

# River Medway boat safety

## The Environment Agency (Inland Waterways) Order 2010

**We are introducing new boat safety standards for all powered boats kept, let for hire or used on the River Medway.**

**From 1 April 2012, you must make sure your boat complies with these standards to register it on the River Medway.**

### **What are the standards?**

For privately owned boats, these standards are set out in the Boat Safety Scheme Essential Guide (2005 edition). For hire boats, small passenger boats and workboats, they are contained in the Boat Safety Scheme Guide (2002 edition). Go to [www.boatsafetyscheme.com](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.com) to download them.

### **Do I need to prove compliance with the standards?**

For most powered boats, you must have either a valid Boat Safety Scheme Certificate (BSSC) or, for boats up to 4 years old, a valid Declaration of Conformity made by the boat's builder under the Recreational Craft Directive (RCD). When you renew your registration, you will need to send us a copy with your registration application. If you do not, we will not be able to register your boat.

### **How do I obtain a Boat Safety Scheme Certificate (BSSC)?**

You will need to contact an approved Boat Safety Scheme examiner. There are currently five based in the Kent area:

Dean Hendey	(Mobile) 07976 618239
William Flannery	(Mobile) 07767 755081
Michael Marsh	(Mobile) 07595 428639
Colin Smith	(Mobile) 07825 575979
Derek Lidington	(Mobile) 07702 723097

### **Does every type of powered boat need to have a BSSC?**

Although all powered boats need to comply with the standards, the following types of boat do not need to have a BSSC or Declaration of Conformity to register on the River Medway:

- Privately-owned, open vessels that have no domestic cooking, heating, refrigerating or lighting appliances installed, are not fitted with other permanent electrical systems (e.g. navigation lights, electric engine start / power tilt etc) and which are propelled solely by an outboard engine without a fixed fuel system.
- Passenger boats with a current Passenger Certificate issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

*If you own one of these boats, you must still certify on your registration application form your boat complies with our construction and equipment standards in every respect.*

### **Boats not required to have a BSSC for a maximum of 12 months from 1 April are:**

- Boats kept afloat but not used and requiring work to bring back into compliance with BSS standards before being returned to service or sold.
- Other boats undergoing planned restoration / refit / refurbishment if kept afloat.

*If you own one of these boats, you must still register it and pay the full annual charge so you can keep it on the Medway, but the registration certificate and plate we issue will not allow you to use your boat. You must remove your boat from the River Medway if you do not obtain a valid BSSC by 31 March.*

### **I never use my boat, so why should I make sure it has a BSSC?**

The Boat Safety Scheme is designed to ensure boats do not present a risk of fire or explosion that may injure waterway users or cause damage to property. If boats have fuel, gas or electrical systems on board, they need to be properly maintained and safe at all times – even if not in use.

### **How long is a BSSC valid?**

A BSSC is valid for four years from issue. It is your responsibility to make sure it is always up-to-date and your boat is compliant at all times. We may refuse to issue a registration or suspend a current registration if we find your boat does not comply with the safety standards at any time.

**If you renew your BSSC, you will need to send us a copy straight away - don't wait until you register the following year.**

### **I am carrying out restoration work on my boat – can I still use it?**

Yes, provided you can obtain a BSSC. You will only be able to do this if all on-board systems (e.g. engine, fuel, gas, electrical) are fully BSS compliant. Any non-compliant systems will either have to be removed from the boat or brought to a compliant standard in order to obtain a BSSC. If you cannot obtain a BSSC, you will still need to register it and pay the full annual charge, but we will issue a registration certificate and plate that only allows you to keep your boat on the Medway but not use it.

### **What happens if I do not register my boat / comply with the requirements?**

Our lock staff and patrolling officers will report any boat they find which is kept or used on the Medway and is not displaying a valid registration plate. There is a maximum fine of £1000 for failing to register a boat and comply with our registration requirements, and conviction for this offence also results in a criminal record. We may also ultimately remove a boat from the waterway if it is not registered, and dispose of it.

### **How can I find out more?**

For more information about the Boat Safety Scheme, visit the website at [www.boatsafetyscheme.com](http://www.boatsafetyscheme.com) or contact the Boat Safety Scheme team on 01923 201278.

customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

floodline  
0845 988 1188

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)