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BSS publishes the specific Hire Boat examination boat checks to be implemented in April 2017

New and revised checks for hire boats have been published by the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS).

A complete new examination for hire boats will be implemented in April 2017, the vast majority of which will be the existing checks on privately owned and managed craft in private use.

The publication follows the consultation in 2015 and the BSS announcement in February 2016 that the proposed changes had maintained stakeholder support through the consultation and would be implemented as set out in the proposals. The newly published list represents the 16 checks that are a mix of items retained from the 2002 BSS Standards for hire boats, or completely new requirements.

Boats holding existing 2002 non-private BSS Certificates on hire boats will continue to be recognised by the navigation authorities until they expire, but this with the expectation that all hire craft will meet the new revised requirements from April 2017.

Owners and operators of hire boats are advised to visit www.boatsafetyscheme.org/hireboats2017 where the list can be downloaded or printed out.

Boat operators will also find some links to additional useful advice and information including the private boat examination checking procedures.

The full list of retained and new checks is provided below.

Retained checks from the 2002 Standards, some slightly modified, are:

- Handholds: - Are all designated external Crew Area decks provided with suitable handholds in good condition?
- Lifebuoys: - Are all lifebuoys in good condition, and is at least one suitable lifebuoy provided and is it positioned in an appropriate location?
- Means of reversing: - Is the boat provided with a means of reversing operable from every helm position? (now includes outboard powered craft)
- Fire blankets: - The provision of suitable fire blankets in open view (adapted to include the presence in open view)
- Fixed ventilation warning labels: - Are accommodation space fixed ventilators protected by warning labels in open view?
- Glazing material: - Is all glazing material of a suitable type?
- Weed hatch openings: - Is the weed hatch opening at least 150mm above the normal laden waterline, and are the cover securing and sealing arrangements in good condition?
- Through-hull openings below waterline: - Are all through-hull openings located below the normal laden waterline protected by closable valves, and are the valves readily accessible and free of signs of leaks?
- Through-hull openings above waterline: Are all through-hull openings above the normal laden waterline either watertight, or is the associated downflooding point the correct height above the normal laden waterline and are any pipes, hoses, ducts or other vessel structures between the hull opening and the downflooding point permanently installed and in good condition?

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New BSS Hire Boat Requirements

- Slip-resistant surfaces: - Are all designated external Crew Areas, companionway steps, and boarding planks provided with suitable slip-resistant surfaces?
- Narrowboat tiller arc identification: - Is the arc of the narrowboat tiller clearly identified?
- Means of escape: - Are all means of escape, other than main doors, clearly marked with a suitable label in good condition?
- Smoke alarms: - If the vessel has overnight accommodation, is at least one suitable smoke alarm provided?
- Smoke alarms: - Are all smoke alarms in good condition?
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms: - If the vessel has overnight accommodation and an installed solid fuel stove, are the correct number of suitable carbon monoxide alarms provided?
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms: - Are all carbon monoxide alarms in good condition?

Specific information on the two items at the top of the new checks list, slip resistant surfaces and tiller-arc identification, is being published.

BSS manager, Graham Watts said;

‘I wish to pay tribute to the stakeholders who have helped the process from start to finish. I believe the new and revised checks are straightforward and easy to implement and will enhance hirer safety.

‘That said, any request for technical support by any hire boat operator is welcomed. I’m confident we can help any operator to move their fleet to full compliance.’

The BSS technical team can be contacted via <http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/contact-us> where the form allows for questions, photos, diagrams and supporting documents to be uploaded for the BSS support requests.

The BSS will strive to make hire operators aware of this information with the help of navigation authorities and trade associations.

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NOTES

The proposals affect all hire boats operating on waterways that have adopted the BSS. For the purposes of the consultation, hire boat means, any hired powered boat such as weekly and day hire craft:

- let or hired under an arrangement, whether or not on a pre-contract basis;
- the subject of a bare boat charter arrangement;
- the subject of any form of third-party managed shared-use arrangement (including timeshare or shared ownership).

The term ‘hire boat’ does not include:

- privately owned or managed boats for leisure, pleasure and residential owner-occupation;
- boats operating commercially with a skipper or crew, and which carry passengers;
- workboats;
- emergency service boats and rescue boats.
- hotel boats,
- boats let as residences or longer term accommodation

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. The BSS promotes 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 examination and certification have a life span of four years. Navigation authorities using the Scheme usually require valid BSS certification at the time of licensing, registration, toll renewal or similar. The certification is issued to boat that is found to be compliant with all the BSS requirements relevant for that boat. These can be found at www.boatsafetyscheme.org and the compliance check is carried out by an authorized, independent practitioner known as a BSS examiner.