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Your BSS Certificate is changing

After 31 March 2013, boat owners will no longer have the task of sending off the blue copy of their Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) Certificate to the boat's registration or licensing body as the examination recording process has moved into a central online database system with direct input from BSS examiners.

After a successful boat examination, the owner will get a copy of a new, receipt-style certificate, called a BSS Examination Report, to keep for their own records.

The change has been made possible because all navigation authorities participating in the Scheme have access to the BSS central database where they can double check your boat's certification details and expiry date and most authorities will no longer use printed and posted BSS documents to administer boat registration and licensing applications. The change allows BSS examiners to provide directly the new-look certificates either as electronic files, or printed on plain paper in black ink.

The new-look certificate, or BSS Examination Report, may include any failure notifications and advisory information, combined in one multi-page document.

Existing BSS Certificates will continue to remain valid until reaching the expiry date.

Commenting on the impact of the changes for boat owners, Graham Watts, BSS Manager said,

'The BSS examination continues in the same way, it's just that there's no blue copy of the BSS Certificate to pass to the navigation authority.

'Boat owners benefit from having improved information clearly setting out when the boat was examined, what the examiner found, and the certification expiry date.

'Boat owners should continue to pass on the BSS certification information from their boat file to the new owner if the craft is sold on.'

BSS examination data is already held on a central database and authorised BSS Examiners have been inputting in to this for over two years. It holds only examination and boat data, no owner or personal information is included.

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This move will help some navigation authorities to develop online boat registration and licensing, making the administration easier.

The improvements will also involve essential boat risk information being recorded online by BSS Examiners and this is planned to improve safety on the waterways.

A guide to the new-look certificate has been posted online, go to www.boatsafetyscheme.org/boat-examination and follow the links on the page.

- ENDS -

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Attached to this news release is an image of new receipt-style BSS Certificate this explanatory sample will be available on the examination section of BSS website.

Improving safety on the inland waterways essential boat risk information being recorded online by examiners will ensure that any changes made to the Scheme are grounded in improved risk data. This is achieved in three ways:

- a) the enhanced ability to assess individual BSS check item fail rates to assess any need to communicate improvement initiatives or introduce or remove risk control measures;
- b) the enhanced ability to monitor the performance of BSS Examiners against the BSS checks and so replace the bought-in service;
- c) for the first time it will provide an accurate and comprehensive breakdown of engine/appliance types across the inland fleet and so will aid in assessing the level of risk presented by known causes of boat fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisonings, etc.

The need for a BSS examination: Boats that are older than four years and licensed or registered on most of the UK's inland waterways must go through a BSS examination once every four years and be certified as compliant with the BSS requirements. The BSS examination makes sure that a boat meets the navigation or harbour authority's minimum safety and environmental standards.

BSS certification has a life span of four years. Navigation authorities using the Scheme usually require BSS certification at the time of licensing, registration, toll renewal or similar. The certification is achieved when a boat is found to be compliant with all the BSS requirements relevant for that boat. These can be freely downloaded or read on www.boatsafetyscheme.org. The compliance check is carried out by authorized, independent practitioners known as BSS examiners.

The BSS is a public safety project owned jointly by the Canal & River Trust, registered as a charity with the charity number 1146792, and the Environment Agency. At least 14 other navigation and harbour authorities have also adopted it. The navigation authorities' purposes for the Scheme are to help reduce the risks of fire, explosion and pollution on small craft. This is done by promoting fire safety and pollution avoidance advice to help boat owners keep themselves and their crews' safe as well as regular examination of fuel systems, gas systems, electrical systems and appliances. The BSS is responsible for the administration and supervision of the BSS examination scheme.