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## The BSS next business plan to 2022 includes certification price rise

The Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) Management Committee has agreed a new four-year business plan to resource its work to 2022 and invest in improvements that will have an even longer-term benefit. The plan also includes the first price rise in certification charges for eight years.

BSS Examiners will pay a new price of £36 (excluding VAT) for each certification they issue to a boat, which is a £7 (ex VAT) rise that they will likely choose to pass onto customers.

The new price will apply from 1 April 2018 and the Scheme intends holding it for at least the whole of the four-year business plan period, which is designed to coincide with the four-year lifespan of BSS Certification.

Graham Watts, the BSS Manager said,

‘The Scheme’s track record on keeping to a business plan and controlling costs has been good with the resultant freeze in the BSS Certifications price for the last eight years, but having considered all options, a price change now cannot be avoided.

‘Predicted inflationary pressures rising over the next four years means the BSS needs to invest in its information technology and training in order to maintain the efficiency gains we have already achieved.

‘Above all, it’s critical to invest to help avoid the possibility of excessive inflation busting price rises in the business planning period beyond the next four years.’

The new BSS business plan includes additional support to BSS Examiners, projects to improve the quality of examinations and enhancements to customer service.

The Scheme acknowledges that times are tough and boaters face other price increases associated with their boating activity, so we will remain committed to continued effectiveness and efficiency to hold down costs while delivering more results.

Throughout the four-year business plan period boaters will see further investment in influencing boat owners’ behaviours, which is the key to keeping people safe from serious harm.

The BSS will also continue to support research into the risks such as carbon monoxide, as it has tangible benefits for boaters, not least the sharing of the best quality safety advice in the most effective ways.

Certification income represents almost 90% of the Scheme’s revenue all of which is invested into the work underpinning the BSS Examination service, risk research and review and the promotion of boat safety advice.

**-ENDS-**

## Notes for editors

**The BSS** is a public safety project owned jointly by Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency. At least 12 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 periodic examination of fuel systems, gas systems, electrical systems and appliances.

Navigation authority subsidies were withdrawn in 2007 and it became self-funding. Its aim is always to maintain of balance of income and investment in services and safety projects.

**The BSS Examination and Certification** The lifespan for a boat's BSS Certification is four years. Navigation authorities using the Scheme usually require a valid BSS Certification of boat at the time of licensing, registration, toll renewal or similar. Certification indicates that on the day of examination, the boat complied with the BSS Requirements. They can be freely downloaded or read on [www.boatsafetyscheme.org/boat-examination](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/boat-examination) . The compliance check is carried out by an authorised, independent practitioner known as a BSS Examiner.

The Boat Safety Scheme charges a BSS Examiner for each BSS Certification they make. As independent practitioners, they can charge their customers for the examination and certification a fee of their choosing, but it is likely that the examiner will charge a fee influenced by obligatory fixed expenditure professional indemnity and public liability insurance, training fees, and annual registration rising from £87.50 (plus VAT) to £114.58 (plus VAT) for the year to 31 March 2019.

The BSS advice to boat owners is to plan far enough ahead of any need to renew or arrange the boat's first BSS Certification to get two or three quotes from examiners who are prepared to work in the area. Owners should be clear about what is included in the price. The other important advice is to read carefully through the BSS web pages on arranging and preparing for BSS Examination. Acting on that advice in advance can reduce the risk of re-examination by ensuring the boat's installations comply and equally important, that the examiner can see or touch everything that he or she needs to without the use of a tool to gain access. The result may help keep examination costs as low as possible.

## Reporter's contacts

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