

Boat Safety Scheme
First Floor North
Station House, 500 Elder Gate
Milton Keynes, MK9 1BB



Telephone 0333 202 1000

Examiner's Email: BSS.office@boatsafetyscheme.org

Examiner's Website: www.boatsafetyscheme.org/professionals

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BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear Examiner

COVID-19 again

It seems that there is no escaping this subject. The BSS team have trawled through the Gov.UK, Scottish and Welsh government websites seeking the best advice we can offer you; signposting to support your need to make risk assessments and devise safe working methods. We finessed the [COVID-19 advice for examiners](#) again at the end of January.

As the situation changes, we try our best to bring you what is often rapidly changeable advice in a timely way.

Examiners' Survey Volunteers

Thank you to everyone that responded to the Morale Solutions request for help from a dozen Examiners. Richard says the level of interest has been tremendous, 23 examiners came forward within the first 24 hours. This means that Richard has a full complement of volunteers to speak with next week.

End-to-End examination process

Last October we announced the start of a Desktop Assessments programme as one of the quality assurance measures and it presents an opportunity for collaboration between Examiners and the BSS Office Team.

We said there are no pass or fail outcomes, just valuable feedback from the Assessor. Generally, these are going well and everyone that the DT assessor has contacted, has been very appreciative of his feedback.

However, there is an immediately apparent issue, too many examiners are unaware of all the end-to-end processes that BSS Examiners should be following. The result is they are leaving themselves exposed. They can be challenged not just by the Scheme, but also should something happen to the boat, other organisations may ask the examiner questions. In the past year we have seen insurance assessors, Gas Safe Register inspectors, MAIB inspectors, coroners, claims lawyers and the police make a request for records. Examiners who have got gaps or errors in records, or failed to follow processes are exposed when this happens.

So, please consider investing 15-20 minutes of your time to ensure you are familiar with, and are applying, all of these processes and that you are not missing anything.

[Undertaking BSS Examinations And Reporting The Findings To The BSS, Customers And Navigation Authorities](#)

If anything about the end-to-end process is unclear, please ask. If it is unclear to you, there may be other Examiners we need to assist too, or information we need to clarify. Feedback will help us to help you.

LPG tightness-test lock-up values and regulator hazards

Following the LPG Upgrade training, we added a lock-up value record box to the examination recording page, so thank you for reporting the LPG lock-up value with your LPG tightness tests.

Following feedback, we need to make a subtle change for an even more useful dataset. We are about to split the recording boxes into butane and propane. We are also adding a 'Time to lock-up' field where you record the number of seconds it took to reach lock-up point.

Regulator Hazard: We are now asking you to take a new action should you discover an LPG regulator is operating outside of the lock-up tolerance, or is more than 10 years old, or is marked in imperial units? We would like you to tick the new 'Regulator Hazard' box if this applies.

At the flame pattern test Check 8.8.1, we already ask you to issue a BSS Warning Notice if you come across the above, and the notice should include a note about the performance or age of the regulator as appropriate.

The BSS Technical Committee are monitoring LPG regulator issues in anticipation of an official report into house explosions in South Wales linked to LPG.

So, because of the seriousness of this issue, whenever it is relevant please tick the box Regulator Hazard box once it appears on the Examination Record page above the Warning Notice Issued box.

Investing in the improvements you say you would like

Regarding the topic of listening to examiners and improving what we do, the feedback I took away from meeting examiners at the LPG Upgrade training in Autumn highlighted areas we need to address systematically and in short order. The constructive feedback I gained on how the BSS is perceived by examiners fed the post project appraisal and highlighted the following issues.

- BSS Office suffers from poor communications
- BSS Office does not live up to the service level agreement as well as it should.
- BSS could engage more in collaborative processes and working
- An eagerness from examiners to embrace technology – so long as it works!
- BSS Database – clunky and not helpful to examiners

We are eager to address all these issues and more. To enable us to do that we need to invest in people-power and in systems. That being the case, the delayed increase in the annual registration fee from last year will now be instituted this coming year. Annual registration will be £170 plus VAT for the year 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022.

" I'm really enjoying the course and looking forward to the rest of it! "

January saw the successful start of the new Examiner Training Programme. We have highly experienced marine professionals all now working through the 15 online modules including the ECP Knowledge. These modules contain the collective knowledge of the BSS Office, BSS Examiners and specialist consultants for what underpins good Examinations, which is at last in one place and out of people's heads. The Trainee Examiners will be spending a week at Evesham on their Core LPG and Core electric training, and a week of practical, hands-on experience in performing Examinations from start-to-finish, at our new purpose-built compound in Norwich which contains a number of cruisers

and narrowboats. To finish the programme, they have a full assessment followed by six months of being supported by a BSS Champion.

Are you a Potential BSS Champion?

If you have a passion for supporting people grow in their skills and are a great BSS Examiner, then this could be a role for you. We are looking for five Champions to support our new Examiners. Thanks to technology you can be based anywhere in the country, and the role will start around the end of July once the Trainees have completed all aspects of the training programme.

An invite for BSS Examiners to apply for this new role is attached to this newsletter. For each new Examiner that you Champion, you will be required to provide 12 hours of support across 6 months and you will be paid £400 for doing this.

You will be given access to all the new online Examiner training material which you need to complete before the end of July, and you will need to participate in a short BSS Champion training course - this can also be done remotely. There is no charge for any of this training to be a BSS Champion.

Could you be a BSS Assessor?

We are looking for an existing Examiner who would like to do something a little different with their experience, to assess the Trainee Examiners at the end of their training. If you feel you have the skills, experience and personality to be an assessor and you are Gas Safe registered then this could be a role for you.

You will be given access to all the new online Examiner training material which you need to complete before the end of July, and you will need to participate in a short BSS Assessor training course. There is no charge for any of this training to be a BSS Assessor.

An invite for BSS Examiners to apply for this new role is attached to this newsletter.

Want to know more about these roles?

Please see the attached invitation to apply. The document contains further detail about what is expected of BSS Champions and BSS Assessors and how the process works.

Toilets and non-specific issues

These subjects are not linked except that they are features in forthcoming changes to the Examination Record.

To properly protect Examiners and new owners of boats who buy a craft part-way through the lifespan of its certificate, it is important to record risks and Examination activity fully and clearly.

A new field will be added to the reporting form and to the BSSER template to indicate the fact that you have checked a flushing toilet and/or toilet system holding tank capable of making an over-board discharge – hence the name of the field 'Toilet OBD'.

We are also giving the Non-Specific (NS) comment a better, more accurate, name. It is changing to AO, short for Additional Observation. So, if you encounter a risk that you are duty bound to mention

but it does not relate to a BSS Check item fail or unverified compliance, you can add an Additional Observation - AO – so your comment remains on record.

Smoke Alarm Survey

Three boaters lost their lives in 2018 in boat fires. In all three incidents, had there been a working smoke alarm aboard, those fires might have run a different course.

The BSS Technical Committee has been asked by the BSS Management Committee to review the case for BSS Checks for fire detection equipment.

Boat owners will be asked in March to participate in a short survey of fire detecting and suppression equipment currently in use on their boats.

Examiners will have a separate opportunity to help out when we launch a 3-month survey with three tick boxes on the examination reporting form.

There will be more information to follow. Your help will be greatly appreciated by the Committee.

Thank you for reading this newsletter and if you have any questions or comments, I welcome your feedback.

Best regards and please stay safe,

Kevin Tyson

BSS Manager