



1 March 2011

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## BSS EXAMINER NEWS

**Dear Examiner,**

This edition of BSS Examiner News prepares you for your invitation to renew your examiner registration.

We set out the strong expectations upon examiners concerning reporting online.

There is newly published information on waterborne infections and health threats that you could come into contact with you as you work. We also have a battery related alert based upon an increasing number of reported battery incidents.

A 'mystery shopper' measure is being introduced to help us monitor examiner performance.

Please don't ignore a request to examiners from British Waterways not to give wrong information to customers about craft licensing.

Finally, we have some guidance as to how best to contact the BSS team.

### **Online examiner re-registration – your invite will arrive on, or before 9 March**

Please remember, you can only register online. On, or before 9 March, you will receive an email inviting you to go on the website and follow instructions for the simplified registration process.

Concerning re-registration, all we require you to do is login and check that your insurance details on your 'Current Details' page accurately describes the type of insurance, name of provider and the policy expiry date.

Once you have checked your insurance details you simply go to the 'registration' page, read the conditions. Anyone submitting an application is taken as agreeing to the conditions, so please note this point.

Please apply to re-register as soon as possible after receipt of the invitation. Applications that are accepted will be confirmed by email – *remember that until you receive that email you will not be re-registered.*

If you have any questions concerning your renewal, or if you do not get an email confirming your registration for 2011, please call Tracy on 01923 201278.

New examiners registering for the first time have a separate process and must contact Tracy on the number above when requested to do so.

An invoice for the registration fee will be sent in early April and this should be settled in the normal way.

### **What happens if you don't get re-registered in time?**

Remember, if you are not confirmed as registered for 2011-12 by 1 April, you are not authorized to carry out BSS examinations, or to issue certificates. This means that if you have *not had confirmation of successful registration by 31 March, you must not issue any certificates and must cancel or postpone any BSS examination bookings* until you have confirmation of your registration.

Unauthorized examiners will not be listed on the BSS website until registration is completed and late applications will be subject to an additional administration fee of £50 (+VAT) taking account of the additional costs of late registration; unless the delay is pre-arranged and agreed with the BSS Office.

Any certificate issued whilst an examiner is not registered may be cancelled and the circumstances investigated as a potential breach of the Code of Conduct.

### **Not re-registering for 2010/11?**

If you have decided not to register please confirm this in writing to Tracy as soon as possible. I would also be interested to learn of the reasons for your decision.

### **BSS Block Policy PI and PL insurances**

For those who have Michael Hall Associates Ltd (MHA) insurance products, renewals have been sent out and so if you have not received your email or letter, contact Stuart Clark at MHA directly.

Stuart Clark, Michael Hall Associates Limited, Mason Chambers, Manchester Road, Haslingden, Rossendale BB4 5SL. Tel: 01706 836160, Fax: 01706 217177, Email, Stuart.Clark@michaelhallassociates.ltd.uk.

I have been asked why MHA continue to offer four insurance policy products to meet the insurance needs of their BSS examiner clients. The available insurance products are:

- Base cover PI - £1m cover;
- Base cover PL - £1m cover;
- Top-up cover PI - £4m in excess of £1m;
- Top-up cover PL - £4m in excess of £1m.

For the majority of examiners on the block policy all four products will be needed to meet the £5m minimum cover level for both PI and PL insurances.

Around 20% of affected examiners have base insurance with other insurers but have top-up cover with MHA. It follows that the best way to accommodate these examiners was for MHA to continue to split the MHA products between base and top-up covers.

If you have any questions about the MHA insurance products please call Stuart Clark direct.

### **Online BSS examination reporting – timeliness and completeness of reporting**

Nearly all examiners are reporting examinations online and the remaining few will be doing so very shortly. With all BSS activities there are expectations of quality and timeliness and that includes reporting examinations and certifications.

#### Timeliness of reporting

At a recent meeting of the BSS Management Committee members' expressed their expectation that examiners should report the outcome of examinations online within two days. With customers licensing online and news that BW officers in the field will now have access to BSS examination results, putting your results into Salesforce late will increasingly leave you at a commercial disadvantage and you'll be falling short of customer and navigation authority expectations. Please take the opportunity afforded by the change in process to review your current practices and see if any changes will help ensure examinations are reported within two days.

#### Completeness of reporting

We need to put this in the widest context. To appreciate the 'risk picture' on a whole inland fleet basis, it is critical that examiners report any and all BSS failures items online, just like you were asked to with the paper system. Ultimately it will help reviews of BSS measures and any changes that may impact upon the safety of boaters. With online reporting it will become increasingly apparent if individual examiners take it upon themselves only to report passes.

At the recent BSS Management Committee meeting it was made clear that the analytical abilities of the Salesforce facility will influence Navigation Authority decisions in respect of the BSS. So you can see why complete and accurate reporting is crucial to the success of the Scheme and examiners. Recently, I've spoken to many examiners who understand and support this, so I'm calling upon any examiners who may need persuading, to recognise that fault recording is fundamental to the role of BSS examiner.

Examiners who fail to live up to their responsibilities and the expectations of the navigation authorities will become the subject of increased scrutiny and improvement measures.

### **HHO generators – what to do if you find one**

Although the likelihood of an examiner coming across a HHO generator is remote, in the view of the BSS, the devices do present a potential risk to examiners as well as people using or working on the waterways.

In this regard, examiners are not to issue a BSS Certificate should one be found during a BSS examination, unless the installation is supported by relevant standards.

Visit the [HHO pages](#) to find out more about what HHO generators are, the actions BSS examiners should take if one is found and the potential risks such devices present.

The BSS position will be subject of media update in about a week's time so it may be that your customers ask you about HHO generators.

### **'Mystery shopper' measures introduced**

Mystery shopper examinations are being introduced by the BSS to complement pre-existing quality assurance measures such as BSS field assessments aimed at ensuring consistent BSS examinations.

The mystery shopper examinations will involve a BSS assessor re-examining an unmodified boat within 28 days of a BSS Certificate being issued to it; thereby leading to an assessment of the performance of the issuing examiner. The examiner concerned will be contacted following the assessment and informed of the conclusions – good or bad.

Following an initial trial, the effectiveness of the measures and the process employed will be reviewed and, if relevant, finalised.

### **Advice about potentially lethal waterborne infections**

We've added information to the examiner website from the West Yorkshire Health Protection Agency to help you keep yourself clear from waterborne infections. Click [here](#) to go to the information.

### **Battery charging – a potential hazard for BSS Examiners**

The BSS recorded nine incidents in 2010 where the charging of batteries was linked in some way to the cause of battery explosions or boat fires. Although we are not currently in position to comment further on the likely causes, we are keen find out the reasons for the increase in such events and will involve the BSS Technical Committee with this task.

In the meantime examiners are recommended to treat batteries under charge with caution as battery explosions present a potential hazard to examiners and others close to boats, and particularly around the battery area.

### **British Waterways and the impact of the Govt. spending review**

Some of you will have seen or heard the British Waterways' (BW) announcement of a tough three years ahead with a freeze on most recruitment and all pay, planned consolidation of offices, outsourcing of certain activities, spending on major repairs being reduced and the planned loss of around 60 office-based BW jobs.

As the BSS is administered by BW, you may be wondering how this affects BSS Office staff and examiners. At this time it is 'business as usual' and our business plan for the forthcoming year is signed-off. We will continue to become more efficient and we are to move the office to Milton Keynes when the BW Watford office closes next year. Other than to emphasise the importance of examiner self-administering and placing orders in good time, we do not see a change to the way we support examiners or anticipate increased charges for examiners.

### **Avoid commenting to customers about licensing**

I've been requested by British Waterways to ask examiners not to express a view to customers about licensing conditions. It seems that some examiners are telling their customers not to bother sending in the 'blue' copy of the BSS Certificate to their licensing office. BW says that the blue copies are still needed.

### Contacting the BSS Office by phone

Please consider if your enquiry can be made by email as this remains the preferred method of communication.

For non-urgent calls please continue to use the main office number 01923 201278. If you get our automated answer please leave a voicemail message and give your name and contact number and a brief description of the subject matter and one of us will get back to you as soon as possible and generally within a couple of hours.

For urgent advice you can always call a BSS team member as appropriate:

- Phil for technical and IT enquiries on 07917 185539;
- Dave for technical enquiries and boat incident information on 07766 774727;
- Rob for IT and boat incident information on 07710 175478;

For all other types of urgent call please come direct to me on 07711 796417.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G.A. Watts". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Graham Watts, **BSS Manager**