



Information Sheet

Date of issue: 14 Feb 2011

Improvements made to rules for Certificates of Competency

A number of important changes have recently been made by the State Government to the regulations for Certificates of Competency. The Department of Transport's Marine Safety Business Unit advises that the changes have been made to better align WA laws with the National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV) and to improve safety. The changes include:

- new minimum eyesight standards for the initial issue of a Certificate of Competency – requirements that apply to revalidation of exiting certificates are unchanged; and
- the introduction of a requirement that any newly issued fishing Certificates of Competency be revalidated every 5 years – fishing certificates issued before the changes took effect will not be affected.

Changes to minimum eyesight requirements

Until recently the minimum eyesight requirements applying to the initial issue of both fishing and trading Certificates in WA were set at a level higher than the both NSCV and the requirements for revalidation of a Certificate. The changes align WA's minimum eyesight requirements with national standards. Past applicants who were refused a Certificate because they failed to meet minimum eyesight requirements may now be eligible and should contact the Department of Transport if they wish to reapply.

	Previous Standard	New Standard
With or without aids to vision	6/6 in the better eye and 6/9 in the other.	6/6 in the better eye and 6/9 in the other.
Without aids to vision	6/12 in the better eye and 6/24 in the other.	6/60 in both eyes.

Changes have also been made to confirm that aids to colour vision are not able to be used in eyesight tests. Colour vision is important to vessel navigation at night or in times of restricted visibility. However, colour blind applicants may still be eligible for a Certificate of Competency that is subject to certain risk-based restrictions.

The new eyesight requirements can be found on the Department's "Application for Eyesight Test" form available at <http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19590.asp#COC>

Changes to medical requirements

For the initial issue or revalidation of a Certificate of Competency, applicants are required to meet minimum medical standards. The changes to the WA regulations make clear that in addition to this, the holder of a Certificate must continue to maintain an appropriate level of medical fitness that enables them to safely perform the functions to which their Certificate relates. If you are unfit for duty at any time, in the interests of your safety and the safety of others, you must not undertake duties until you have recovered. Permanent or enduring conditions should be reported to the Department of Transport.

5 yearly revalidation requirement for new fishing Certificates of Competency

The practice of issuing perpetual Certificates is contrary to national and international safety standards. Five yearly revalidation is already applied to Certificates of Competency for use on trading vessels.

Newly issued fishing Certificates of Competency (on or after 12 February 2011) are now subject to a 5 yearly revalidation requirement. This means that every five years the holder will be required to demonstrate:

- they continue to meet the minimum medical and eyesight requirements;
- they hold a current first aid certificate; and
- for holders of Master Class III & IV, Mate Class IV, Marine Engineer Class III and Marine Engine Driver Grade I Certificates, that they have obtained acceptable sea service over the past five years.

There are numerous ways in which a person will be able to demonstrate that they have obtained acceptable sea time -

further details are available on the Department of Transport website at <http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/20184.asp> or by contacting the Certification Section of 08 9216 8238. Revalidation will attract a fee every five years, and details can be found on the Department's website.

This change does not affect fishing Certificates issued before 12 February 2011 – these Certificates do not require revalidation. However, should you change the grade of your existing fishing certificate; the new Certificate will be subject to revalidation.

Holders of a trading and fishing Certificate of Competency of the same class will be able to revalidate both Certificates at the same time and therefore pay only one fee. However, Certificates of different classes will need to go through separate processes due to the differing requirements.

For further information about these changes please contact the Commercial Vessel Safety section of the Department of Transport on 9216 8238.