine Survey Office
Department of Transport,
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2
Ireland
Ph: +353 1 6783400
Email: mso@transport.gov.ie

The recommended criteria (given at Section A below) and the checklist (given at Section B) should be used each time an oral assessment of an individual's level of competency in the English language is made. A copy of the checklist is to be retained by the company and a copy of the checklist (together with any other certificates required, e.g., Marlins) is to be submitted to:

Marine Survey Office
Department of Transport,
Leeson Lane

Annex B – English Language Requirements

Dublin 2
 Ireland
 Ph: +353 1 6783400
 Email: mso@transport.gov.ie

2. A pass in the Marlins English Language Computer Test at an approved Marlins Test Centre, as outlined above and in addition, a pass in the ISF Marlins Test of Spoken English (TOSE) at an approved Marlins Test Centre. The TOSE complements the computer-based test. Approved Marlins test centres for the English Language Computer Test and the TOSE are available on the Marlin company home page <http://www.marlins.co.uk>.

The minimum acceptable pass marks are as follows (to be submitted on a stamped computer print-out from a Marlins approved centre):

Level/Department	ISF Marlins English computer test Minimum acceptable score	Test of Spoken English (TOSE) Minimum acceptable TOSE result (overall)	Minimum acceptable combined score
<u>Management and Operational Level</u>			
<i>Navigational Department</i>			
Master/Skipper	90%	Upper Intermediate	86%
Other Officers	80%	Intermediate	72%
<i>Engineering Department</i>			
Chief Engineer Officer	80%	Intermediate	72%
Other Engineer Officers	80%	Lower Intermediate	62%

3. Holding one of the following:
 - a. an STCW Certificate of Competency as Master, deck or engineer officer for which the examinations were conducted wholly in English, OR
 - b. an Irish or UK Fishing Vessel Certificate of Competency as Skipper, deck or engineer officer for which the examinations were conducted wholly in English, OR
 - c. an English Language test certificate that is comparable to or exceeds the level of Marlins as detailed below (e.g. IELTS Level 6, Berlitz Language School level 2+ endorsed by the company, TOEFL for admission to US University); OR

Annex B – English Language Requirements

- d. other evidence of proficiency in the English language may be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Examiner (e.g., evidence of degree or diploma where the course and examinations are conducted through English). The same English language proficiency standards apply when assessing applications for the recognition of professional qualifications as allowed for under Statutory Instrument 8 of 2017 European Union (Recognition of Professional Qualifications) Regulations 2017

Section A

RECOMMENDED CRITERIA FOR ENGLISH ASSESSMENTS FOR CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY FOR FISHING VESSELS

WHEN TO USE

The MARLINS English Language Computer Test for Seafarers/Fishers does not cover oral or spoken English. The assessment method outlined below is for use for applicants for Certificates of competency (CoC) for Fishing Vessels and is to be used in addition to the Marlins English Language Computer Test.

The checklist should be used to confirm standards of English and as an auditable record for CoC applicants.

THE ASSESSMENT

This is to be conducted on a one-to-one basis with a native English speaker (“the assessor”). Where possible, the assessments should be tape-recorded. It should consist of three separate sections of approximately one hour in duration altogether. Where there is doubt as to whether certain criteria are being met there may be a need to retry during the assessment.

Section 1 – oral interview

This should cover general topics, for example, career-to-date, future plans, etc. The questions should enable and encourage discursive responses allowing the seafarer/fisher the chance to ask questions or seek clarification.

Section 2 – live listening/comprehension

The assessor should, at a steady pace, read a passage lasting 3-5 minutes of a general maritime nature, e.g., an incident or a procedure. The seafarer/fisher may take notes throughout (in their own language if preferred). They should be allowed 2-3 minutes to look over their notes and then be asked to describe the incident in their own words, summarising the main points.

Section 3 – specific/job focused communications

This section needs to be tailored to the vocabulary relating to the specific functions to be undertaken by the seafarer/fisher. This may need to include listening to radio messages or loudspeaker announcements and should certainly include the testing of comprehension and communication of the type of orders, statements and requests that the seafarer/fisher is likely to hear or have to make.

Annex B – English Language Requirements

CRITERIA CHECKLIST

These criteria are to help establish levels of listening and speaking abilities and are to be filled-in each time an assessment is made and in all CoC applications to confirm established competence. The criteria are to be used as a checklist and where the assessor decides that one/some are not met that is to be noted for the record against the criterion (a tick (✓) for met and a cross (X) for not met). It will be for the assessor to decide whether failure to meet any of the criteria means the seafarer's/fisher's level of English would not be sufficient to carry out their functions safely and effectively. The completed criteria sheet and, where available, the tape-recording will form the basis of the documentation required for audit.

Section B

Criteria Checklist

Speaking

1. Clarity – language is sufficiently clear and accurate to be understood by native and non-native speakers of English; any inaccuracies, faults in intonation or hesitation do not impede comprehension of the points being made.
2. Initiation of dialogue – there is evidence of the seafarer not simply echoing or responding, but also of taking the conversation forward, asking questions and raising other issues.
3. Vocabulary – the seafarer can speak about their main job functions and communicate in both familiar and unfamiliar situations; their vocabulary is extensive enough to allow some flexibility of expression and is appropriate to the context/topic.

Listening

4. The seafarer shows he/she can understand the overall theme in ways other than repeating back to the examiner word for word.
5. Key points can be identified.
6. Inferences and conclusions can be drawn.
7. The seafarer can demonstrate understanding of work-related communications delivered in a variety of registers and in varying degrees of complexity.

Annex B – English Language Requirements

Company assessment

I can confirm that the standard of English of

..... (name)

..... (function)

was assessed today (date)

and was found to be acceptable/not acceptable.

by.....

(Signature)

.....

(Print name)

Date

