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BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear Examiner,

Richard from Morale Solutions reports on the BSS Examiner Survey 2018 results in this edition of BSS Examiner News. Correspondingly we set out the next steps to improving our support for examiners.

Please also read the two brief advice articles stemming from the field assessment feedback. We think they'll be useful for examiners interested in doing a great job – especially if they get stuck for words.

Finally, there's a last call for examiners interested in gaining authorisation for non-private boat examinations.

BSS Examiner Survey 2018 – the results and what happens next

Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey. The headlines and summary below have been provided by Morale Solutions Ltd. It is now for the BSS Office to carefully analyse the results and then act upon the findings.

The next BSS Office team meeting in two weeks has this as the main agenda item. Richard from Morale Solutions Ltd will help us develop an action plan. After that, options and recommendations will go to the BSS Advisory Committee to agree plans and actions. I'll keep you updated on progress.

Here's Morale Solutions' article on the research:

The headlines

An impressive 77% of all Examiners took part in the survey. 95% agreed that they are proud to work with the Boat Safety Scheme and really enjoy the combination of meeting boat owners and helping them with safety related issues together with the outdoor lifestyle and being on the waterways. There are however some issues for the BSS to address in order to improve things for the Examiners. There is demand for some fundamental changes to the BSS Examination Checking Procedures (ECP) to make things easier and ensure that the documentation and processes remain fit for purpose. Similarly, both the speed of introducing new updates and the speed of response from the BSS Office when the Examiners have a query are also questioned. There are also some concerns about Examiner performance, falling standards and the impact of price competition.

Here is a summary of the Key Findings

- 77% of Boat Safety Scheme Examiners took part in this survey (137 out of 178).
- There are good levels of 'engagement' amongst Examiners (defined as a combination of pride and their belief that providing safety advice or helping the BSS spot future problems is part of the role of an Examiner).

- Examiners enjoy meeting boat owners, helping them with safety related issues and just being out on the waterways and experiencing the lifestyle.
- Our strategic analysis identified four factors which drive levels of Examiner engagement;
 - Working hard to maintain a business relationship with customers in the 4-year period between examinations (69% agree or agree strongly that this is the case)
 - Agreeing that when the BSS introduces new processes or documentation they are fit for purpose (64%)
 - Feeling that Examiners get good support from the BSS Office when they have a problem with a customer (62%)
 - Believing that the BSS acts quickly when making important changes to processes (38%)
- Examiners who undertake more examinations per year are naturally more engaged and more likely to see their income as a significant source of revenue. However, this group are the least likely to feel that the BSS Office “has their back” when they have a problem with a customer.
- The big majority feel they get enough on-going training. Those Examiners who are Gas Safe registered are more likely to perceive that there are issues with varying performance standards but at the same time less open to believing that the “horizon gazing” aspect of the role is something they should be involved with.
- Issues related to the ECP are the #1 ranked factor that people would like to change to make things easier for the Examiners. There is a widespread belief that changes could be made more quickly and could be better thought through (fit for purpose). There is demand for a different methodology (maybe an ‘app’) and access to a FAQ database to help with recurring queries.
- This would take some of the pressure away from the BSS Office. Whilst Examiners are positive about the administration and technical support they get, the speed of response is sometimes an issue for them.
- There is some unmet demand for more work and this is coupled with concerns about how an increase in Examiner numbers could dilute the workloads that are available to existing Examiners. Examiners are more likely than not to believe that there is competition on price in their part of the country and this is linked to perceptions of falling standards in Examiner performance (which one in three believe is a big problem).
- The combination of lower prices and decreasing standards is effectively a “race to the bottom” in terms of quality.
- Half of Examiners have experienced pressure from boat owners to ‘pass’ their boat – with some owners questioning how it passed 4 years ago but not this time around. This is more tied to a lack of consistency in approach and application of the ECP and Certification (rather than changes in BSS requirements between examinations).

End of Morale Solutions Article

BSS Advice Checks – could you explain to a customer why they exist?

Most examiners know that the ‘**BSS Requirements**’ help prevent boat fires, explosions or boat pollution and environmental and other potential harm to visitors, staff and property on, or neighbouring, the navigation authorities’ waterways.

During the last round of BSS Examiner Field Assessments it became clear that nearly half of Examiners would, if asked, struggle to explain when their customers ask ‘why do advice checks exist’? Examiners also found it difficult to strongly recommend to owners, the importance of meeting all of them.

Defining BSS Advice Checks

Only around 7% of the BSS checks are BSS Advice Checks and these are used where the risk is specific to the boat owner and crew i.e. those involving CO poisoning, electrocution hazards and escape from the boat.

BSS Advice Checks assist private boat owners to identify and control the risks which relate solely to themselves and their crews’ wellbeing and for which they have a direct responsibility. These can be described as ‘first-party’ risks because they affect only those onboard the boat. However, the navigation authority will not withhold a licence, registration or toll, based on you finding one of these hazards associated with first-party risks.

It's like giving an owner an instruction manual

The BSS Advice Checks are also one of the navigation authority’s education and safety promotion tools. Where a BSS Advice Check non-compliance is found by the Examiner, the owner is advised where it is and what it is by you. So, in effect, the text of the check item is also the ‘instruction manual’ for the owner on how to reduce the risk.

So hopefully it is clear why Examiners must apply BSS Advice Checks with equal rigour to those checks with Requirement status. It is also crucial that all non-compliant BSS Advice Checks be recorded accurately and in full on Salesforce and reported to private boat owners through BSS Examination Reports (BSSERs).

Give it in writing protect, yourself and your customers

Appropriate descriptions on all ‘Yes, but some Advice Checks did not pass’ BSSER Certifications are an essential part of the risk management tool. They may help anyone who later buys the boat to be aware of any hidden risks it presents, and they can assist in inquests, insurance and legal investigations.

Examiners cannot rely on conversations, previous written reports, appliance records etc, to be handed onward or to be remembered by current or subsequent owners in the ensuing four years. For these reasons of self-protection, as much as owner protection, should you face any customer pressure to present a clean sheet (for insurance, sale or other purposes) do not capitulate, it's not worth the risk.

Should your customer be aboard at the time of your BSS examination and if you identify one or more BSS Advice Check faults, you can help your customer to understand and hopefully encourage them to live up to the responsibility they have, to keep themselves and their crew safe.

Our suggested script:-

‘Although privately-owned boats do not have to comply with BSS Advice Checks to achieve BSS Certification, each one represents best-safety practice and owners are highly recommended to meet all of them. Any listed in the BSSER report may be material to the vessel’s insurance and the boat owner’s duty of care to their crew’.

If this sounds familiar, it is adapted from the ‘About the BSS Examination Report’ section on the last page of each BSSER.

Glossary terms – why they are essential

When was the last time you read through the Glossary terms at the beginning of the ECP? A detailed knowledge of the Glossary terms is important as the wrong interpretation can lead to the incorrect application of Checking actions and/or understanding of the requirement, and thereby incorrect BSS compliance decisions.

The Glossary terms are common terms and so may appear in many individual checks and so any knowledge shortfall could be apply across multiple checks. For example, '**accessible for inspection**' – appears in seven checks and '**readily accessible**' appears nine times.

A review revealed a good understanding of the term '**readily accessible**' during the last round of BSS Examiner Field Assessments, however the understanding from memory of '**accessible for inspection**' left some room for improvement for nearly 40% of examiners assessed.

Please ensure you have an accurate working knowledge of all the Glossary terms

Final call for any interest in the 2002 BSS Standards upgrade course

Further to coverage in newsletter 18-004, around ten Examiners have expressed their interest to attend the two-day upgrade course to allow them to examine classes of non-private boats (other than hire boats) such as tenanted boats, hotel boats and workboats.

A course is arranged to take place in late November and this is a final call for any further expressions of interest to go on the course. If you are interested to attend, please let me or Dave Washer know before the end of this month.

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**