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## BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear examiner,

One big topic and several short, but quite important items in this edition, including a request for any experience you may have had with exhaust problems; see below. It must be getting near Xmas!

### **ABSE BSS Examiner Survey Results**

Thank you to those examiners who took the trouble to respond to the ABSE BSS Examiner Survey and thanks to ABSE for having the data analysed professionally. The level of response from examiners at 63.5% was excellent, providing an indication of the high level of interest in the survey subject matter.

We are carefully analysing the raw data and from what I've seen so far I'm sure the information will provide a good indicator of the attitudes of examiners and can be used to guide BSS activity over the coming months. I can assure you that by sharing the task with ABSE, confidentiality was achieved with no survey report forms or examiner comments being received by the BSS Office.

I'm sure ABSE will share the results with members in due course and we will be asking ABSE to represent the comments collected on the forms, in order to help illustrate the results received.

It is clear that the BSS Office is doing alright in many areas, but many of the comments highlight potential for improvements. These were especially useful as we are deciding the details of the new examiner website and many of the improvements you want can be dealt with through that. Also, where concerns were expressed, but without a specific direction to the improvement needed, we will work with ABSE and the other practitioner bodies in the coming weeks to get a steer.

Highlights of the BSS review of the ABSE/BSS survey are in the attached Annex A.

### **Fixed engine exhausts – fire and sinking safety issues**

I have a task to support the BSS Technical Committee with any information on fixed engine exhaust related fire incidents. Please contact myself, Dave or Phil if you know of any fire incidents and in particular if you know of any incidents involving leaked or sprayed diesel over hot exhausts, the ignition of lagging soaked in diesel or engine oil or fires or sinkings involving flexible exhaust sections where the raw water cooling has failed. Please email the office or give the office a call on the usual number 01923 201278 and ask to speak with any one of the three of us.

### **Examiner website project update**

The development of the website is progressing with most of the work developing the re-registration and examination forms completed. The group of 10 examiners helping the project will shortly be helping test and improve the online documentation. Once that work is complete we will open the site to all examiners to practice using the forms before going live; watch this space!

### **BSS not at the London International Boat Show**

If you're planning a visit to the London International Boat Show between 9 – 18 January at Excel, don't look too hard for our stand. BW, EA and the Broads will not be exhibiting at the show this year, so the BSS will not be there either. We will have more news on exhibitions and festivals in the next newsletter.

## **BSS Examiner Code of Conduct 2009/10**

Any views on the proposed changes to the Code of Conduct that you may have need to be in before the consultation ends at 17.00 on Friday 2 January 2009 at the latest, but sooner is better. Comments on the proposed changes can be made directly to the BSS Office, through ABSE or through your surveyor organisation. Once all views have been considered, we intend to circulate the finalised Code of Conduct late February and implement it from 1 April.

## **Forward thinking on re-registration**

There's only four months to go to re-registration and this year your application is going to be made online so its time to consider how you can make it go smoothly.

If there's a problem, leaving these things until the last minute might delay your re-registration and so put a brake on your examination activity. Remember, if you are not re-registered by 1 April, you are not authorized to carry out BSS examinations, or to issue certificates and must cancel or postpone any BSS examination bookings you may have for after that date. The following guidance is based on previous experience and may help ensure re-registration goes smoothly:

- ▶ If you are not on the BSS Block Policy through Michael Hall Associates, then check your PI and your PL policy gives you the necessary level of cover (£1m) for BSS examination work and check its renewal date to ensure you are covered. Speak to your broker if you have concerns.
- ▶ Make sure your monthly returns are up to date and remain so. This is a crucial matter for the navigation authority licensing and registration departments and it helps boaters get early payment discounts. As some examiners know, moderately outstanding returns mean we stop supplying paperwork, including certificates, until everything is up to date and it also means we won't accept re-registration applications from examiners. Call Tracy or Kerry if there is a problem with your returns.
- ▶ Being behind with your invoice payments may prevent new invoices being raised and could affect your authorisation to issue BSS Certificates, so make sure your account is paid up.

## **Update on the BSS Examiner electrical knowledge and understanding assessment**

As you know examiners will attend training and/or assessment on electrical knowledge and understanding the late Autumn of 2009, through to the following Spring. I can update you that the development work is progressing with most of the course material collected and presentation framework planned. A series of pilot courses will be run in the Spring.

## **Winter seminars**

We are finalising plans to run compulsory BSS seminars around the country during February to introduce the new examiner website including demonstrating how to transfer private boat examination data using your home computer. The seminars will also be used to demonstrate the elements of the planned Examiner Technical Reference Manual and other examiner support features, and the seminars will provide a good opportunity for your feedback on the plans.

## **BSS email addresses**

Please make sure you use [bss.office@boatsafetyscheme.com](mailto:bss.office@boatsafetyscheme.com) when you email the BSS Office. Emails to BSS using the previously available British Waterways address will be disabled shortly.

I hope you enjoy the festive period and Merry Christmas to you and yours. For your information the BSS Office closes from midday on 24 December until Monday 5 January 2009.

Best regards,



Graham Watts, **BSS Manager**

## **Annex A – Examiner Survey Results Highlights - a BSS Office view**

### **The Examination**

The vast majority [85%] of respondents fill in examination paperwork on the day. *This will support the use of hand held data loggers in a later stage of the BSS efficiency developments.*

Weekend boat examination is a minority activity. *This matches BSS examination return data.*

Boat owners are more often present than not. *This matches surveys that suggest examiners are a key source of safety information for boat owners.*

Most respondents like having the owner present (60%). *This means the owner can be given useful safety information and can help the examiner find hidden system components on the boat.*

Respondents believe that two-thirds of owners wish to exceed compliance and meet best practice. Few owners seek only to gain a certificate only. *This is heartening in support of wider BSS aims to raise safety awareness.*

All bar one respondent use reminders on the boat (i.e. BSS checklist) to help them conduct the examination. *This is also good news and helps ensure a complete examination.*

### **Using the internet**

80% of respondents feel confident enough to use of the internet and 80% of respondents have broadband. *These two pointers are good news for the intended use of the new examiner website.*

62% of respondents are positive about the move to website entry of examination results.

More respondents would like to see the introduction of hand-held loggers, than not. Most respondents are prepared to undertake some training in their use.

### **The BSS Examiner Code of Conduct**

Most respondents believe codes of conduct are necessary. 53% think it necessary to set boundaries and see usefulness in codes and 54% do not believe it is a matter of trust.

Eight examiners said they could not understand the code, 7 of whom also said they do not support the code and are fearful of it.

Most did not express a view either way. 39% think they understand the BSS code, but not confidently. 21% were lacking in understanding to a lesser or greater extent. *We will explain more about the code and what each section's role is to aid understanding of examiner benefits and protection.*

### **BSS Office technical and admin support**

78% of respondents said the BSS Office replies to technical questions within a reasonable time.

While 30% of respondents thought the technical newsletters are useful and in total over half believe the technical newsletters are acceptable, nearly 40% thought they are poor. Most worryingly 2 respondents say they never read the updates! *We need to work with ABSE to find out more as to why so many respondents [60%] found BSS technical newsletters poor or merely OK. We can then build improvements into the new examiner website.*

93% of respondents gave the BSS Admin team a very positive rating.

### **BSS Field Assessments**

The majority of respondents thought the administration of their field assessment was good.

Over half thought the field assessment was accurate. Most agree it helps them gauge their own performance, but 5.5% of respondents did not find it so. 10% of respondents do not think assessments help provide a level playing field, 6% think field assessments are pointless, but the majority do not agree.

Only one-third believe field assessments help them to feel less isolated. 60% would like to see at least some element of training incorporated. *The BSS has already started work with ABSE on finding other routes to deal with some of the points that FAs currently try to address. Examiners can look forward to significant changes using a collaborative approach.*

### **Mystery shoppers**

The concept people posing as customers in order to evaluate the quality of examiner service split the view of respondents evenly. *If there are benefits to examiners of having mystery shopping, then this needs to be explained clearly.*

### **Training**

60% cannot see the need for any training apart from when there are significant changes to the ECPs. *The recently developed BSS procedural document supports this view as one of the criteria in support of training.* 11% cannot see the need for any additional training at all. *This is worrying and we need to promote the accepted objectives for examiner training.*

Over half would try to attend examiner get-togethers and nearly half would accept this as compulsory. *This appears to contradict the attitude supporting an element of training with their field assessments. It also suggests that around half do not see get-together activity as training.*

Over 70% of respondents are willing to consider online training. *This contradicts the answers against training but may suggest a greater willingness to participate in training given a more flexible timings and zero travel.*