



**Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport**  
**Certificates of Competency for Fishing Vessels**

**Deck Officer Requirements**

**The 'Exam Directions'**

**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016**



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## Acronyms

CoC	Certificate of Competency
GT	Gross Tonnage
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
MMO	Mercantile Marine Office, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
MSO	Marine Survey Office, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
BIM	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
SHL	Second Hand Limited
SHF	Second Hand Full
SHS	Second Hand Special
SKL	Skipper Limited
SKF	Skipper Full
SIS	Seafarers Information System
STCW	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers

### Note:

Department      Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

1.1 This publication, issued under the Fishing Vessels (Certification of Deck Officers and Engineer Officers) Regulations, 1988 (hereafter referred to as the Fishing Vessels Officers Regulations) made under Sections 3 and 8 of the Merchant Shipping (Certification of Seamen) Act, 1979, as amended by S.I. No. 192 of 2000, specifies the standards of competency and the conditions to be satisfied before a certificate of competency under those Regulations will be issued. Particulars are given of the conditions of entry to and the conduct of the examinations to be held as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for certificates of competency in a Deck Officer capacity for service in fishing vessels registered in the State.

1.2 The Fishing Vessels Officers Regulations provide for the following classes of deck officer certificate:-

Skipper (Full)  
Skipper (Limited)  
Second Hand (Full)  
Second Hand (Special)  
Second Hand (Limited)

The fishing Vessels Officers Regulations specify that from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2000 every sea-going fishing vessel registered in the State or Government fishery research vessel which measures 17.0 metres in length or more and which plies within the Limited Area and fishing vessels of any length which ply within the Unlimited Area shall carry deck officers holding valid certificates of competency of the appropriate classes specified in paragraph 1.2,

1.3 These directions should be read in conjunction with the guidelines on the "Seafarer" website [www.seafarers.ie](http://www.seafarers.ie)

1.4 Seafarer Database, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.  
All seafarers holding certificates or other documents issued by or under the authority of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport are required to have a unique identity number which will appear on all certificates issued after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

1.5 A seafarer identity number can be obtained by logging onto [www.seafarers.ie](http://www.seafarers.ie) and following the instructions.

## CHAPTER 2

### General Conditions and Conditions of Entry

- 2.1 Proof of Nationality.  
Every candidate for a certificate of competency will be required to produce proof of name, nationality and place and date of birth. Such proof should, in general, be in the form of a passport, birth certificate or a Certificate of Naturalisation.
- 2.2 Times and Places of Examination  
The weeks on which examinations are held are updated annually on the Department website. All written examinations are conducted on the Department's behalf by the National Fishery College, Greencastle Co. Donegal and at the Regional Fishery College Castletownbere, Co Cork. The oral examinations are held at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Leeson Lane Dublin 2; candidates are required to possess all ancillary certification and have passed written examinations prior to attending for oral examination.
- 2.3 How to apply to sit an examination  
A candidate for examination must complete the application form (SIS Form 9) obtainable at the Mercantile Marine Office, Dublin or online at <http://www.seafarers.ie> and submit it, together with proof of nationality, testimonials, birth certificate, ancillary certificates, where applicable, discharge certificates or sworn declaration and fee to the Superintendent of the Mercantile Marine Office, Dublin. The fee may be paid electronically.
- 2.4 All candidates for examinations will be expected to hold Fishermen's discharge books or discharges signed by the Skippers of the vessels they serve on.
- 2.5 The completed form and supporting documents together with any certificate of competency or certificate of service held are to be lodged with the Examiner not less than 21 days before the Monday of the examination week concerned. It is important that this procedure should be observed as discharges and testimonials may have to be forwarded for verification and in the absence of such verification candidates cannot be examined. Candidates will be required to explain to the satisfaction of the examiner any gaps in their service.
- 2.6 In cases where a candidate is in doubt as to his/her eligibility for examination and wishes to submit his case for special consideration, all certificates, discharges and testimonials, together with a form of application (SIS 9), duly completed, must be submitted and the appropriate fee paid before any enquiries are made as to the candidate's qualifications.
- 2.7 A candidate whose application is in order will be issued with a Notice of Eligibility which will authorise his/her entry to the written and oral parts of the examination, as appropriate. The Notice of Eligibility (NOE) will be required by

the examination centre where the written examinations are to be conducted and by the Department's Examiner when a candidate appears for oral examination. Upon receipt of a NOE a candidate should apply to the National Fishery College, Greencastle Co. Donegal for admission to the written examinations and pay the necessary fee. Candidates will be advised of the date and time of their oral examination not less than 2 weeks before their examination.

#### 2.8 Particulars of Sea Service

A candidate's eligibility for examination will depend (among other things) upon the amount of sea service which he/she has performed within the last ten years and upon the ranks which he/she has held on board the various vessels in which he has been employed. It is therefore imperative that the particulars which the candidate inserts on his application form (SIS 9) should be accurately stated, and the declaration signed. The amount of service laid down in these requirements for each grade of certificate of competency is the absolute minimum that can be accepted and unless a candidate can prove the full amount he cannot be admitted to the examination.

#### 2.9 Testimonials

Testimonials as to character, including sobriety, and as to experience and ability on board ship will be required of all candidates. The candidate's testimonials and other papers will be returned to him when the examination is finished.

#### 2.10 Fraud and Misrepresentation

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.

#### 2.11 Penalty for offering gratuity

A candidate who offers a gratuity to any officer of the Department will be regarded as having committed an act of misconduct and will be rejected. The candidate will not be re-examined until a period of at least twelve months has elapsed. This penalty is additional to any penalty to which the candidate may be liable under criminal law.

#### 2.12 Medical

All new entrant<sup>1</sup> candidates for Examination are required to produce (as of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017) a Medical Fitness Certificate as per Marine Notice No. 38 Of 2014 as amended. A panel of Doctors entitled to issue a medical fitness

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<sup>1</sup> Existing holders of a Fishing Certificate of Competency may produce a medical fitness certificate when applying for examination but are required at a minimum to produce an eye sight test certificate when applying for examination for a superior Certificate of Competency.

certificate is as per the annex of this notice.

#### 2.13 Knowledge of English

Each candidate must prove to the satisfaction of the Examiner that he/she is sufficiently conversant with the English language to perform the duties required of him in a ship registered in the State. (IELTS required for non-native English speakers)

#### 2.14 Issue of Certificates

Candidates who pass the examination and qualify in all other respects will receive their Certificate of Competency (CoC) on passing the oral examination. In any event the Department will endeavour to arrange the issue of a CoC within one week of all qualifying conditions being met.

#### 2.15 Insufficient Service

If after a candidate has passed the examination it is discovered that his/her 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/her part, the Minister may either return the fee to him/her or issue the certificate to him/her after he/she 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.

#### 2.16 Fees

Fees are as listed on SIS Form 9

#### 2.17 Oral Examinations

A candidate who fails the oral examination is required to wait at least one month before reapplying for a repeat examination. A candidate must wait at least three months before apply for a second or further re-sits of an oral examination. After an oral examination failure the Examiner may apply a period of additional sea service before a further re-sit.

#### 2.18 Ancillary Certification

Ancillary certification for each grade of CoC is as listed in the table below. As per regulation 4 of S.I 587 of 2001 all fishing vessel crew members are required to have completed STCW (Standards of Training and Certification of Watchkeepers Convention) elements of basic training as follows:



<b>STCW Ancillary and other Certification</b>	<b>Skipper Full</b>	<b>Skipper Limited</b>	<b>Second Hand Full</b>	<b>Second Hand Limited</b>
<b>Basic Training PST</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>Basic Training FF</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>Basic Training FA</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>Medical Fitness</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>GMDSS GOC</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>Advanced Fire Fighting</b>	√	√		
<b>ENS Fishing</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>NCC Fishing</b>	√	√		
<b>Medical First Aid at Sea</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>Medical Care on Board</b>	√	√		
<b>Testimonials</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>Photos x 3 (Name + Signature on reverse)</b>	√	√	√	√
<b>BIM College Attendance Letter</b>	√	√	√	√

## CHAPTER 3

### Classes of Certificates, Age Limit and Qualifications Required

#### 3.1 Classes of Certificates issued

The following classes of certificate of competency as deck officer of fishing boats will be issued by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport:-

Skipper (Full)	-	SKF
Skipper (Limited)	-	SKL
Second Hand (Full)	-	SHF
Second Hand (Special)	-	SHS
Second Hand (Limited)	-	SHL

- 3.2 The "Full" certificates of competency are valid for service in all fishing boats 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).

#### 3.3 Scope of Certificates/Endorsements

CERTIFICATE	SCOPE
Skipper (Full)	Skipper in all Waters
Skipper (Limited)	Skipper in Limited Area only of vessels less than 100 metres in registered length
Second Hand (Full)	Second Hand in all Waters
Second Hand (Special)	Skipper in vessels not exceeding 24 Metres in length in the Limited Area Only
Second Hand (Limited)	Second Hand in Limited Area only.

There will be only three examinations:-

- (a) Skipper (Full)
- (b) Second Hand (Full) and
- (c) Second Hand (Limited)

After a further twelve months sea service as a watchkeeping deck officer in fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length the holders of the Second Hand (Limited) certificate of competency and the Second Hand (Full) certificate of competency may on satisfying the requirements be issued with a Second Hand (Special) certificate and a Skipper (Limited) certificate, respectively.

3.4 Candidates for certificates of competency shall be not less than the ages respectively shown hereunder on the date of assessment.

Skipper (Full)	-	19 years
Skipper (Limited)	-	19 years
Second Hand (Full)	-	18 years
Second Hand (Special)	-	19 years
Second Hand (Limited)	-	18 years

### 3.5 NOTE

- (i) In these Directions the word “length” refers to the length shown on vessels certificate of registry.
- (ii) A “valid certificate of competency” means a certificate of competency as Skipper or Second Hand issued by the Minister under the Merchant Shipping Acts or a certificate of competency as Skipper or Second Hand granted by another State which has been recognised by virtue of Section 7 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1947 (No. 46 of 1947) as being equivalent to a certificate granted by the Minister.
- (iii) Every candidate for any certificate of competency must produce satisfactory evidence of his service in a certificated capacity such as a Discharge Book (Dis. A), Discharge Certificate etc.

### 3.6 **Second Hand Limited**

For a certificate of competency as Second Hand Limited every candidate must

- (a) be not less than 18 years of age;
- (b) satisfy the Minister as to medical fitness,
- (c) have approved seagoing service in the deck Department on fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length, of not less than 24 months;
- (d) passed an appropriate examination or examinations to the satisfaction of the Minister.

### 3.7 **Second Hand Full**

For a certificate of competency as Second Hand Full every candidate for certificate must:-

- (a) be not less than 18 years of age;
- (b) satisfy the Minister as to medical fitness,

- (c) have approved seagoing service in the deck department of fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length of not less than 24 months;
- (d) passed an appropriate examination or examinations to the satisfaction of the Minister.

### **3.8 Skipper (Full)**

For the certificate of competency as Skipper (Full) a candidate must:

- (a) have served 36 months at sea (in a deck capacity) of which 12 months must have been served in a capacity not lower than second of two certificated Watchkeeping officers, in addition to the Skipper on board fishing vessels of 12 metres or more in length whilst holding a valid certificate of competency listed at (b) below, and produce satisfactory evidence of his twelve months service as second or third hand such as Discharge Certificate etc. and
- (b) hold either a Second Hand (Full) Certificate or a Skipper (Limited) Certificate;
- (c) passed an appropriate examination or examinations to the satisfaction of the Minister;
- (d) satisfy the Minister as to medical fitness,
- (e) 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 before along with the additional criteria before attending for oral examination for a Skipper Full Certificate of Competency.

### **1.9 Lost Certificates**

An applicant for a replacement copy of a certificate of competency should complete the form (Form SIS 2) giving the necessary particulars, and hand it to the Superintendent of the Mercantile Marine Office, Dublin, paying at the same time the appropriate fee. A declaration as to the circumstances in which the certificate was lost, stolen or destroyed must be made by the applicant before the Superintendent. The Superintendent will then refer the application to the Department Examiner for a decision to consider the re-issue of a replacement Certificate of Competency.

No fee is chargeable if the applicant can show that the certificate was lost through shipwreck or fire on board ship.

## CHAPTER 4

### Sea Service

#### 4.1 Estimation of Sea Service

For the purpose of these Directions sea service is reckoned from the commencement of the voyage (or fishing trip) or period of continuous sea service to its termination. Sea service claimed in the application form must in all cases be supported by documentary evidence to the satisfaction of the Examiner.

Qualifying sea service 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 on its merits and if necessary, the case will be referred to the Examiner of Masters and Mates. The qualifying service specified for any certificate of competency must be performed within a period of ten years preceding the date of a first attempt at the examination. The Examiner may exercise his discretion to vary this requirement in individual cases.

#### 4.2 Proof of Sea Service

A candidate for a certificate as Second Hand must produce satisfactory evidence of the prescribed qualifying sea service. A candidate for a certificate 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 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 12 months.