



## **SOUTH AFRICAN SAILING**

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### **Annual Report of the National Inland and Offshore Committee (NIOC) July 2009**

#### **Revised syllabus for Certificates of Competence**

Initially SAS considered moving to the RYA syllabus but rejected this option for several reasons, the key ones being:

1. The RYA syllabus deals with the complexity of UK standard and secondary ports and tidal atlases. While this material is entirely relevant to UK waters it is not relevant to sailing in SA or most of the rest of the world. It is certainly inappropriate to force a South African day skipper to study this material. We have only included this material at yachtmaster offshore level.
2. The RYA insists that practical exams from Coastal Skipper upwards have to be carried out in Saldanha Bay. We did not believe it is necessary or even sensible for Coastal Skipper or Yachtmaster Offshore candidates to travel from say Durban to Saldanha to be examined.
3. Schools would have to pay for RYA course material. It seemed inappropriate for SA sailors to have to pay a royalty to the UK to learn to sail.

The new syllabus for Certificates of Competence was approved by SAMSA after a series of meetings with Captains Dave Colly and Gustav Louw in November and December 2008. The new syllabus came into effect in January 2009

The revised syllabus fully embraces GPS technology while retaining traditional chartwork as backup and confirmation.

#### **The Local Waters Certificate of Competence**

The new syllabus includes a new Certificate of Competence – the Local Waters CoC. This was introduced for two reasons:

1. Many day skippers do not wish to tackle difficult coastal passages. All they want to be able to do is to sail in their local waters after sunset.
2. Day skippers who own boats found themselves in a catch 22 situation. To take the next step to Coastal Skipper they needed 24 night hours. However as Day Skippers they were not allowed to sail at night, so accumulating these hours was difficult. The Local Waters CoC allows them to bridge this gap more easily.

The definition of local waters is the same for Day Skipper and Local Waters skipper. The difference is that the Local Waters Skipper may sail in his local waters by day or by night.

## **The new regulations and Inland Waters Requirement**

The new regulations came into effect on inland waters from 1 March 2009. The major changes are:

1. All yachts greater than 9m in length on inland waters now require a Certificate of Fitness (CoF). And on inland waters skippers of yachts greater than 9m in length now require a Certificate of Competence (CoC). The minimum qualification is an Inland Waters CoC. Any higher qualification - Day Skippers or above – is by definition sufficient for inland waters.
2. All power boats greater than 15 horsepower now require a CoF and the skipper requires an appropriate CoC.

There is no difficult technical material in the inland waters sailing exam. There is no chartwork exam and the candidate requires only a basic understanding of Colregs. If you can skipper your yacht safely you will pass. So if you sail a yacht >9m in length we would encourage you to get legal. Pretty well all you have to do is to take an examiner for a sail.

SAS is currently authorised to issue CoF's for power vessels. However, in terms of the regulations, only SAMSA is able to issue CoC's for power boats less than 9m in length. SAS is currently submitting an application to train and examine skippers for power vessels under 9m in length. Assuming that we are successful we will be able to run courses, conduct exams and issue temporary certificates of competence. SAMSA will issue the permanent certificates.

### **Certificates of Fitness (CoF's)**

The new regulations fully define the CoF requirements. SAS is no longer allowed to add additional requirements for sailing vessels. And unfortunately some safety features essential to offshore sailing have been omitted. So for example many safety officers feel very uncomfortable having to sign off on a CoF for a yacht without jackstays and harnesses because they know that it is not safe to take the yacht offshore.

The statement of compliance on the COF currently reads:

*This is to certify that the above vessel has been inspected by an accredited inspector of SA Sailing and that when inspected it complied with the construction and equipment requirements of the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations 2007 insofar as they apply to unregistered pleasure vessels.*

To this we plan to add one of the following statements. Either:

*The vessel also complied with the additional requirements which SA Sailing considers to be the minimum for the safety of this category of vessel.*

Or:

*However the vessel did not comply with the additional requirements which SAS considers to be the minimum for the safety of this category of vessel.*

The owner will then have the freedom to choose whether he wishes to meet just the minimum legal requirements or the legal minimum plus the SAS minimum requirements.

## **SAS' Internet Site**

There is a great potential for our members to be confused or misinformed on issues relating to CoC's, CoF's, controlled events and going foreign. Even SAS staff and members of the offshore committee are sometimes uncertain on specific issues. Our plan is to simplify the system as far as possible and then describe the system in a simple and easily understandable way on the SAS web site. We have made a start with CoC's and controlled events. A draft covering listing of yachts and Certificates of Fitness has been completed and might be live by the time you read this report. Still to be tackled is the rather complex matter of "going foreign".

## **Costs**

NIOC is concerned about the costs to its members of CoC's and CoF's. Since SAS is a non profit organisation there is no profit margin, and the costs to members simply reflect the costs incurred by SAS. The only way to reduce the cost to members is to reduce the costs incurred by SAS.

With this in mind, NIOC decided not to replace Sandy Ostendorf when she resigned towards the end of 2008. To cover some of Sandy's workload we appointed Senior Safety Surveyors (North and South). These honorary positions mirror the Senior Examiners (North and South). Many thanks to Dave Cox and Dave Elcock for picking up this responsibility.

In conclusion I would like to thank the many people involved in the affairs of the SAS National Offshore Committee – the SAS staff, the safety officers and safety surveyors, the examiners and the members of the offshore committee - for the huge contribution they have made to sailing in the last year.

I would also like to thank Richard Crockett and Sandy Ostendorf. Richard resigned as chairman of NIOC in November 2008 and Sandy left SAS for a new career. Not only was their contribution to SAS enormous, but they have continued to make their time available to the new committee whenever we sought guidance.

Jannie Hofmeyr

July 2009

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